A Fine Balance:
Stories of parents who climb

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy

Buckinghamshire New University
Brunel University

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January, 2012

Abstract

The thesis is based on research that uses a post-structural narrative or storied approach to examine the experiences of parents who have or continue to rock climb. It focuses on the family, leisure and working lives of seven heterosexual couples with children in the UK.

The work of Michel Foucault provides the theoretical framework. In Part One of the thesis his earlier work on discourses, knowledge and discipline are used to analyse the subjects that are formed by discourses on parenting and climbing. This part of the thesis is concluded by bringing these two fields together through examining the notions of individual parental and family leisure and the notions of risk and responsibility. Foucault's later work on experiences and the technologies of self is used in the analysis and discussion of the data in the third part of the thesis.

Data for this thesis were collected through in-depth narrative interviews with both partners in the seven couples, six of these couples were interviewed twice, and the interviews were supported by participant observation. Influenced by post-structuralism and the ethical dilemma of maintaining the anonymity of both partners in a couple, fictional writing strategies were used to represent the data in the form of five short stories.

These stories and the resulting discussion highlight the complexity of parents' everyday lives as they negotiate time and different life-worlds in the early years of parenthood. Couples' experiences were often quite different and any one individual's experience could be contradictory. Whilst parenting did constrain climbing commitment, many of the mothers and fathers used creative practices to maintain their commitment, with some actively critiquing some of the discourses of intensive and gendered parenting, which disciplines parents (and especially mothers) to sacrifice their own time for their children. Findings from this thesis suggest that parenting remains gendered, mothers were more likely to perceive themselves as having more responsibility (and thus less likely to take risks) and feel guilty about sacrificing time with children for themselves. However, many of the parents did actively negotiate to share parenting, and many of the fathers also were less willing to take risks with the increased responsibility that came with fatherhood.

Parenting was shown to be relational, in that fathers and mothers supported each other's maintenance of leisure, working and family spaces. Although the parents' educational, working and age identities cannot be ignored, it is possible that when both parents are committed to the same activity such as climbing that they are more likely to maintain equitable gendered relations. Finally, in terms of family leisure, this research showed that some parents did adopt a child-centred approach to their 'free-time' and were more likely to perceive their children as 'at risk.' However, many of the regular climbers were impacted by their identities as climbers, and saw taking children into 'risk spaces' as potentially beneficial, and climbing as a family activity that was used to pass down their own family values (not necessarily 'expert derived' ones). In this way, parents construct themselves as ethical beings and individualise 'universal' moral codes.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my family-

To those still with me who have provided me unlimited support and had to listen to me talk about my research for the last three years, and to those who have gone who would have been proud of me whether I finished it or not!

Acknowledgments

There are so many people to whom I owe an enormous amount of gratitude, and without whom this thesis would not have been possible, so to name a few:

My brilliant supervisors-Barbara and Ben, who always had their doors open, and most of all for guiding me and encouraging me to find my own path! I would also like to thank Ina (and Robert), Zoe, Alan, Laura and everyone else at Bucks, and Chris, Alex and Ali at Loughborough who collectively shared offices, provided intellectual? stimulation and even a place to stay when I needed it.

I am of course greatly indebted to the parents who participated in this research, who welcomed me into their homes, showed me photo albums of their lives and whose stories inspired me, and kept me writing.

When I started my PhD I was determined to treat it like a job, to keep the rest of my life going, this was, of course, not always possible, but I did my best, and I would like to thank the following for keeping me sane through the harder times, and especially after I broke my ankle. To Mozzie, Merv, Ozzy, Jen (and Matt), Gabalar, Mullen, Dr Morris and Sin for cooking for me, taking me out, distracting me and making me laugh. To the Wins-church group for so many fun weekends, and especially for the Mich-olympics and Glastonbury. To the climbers (especially Victoria) for stopping me working on many Wednesday afternoons and weekends. To Caroline and Louis for all the coffee breaks, and to Grandpa (and Grandma) Brown for reading my thesis (and telling me you enjoyed it?)-any mistakes are mine not yours!

My final thanks go to people who have helped and encouraged me more than they can ever know. I would not be where I am without you. To Mum for always picking up the phone and telling me to stop when I needed to be told, to Dad for the 'travel' support and Sam for distracting me. To Tom for steak knives and jalapenos. Lo, the sister I never had, thank you for helping me around London on one leg and providing so much emotional support over the last year. To Tory, I don't know how I can express my gratitude enough-but thank you for reading countless drafts and for listening to my worries. Finally to Rich, thank you for laughing at me on my 'this is rubbish' days, for seeing the end before I did, and most importantly for introducing me to climbing.

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Glossary

Whilst I have attempted to clarify terms within the text, a glossary of climbing terms may also be useful.

Adventure climbing: See **Traditional climbing**.

Allez: French for go, many of the climbers in France will shout Allez to encourage climbers to get up the problem or route.

Aid: To use equipment to overcome a difficulty on a problem.

Arête: A sharp outward pointing ridge of rock at any angle.

Bars: A technique in which knee, arms, and occasionally a head is used.

Belay (noun): An anchor point, to connect the climber to the rock. This is done short term-whilst climbing the route, (a running belay) where the rope is clipped into protection in the rock, and long term-where the climber sets up a belay during a multi-pitch climb, at the top of the route so they are secure to then bring the second climber up, or even at the bottom of a route so that a lighter belayer does not come off the floor if a leader falls.

Belay (Verb) or **belaying**: The act of paying or taking in rope. Usually a friction device is used which enables the partner of the climber to lock the ropes off quickly, and secure/protect a climber from a fall.

Beta: Information about a route, i.e. about equipment that can be used, or the moves to do the climb

BMC: British Mountaineering Council.

Bolting: Fixing bolts to rock for protection (generally on limestone, quarried slate and quarries in general).

Bold: A route that is virtually impossible to protect, and thus a fall would be serious.

Bomb-Proof/Bomber: Placed equipment that is very safe, and would not come out of the rock if the leader fell on it.

Bouldering: Climbing on small rocks, usually a short distance above the ground and therefore do not require (usually) the use of a rope. Equipment is minimal and no equipment is placed in the rock, but mats are often for climbers to land on and prevent injury. Mats have become acceptable because they are said to help protect the area around the rocks from erosion. Routes are called problems.

Bridge: To climb a route by applying equal pressure with the feet and hands in opposite directions on opposing pieces of the rock face and working one's way up slowly.

Bucket: A jug like hold, which the whole hand can grasp.

Bulge: A small rounded overhang.

Bumbly: A rather derogatory term for a climber, who is typecast as: "male pseudo-climber, grey beard, male pattern baldness, (sometimes an all-over pattern), a 44 inch waist, (more laundry than washboard), XXL harness loaded with Hexes and prized MOACs, red socks, hairy cannonball calves, checked shirt. The star bumbly also has a tubular woolly hat, and a giant sandwich box smelling of Scotch eggs." (Hume, 2008).

Carabineer: Metal clips with a hinged gate, used to connect rope to places equipment.

Chalk: Light magnesium carbonate carried in a small bag, used by climbers, as a gymnast/ weight lifter would use resin, to aid a dry grip.

Chimney: A crack that is wide enough to fit the whole body into, awkward to climb.

Climbing elite: The 'hard' climbers, usually sponsored.

Climbing wall: constructed, usually indoor environment.

Corner: the inverse of an **arête**.

Crag: An area where the action of climbing takes place.

Crimp: A small hold, which you can just get the edge of your fingers onto.

Crux: The hardest move on a route or problem.

Deep water soling: Climbing on a sea cliff above sea, done without protection so falls are into the sea.

Desperate: A route that feels very hard to the individual, and often involves little protection, and lots of swearing.

Disco Leg: Uncontrollable shaking of one or both legs when climbing.

Dogging: To dog a route is to complete a climb after taking repeated falls, resting on gear or using aid.

Dry Tooling: A form of climbing where axes or other tools are used to cover ground that is not ice or snow.

Dyno: A controlled dynamic leap for a hold.

Elvis leg: Also known as disco leg, shaking in one or both of your legs**.**

Ethics: Informal rules about how to climb a route, they include rules about conservation, access, honesty and style.

Exciting: When a route feels bold and difficult.

Exposed: In a position where you feel vulnerable to the elements or the realisation of how far away the ground is.

Fingerboard: A training device, a board with individual strips of wood attached. Used by climbers to increase the strength in their fingers by doing pull-ups and moves without the aid of their feet.

Flash Ascent: See onsighting.

Foothold: A feature that a climber can stand on.

Friends: a brand name for a camming device that is inserted into cracks and fissures for protection. They come in various different sizes and represent a huge leap forward in terms of protective devices.

Gear: Protection, the equipment used to prevent a climber hitting the floor if they fall.

Grades: The difficulty of a climb. Grading systems in climbing can be very complex as grades are not universal, and are very subjective.

Gripped: Terrified, gripping the rock and not wanting to move

Grit: Gritstone rock, a rock that has a lot of friction, and is less prone to rock fall.

Groove: An indentation in the rock that is not deep enough to be a crack or corner.

Guidebook: A book of recorded climbs in the area.

Hardcore: Very dedicated climbers-recognised as good or risk takers

Head pointing: A traditional climb that is led after practice on a top rope

Heel hook: A technique that involves hooking your foot onto a hold, which prevents swinging out, and allows a climber to reach the next hold with a free hand.

Hex: A piece of gear, hexagonal shaped. **Friends** are often used instead.

Hold: A feature on the rock/indoor wall that is used for an ascent**.**

Ice Climbing: The use of axes and crampons to climb ice formations, including frozen waterfalls

Indoor climbing: Climbing artificial climbing walls. At walls, options for climbing include: **bouldering**, **top roping** or **leading**, when leading the walls have fixed bolts and lowering off points which climbers clip into (like in sport climbing).

Jamming: Technique for climbing cracks (finger/hand/knee/foot/face jam).

Layback: A technique that involves pushing on legs in one direction whilst pulling on hands in another, used for climbing on holds that point sideways, especially one edge of a crack or one side of an arête.

Leading/leader: Going up the route first, and placing equipment (either trad gear or putting quick draws in bolts) followed by a seconder.

Mixed Alpine climbing: A form of climbing that involves routes that are mixed terrain, i.e. rock and ice.

Nut: Protection for traditional climbing, a metal wedge on a steel wire. They come in a variety of sizes and are used in cracks. Removed by yanking or hitting with a nut key.

Offwidth: A crack that is too wide for jamming but too narrow to be a chimney. Awkward to climb.

Onsight: to lead climb a route with no data about the equipment or moves, and no prior inspection, it is climbed from the ground up to the top with no falls. Regarded by most climbers as the 'purest' style of ascent.

Overhang: Sections of rock on a climb where the top sticks out further than the bottom, very steep, so requires good technique or strength.

Placement: Where gear is placed in the rock, good placement (best and most efficient places) takes practice.

Plas y Brenin: An outdoor activity centre in Wales.

Problem: Natural or artificial obstacle, the term given to bouldering routes.

Protection: Equipment or gear is placed in the rock in order to make the climb safer, when placed well the equipment ensures that falls are not life threatening.

Pumped: Forearm fatigue from build up of lactic acid.

Rack: A collection of gear.

Redpoint: The sport version of a headpoint, i.e. a lead of a route after is has been pre-practiced on either a top rope or going from bolt to bolt.

Retro flash: The repeat of a climb you have done before that you have forgotten how to climb.

Rockover: Technique that involves pushing one's body over a raised knee to reach up to a higher handhold.

Rock shoes/boots: Specialist shoes used to climb rock (and indoors) very small, with a sticky rubber sole.

Run out: Big gaps in between available placements for protection, often when finishing the route.

Sandbagged: Being pointed out to a route and being told it is much easier than it is, or the grade itself may not be a reflection of its difficulty.

Seconding: The belayer who then follows the leader tied to the end of the rope and belayed by the leader at the top of the pitch; in traditional climbing, they remove the gear from the rock as they ascend.

Slab: Rock that is slightly less than vertical, often harder to climb than it looks, requires good friction and footwork.

Slack: Rope that is not taut, a climber can ask the belayer for slack whilst climbing if the rope is being taken in too tightly.

Sloper: A hold with a not very positive surface, or edge, feels quite rounded and hard to hold onto.

Soloing: An ascent of a route using only rock shoes and chalk. Can be very dangerous because will result in very serious consequences.

Sport climbing: Sport climbing is a type of rock climbing where permanent bolts are pre-placed in the rock; climbers attach carabineers to the bolts to provide protection. In sport climbing ethics allow resting or using bolts as footholds when examining the next move. Bolting is often necessary on some rock types.

Spot: To put oneself in a position to catch or assist the boulderer when they fall.

Style: Form of ascent that a route is climbed in.

Sustained: A route that is consistently the same grade through-out.

Thug: To get up a climb using strength and not technique.

Thrutch: Not the most stylish form of climbing, where determination overcomes an obstacle by any means possible. Useful in chimneys and offwidth cracks.

Top rope: To climb with a rope that is attached to a belay above you, means that you will only fall as far as the rope stretches (unless your belayer drops you).

Traditional climbing (trad): When a climber places their own equipment in natural rock features, when ascending a route, to provide protection. Ethically, protection is only for safety in preventing a fall and not for resting on.

Watch me here: An instruction from the leader to their belayers when they are anticipating that they might fall.

Weekend warrior: Climbers who climb mainly on weekends, or part-time

Whipper: a long fall.

Work: Time spent practicing a route or problem (working a problem).

YoYo: To climb a route in a style where if you fall, you are lowered back down leaving the gear in place before attempting to climb it again.

Youth: All climbers sometimes called youth, regardless of age.

(see Hardwell, 2007; Bate & Arthur, 2006; Crook, 2003) .

Chapter One:
Introduction: Outlining the thesis and theory

Broadly, this thesis explores the social construction of multiple identities by looking at the experiences of parents who rock climb. Specifically it does this through first conducting individual interviews with seven heterosexual couples, who are parents and were or continue to be rock climbers, and then by creating five stories to represent their experiences. The purpose of this initial chapter is three fold, I first provide a very brief personal and academic background to the research topic as well as introducing my research aims. Secondly I explore the theoretical framework for the study, introducing the methods and concepts of Michel Foucault that have been fundamental to this thesis. Finally, in this chapter I provide an overview of the structure of this thesis.

1.1. Rationale and aims of the thesis

Like many other adventure sports researchers, my initial interest in climbing was a personal one. The parenting side to the research is not (well not yet in any case) an experience I have been through. However, the appeal of this research topic did stem from my engagement with parents who climbed, with my attendance at a talk on women's climbing at a film festival, and my reading, although sometime after the event itself, of the media reaction to Alison Hargreaves' death. This event has been discussed in relation to risk, gender and responsibility (see Laurendeau, 2008a, 2008b; Frohlick, 2006; Palmer, 2004). However, somewhat surprisingly virtually no empirical research on either motherhood or fatherhood within the adventure sports field, or even within sports sociology, has resulted from the circumstances of Hargreaves' life and death (for some exceptions see Spowart et al., 2010, 2008; Robinson, 2008; Such, 2002).

Initially this research aimed to primarily explore the impact that the contradictory discourses of risk-taking and responsibility had on parents' experiences, and how this related to gendered identities. Yet I was also interested in other contradictions that emerged from the literature including time, Brannen and Nelson (2005) suggest that family time has a moral element, and

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there is thus a "contradiction between time in work and time devoted to family" (p118). The same can be said of parenting and climbing as a serious leisure activity (Stebbins, 2007). The notion of intensive parenting, which is 'known' as good middle class parenting indicates that parents, and particularly mothers should sacrifice their own time for that of their children, whilst somewhat opposed to this climbing is 'known' as a culture of commitment. The primary aim of this thesis then is to explore these discursive contradictions by looking at the experiences of parents who have or continue to rock climb.

Social research into parenting has taken off in the last two years, with a number of seminar and conferences on issues around parenting cultures (see Parenting Culture Studies, 2007). This research has examined the notion of intensive parenting, risk and parenting, fathering, and the medicalisation of pregnancy and feeding. This interesting, evocative and politically relevant research has importantly brought the debate into the public eye, and attempted to critique the 'scientification' and expert guided nature of parenting culture; however rarely in this research does leisure or sport come under consideration.

Within the leisure field, early research into family and sporting activities or leisure made a distinction between employment and leisure in family lives, and related to stages of the life cycle (see Roberts, 1970; Rapoport and Rapoport, 1975). Whilst beneficial, this research was criticised by feminists for being rather androcentric and ignoring the influence of gender on family and leisure lives (Henderson, 1994) and over-emphasising the positive and rarely critiquing the constraining impact of leisure. With the increased number of women in the workforce, the impact of the feminist movement and changing family structures, research in the late 1980's began to take into account the constraining and enabling experiences of leisure for mothers, using qualitative methods and seeking personal accounts (Clough and White, 2001; Wimbush, 1988; Deem, 1986). The results of feminist leisure research has been mixed. Some research has shown that paid employment may have improved women's opportunities to access personal leisure, and that leisure spaces are potentially empowering for mothers (Kay, 2001; Wimbush, 1988). However, other research has suggested that despite women's increased access to paid work the ethic of care has continued to mean that mothers' are governed to take on the burden of most household work and to sacrifice their own time for their family (Thompson, 2002, 1999; Shaw, 1994).

Some quantitative time-use research has analysed father's time, showing that in the last 40 years fathers have generally increased the time that they spend with families and doing housework (Sayer, 2005). Other research, especially feminist research, has however, tended to focus on

women's experiences of leisure, or their accounts of their families or partners leisure, rather than at fathers own accounts of their experiences. Attempting to bridge this gap there has been a call by Kay (2009; 2006) to consider the experiences and involvement of fathers in family leisure. The suggestion is that discourses of 'new' or 'involved' fathers may have contributed to a representation of fathers who are more engaged in the care of their children, and this thus may impact their own personal leisure. What is needed now are more studies that explore the relational aspect of individual and family leisure, and specifically more studies that examines particular sporting practices in more detail and how parenting influences this involvement.

This research picks up and expands on this gap, by exploring both parents experiences and meanings of their parenting, family and leisure lives, but specifically around the sport or activity of climbing, looking at how individuals' climbing identities are influenced by parenting. This entails a detailed examination of the discursive fields of climbing and parenting, to understand what is 'known' about these two institutions and how these influence parents' own understanding of who they are.

Broadly as suggested above this thesis aims to explore the experiences of parents who rock climb, more specifically, the key questions that underpin this thesis ask:

1) How does climbing fit into the world of these parents? In addition, how does this relate to discourses of parenting and climbing?

2) How do parents construct their experiences in relation to contemporary notions of risk and responsibility?

3) How does the experience of climbing and parenting relate to gendered identities?

Whilst conceptions of gendered parenting, and climbing are the primary focus of this research, influences of age, work and class cannot be ignored, and this is why Foucault's work has been influential to this thesis, as his methods allow me to identify that identities are multiple and complex, and cannot necessarily be explained in static, fixed terms.

1.2. Reading the thesis through a Foucauldian approach to identity(ies)

My own academic development has been informed predominantly by neo-Marxism, and more recently in a limited way by post-modernists such as Bauman; however, it is the work of Michel Foucault that has significantly contributed to this thesis. Whilst Foucault himself rejected being classified as either structuralist, post-structuralist or post-modernist (Markula and Pringle, 2006)

he has been termed all of these things, and I would position this thesis within post-structural social thought challenging:

> The epistemological and ontological assumptions of modernity. The quest for certainty, absolute truths, and universal solutions within modernism is challenged by the exposure of fragmented knowledge and the impossibility of separating "truth" from the functioning of discourse and power (Helstein, 2007: 80).

I am particularly interested in using Foucault's tools that are outlined below as a way of understanding and critiquing how humans are subjectified, through both modern and post-modern forms of power. Primarily then his work has directed my understanding of social identity, Foucault's entire work can be seen to question how knowledge about people has been formed and how this has shaped being human. Rather than being concerned with the Marxist approach of individuals having power, he questions, "how humans understand themselves in our culture and how our knowledge about the social, the embodied individual and shared meanings come to be produced in different periods" (Hall, 1997: 43).

Foucault rejects an essentialist view of the fixed, true self, and instead thinks it is better to speak of identities, which are fragmented, or shift contextually (Foucault, 1980b). However, he recognises that through relations of power certain 'knowledge' becomes seen as true. Markula and Pringle (2006) highlight that from a Foucauldian perspective "identity can be understood as constructed via experiences that are linked to the workings of discourse, power relations...and processes of active self-negotiation" (p99). A concern with discourse and power relations are reflected in Foucault's earlier work on technologies of dominance, where he sought to analyse how individuals have been classified, disciplined and normalised. This identifies that individuals are both the object and are constituted, or come to recognise themselves in relation to workings of discursive formations (Butler, 1997). Whilst a concern with active self-negotiation and experience are implicit in Foucault's later work on technologies of self.

A Foucauldian approach is useful for this thesis because he recognises that identities are multiple, as Helstein (2007) expands, subjects are constituted through a number of discourses, which "Foucaultian subjects are continually negotiating among" (p84). This is useful because it identifies rather than being recognised, and seeing in ourselves a fixed identity, such as a parent, a climber, or a female or male, individuals are situated as all of these things and they are constantly shifting (Fuss, 1989). Whilst these positions are constituted within different discursive fields, thus subjects are seen "as a complicated field of multiple subjectivities and competing identities (Fuss, 1989: 33).

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A Foucauldian approach provides the tools to deconstruct the stable identity, to show how climbing and parenting identities have been discursively constructed. These concepts are now discussed in more detail, taking into account some of the criticisms and modifications of Foucault's work, before outlining how his work has framed this thesis.

1.3. Disciplining bodies

1.3.1 Discourse

Before exploring relations of power, it is necessary to look at Foucault's contribution to the concept of discourse. Structural approaches referred to discourse as language, Foucault's approach to discourse is more complex, "treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individual group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice" (Foucault, 1972:80). It is recognisable that language is important within this conception, the primary unit being the statement; written, visual or verbal, which provide a way of talking about objects, or humans. However more than representation, discourses are also practices that produce our conduct (Hall, 2001). Although there are multiple understandings of objects within certain historical contexts particular discourses come to have more authority and represent what is 'true', obstructing other ways of knowing (Markula and Pringle, 2006; Rabinov, 1984).

The concern with the discursive formation of subjects within the human sciences is reflected in Foucault' archaeological method. Archaeology is the analysis of the relationship between discourse and knowledge, recognising that "there is no knowledge without discursive practices; and any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms" (Foucault, 1972: 182-183). This does not mean that objects do not have material existence in the world outside discourse, but it is through discourse that objects gain meaning, for example, a rope exists materially, but through discourse that we know that it is a rope and how to use it in climbing. In *Madness and civilisation (1965) The order of things (1970) The archaeology of knowledge (1972) and The birth of the clinic (1973)* following Nietzsche's own a-historical exploration of the origin, Foucault mapped the origins, transformations and disappearances of objects and discourses in the fields of punishment, madness and medicine. Suggesting, not that man is the rational foundation of knowledge but instead that the speaking and acting man that we 'know' today arose from knowledge, produced in the human science, in which he was the object (Foucault, 1970).

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The analysis of specific discursive regimes within the human sciences demonstrates then, how institutions, practices and language produce the knowledge, from which we come to know who we are, and what we can do. However, not only do discourses change but multiple discourses shape humans (Markula and Pringle, 2006). As Stewart (2002) says, Foucault can be used to identify alternative discourses. The above approach is used to examine the various discourses that shape parents and climbers in chapters two and three.

Despite the lack of formal identification of power/knowledge it is underlying Foucault's archaeological work "when I think back now, I ask myself what else it was that I was talking about, in *Madness and civilisation* or *The birth of the clinic* but power?" (Foucault, 1980b:115). In the mid 1970's, coinciding with the development of his post-structural method of genealogy, Foucault's work began to reflect more explicitly a concern with power (see *Discipline and punish*, 1979; *The history of sexuality: An introduction,* 1978a), while maintaining his archaeological exploration over the emergence and formation of discourse (Smart, 1983; Kendall & Wickham, 1999; Pringle and Markula, 2006). Thus discourse was seen to link power and knowledge; discourses of knowledge (or truth) are the means by which power is exercised yet similarly power produces truth (Foucault, 1980b).

1.3.2. Power- Knowledge and the body

Jenkins (2008) suggests that "Identities exist and are acquired, claimed and allocated within power relations" (p45) but what does Foucault mean by power? As seems to be rather characteristic of Foucault, he defines this in terms of what power is not, rejecting the Marxist notion that power is a possession that can be acquired, based on class status or a position occupied by the state (Foucault, 1983). Instead Foucault suggests that focussing on power from the top-down obscured the real workings of power (Smith Maguire, 2002). Whilst Foucault (1980a) was not arguing that groups and individuals did not benefit from power, he said that it was only the final form of power and instead it was the use of discourse that gives groups influence; the state, for example only "operates on the basis of other, already existing power relations" (p22).

By power relations, Foucault means the relations between people and groups, which exist at the everyday micro level through the actions of everyone (McNay, 1994). A relationship of power is a practice, it is "exercised through and by the dominated…it exists as micro powers of power relations that permeate every aspect of social life and so can't be overthrown once and for all" (Sheridan, 1990: 139). This has important implications for the possibility of resistance, although power relations may be unbalanced, they work by people acting upon the actions of

another, and because power exists and flows through relationships Foucault suggests that subjects must be free. Although he recognised that power could be repressive and constraining, he was publically critical of the notion that this is the predominant effect of power, because he did not think that through this that power would have the normalising effect it does. Instead then, Foucault saw modern power as productive, producing "effects at the level of desire...and also at the level of knowledge" (Foucault, 1980c: 59). Foucault paid particular attention in his work to the relationship between power and knowledge, indicating that: "there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge which does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations," (1991: 27). Knowledge is made available through power relations, and this knowledge produces discourses that are known as 'true.'

We can see then that rather than an interest in who has power, or even what power was, Foucault was interested in the effects of power, and to analyse this he conducted genealogies or "histories of the present" (Foucault, 1991: 31). Rejecting modern theories of history, which have positioned history as a process of continuous social progress or the present as the result of a series of logically linked events (McNay, 1994) instead Foucault brings a post-modern outlook suggesting that history was discontinuous and events somewhat accidental, therefore, a genealogical analysis seeks to identify the stages of disruption that form knowledge. This in a sense highlights that from one historical era to the next things change, but at the same time, Foucault did not suggest that there were complete ruptures between eras; instead, he recognises that what we know as 'true' today has evolved through these disruptions (Markula and Pringle, 2006).

From these genealogies, Foucault identified different forms of power; he rejected what he saw as the reductionist Marxist notions of economic power and the pre-enlightenment sovereign power, which he saw as out-dated, and too repressive. The flux in population and the birth of capitalism (with the industrial revolution) in the Victorian era at the end of the 18th century meant that sovereignty power was no longer sufficient as a method of control. At this time, there was a reduction in central governments domination mechanisms, such as public torture and killings, which were replaced by new forms of power relations (Smith Maguire, 2002). He called this modern power, disciplinary power mechanisms, which he critiqued as "more efficient, productive and cooperative than its predecessor" (Cole et al.. 2004: 210). This power produced "'man' as a discursive construct....and the human being for the first time becomes not only an aloof representing subject, but also the object of modern scientific investigation," (Kellner and Best, 1997, paragraph 24). Foucault's post-structural or post-modern genealogies

were anti-science, not because he was seeking ignorance, or he was specifically against the methods used in science but he suggested that the knowledge that emerged from these human sciences (psychology, sociology, literature, medicine) was used to discipline and control individuals (Rouse, 1994; Turner, 1982). Foucault sought instead to write the histories of the marginalised and oppressed, seeking alternative 'collectives' to contest the "[coercive] effects of the centralizing powers which are linked to the institution and functioning of an organised scientific discourse" (Foucault, 1981: p. 84).

Foucault (1980c) suggests that these power relations focus on and around the body. As power and knowledge are related, the body is therefore also subject to truth practices, and "forms of power...categorises the individual...attached him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him" (Foucault, 1983: 212). This is an important consideration in this thesis, because it recognises that individuals are the effect of power, therefore whilst identity may appear or be experienced as natural it is not, instead it is a construction that is imposed, normalised and repeated by subjects. This does recognise that knowledge, or these truths are not stable and therefore identity is fragmented, unstable and framed by multiple discourses (Kaufmann, 2005; Andrews, 2000; Kendall and Wickham, 1999). However the development of knowledge of humans as a 'technique of power' problematically created new forms of social control through which individuals become subjects and tied, or constrained to particular ways of knowing oneself (as men/women/ mothers/fathers/ climbers) and excludes other ways of knowing (Foucault, 1988a).

Disciplinary techniques came about in order to control the location of individuals yet al.so improve the productivity of bodies in space (Rail and Harvey, 1995; Rouse, 1994). The political implications of the subjectification of individuals saw responsibility shift from the state to the individual, i.e. subjects are required to take more responsibility for themselves (Maguire Smith, 2002). This has both a positive and repressive effect; through self-management individuals are freed to an extent from the state's control to make their own decisions in response to authoritative figures, yet in reality Foucault suggested that this 'self knowledge' and discourses of truth serve to reinforce authorities that discipline and controls bodies (Rouse, 1994). How then are individuals formed through these power relations? Or how does this 'truth' become authoritative? Foucault (1988a) suggested that there were modes of domination, or technologies of discipline that acted upon people, enabling them to see the truth about themselves.

1.3.2.1. Technologies of Discipline

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Disciplinary techniques act to divide people and naturalise certain ways of behaviour, producing socially constructed and politically compliant 'docile' bodies. These docile bodies were produced, specifically, in relation to the discursive fields or institutions in which they were positioned. These institutions have quite individual histories, because for Foucault modernity is characterised by multiple discursive fields and power relations and through institutions such as schools, hospitals, the state and the family, different individuals (dividing practices) were constructed and normalised. Medicine and psychiatry individualises and diagnoses 'abnormal' bodies within a hospital, whilst Physical Education produce and reinforce specific and different bodies (e.g. the fit/unfit body) and practices through teaching styles and training techniques (Kaufmann, 2006; Markula and Pringle, 2006; Pringle and Markula, 2005; Andrews, 1993; Rail and Harvey, 1992).

Three instruments produce the docile body; these are *hierarchical observation, normalised judgement* and *examination* (Foucault, 1991a). Hierarchical observation focuses on the importance of visibility, suggesting that a great deal of control is gained through observation. Foucault used the concept of the Panopticon[1] to explain how in modern society, force is not needed when one feels under constant surveillance (Andrews, 2000; Rail and Harvey, 1995). Similar mechanisms of surveillance discipline operate through the whole social body (Foucault, 1977). This is noticeable in the disciplinary institutions such as schools (Rouse, 1994) where individuals are located hierarchically in space (i.e. with heads at the top over teachers below who observe students at the bottom). In sporting events, where referees, fans, participants, CCTV and spectators observe sporting games within stadiums which controls sporting bodies (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Thus individuals, and particularly bodies that have been labelled as a concern, are under constant scrutiny even when not under the gaze of others. Methods of surveillance are all linked, and serve to normalise individuals (Andrews, 2000).

Normalizing judgements act as an instrument to punish deviations from correct behaviour, this encourages reform where individuals desire reward for correct behaviour, or being normal (Foucault, 1991a). Normalisation distributes individuals around a standard ideal, allowing the differences between these individuals to be measured or examined. Finally, examination combines hierarchical observation and normalised judgement, it establishes 'the truth' about individuals as they are measured, ranked, differentiated, and compared to others (Hewitt, 1991). More than this, examinations are an effective method of normalisation and individualisation because they serve to punish and reward, and direct future behaviour; for example fitness tests

measure and classify individuals as fit or unfit, and then direct 'unfit' bodies to lose weight, or get fitter (Markula and Pringle, 2006).

Techniques of discipline do not only work on individuals, in *The history of sexuality,* Foucault (1978a) discussed a disciplinary power, known as bio-power, which had a bigger target, the population. This bio-power:

> Focussed on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanisms of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, birth, mortality, the level of health, life expectancies and longevity...Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls*: a bio-politics of the population (Foucault, 1978a: 139**,** emphasis in original).

Foucault suggested that as with other new relations of power, the development in bio-power is linked to the 18th/19th century rise in capitalism. Whilst prior to the 18th century the focus of the population was survival (Klaufman, 2006), the development in capitalism required a focus on life; concerned with productivity and economic profit capitalist societies needed healthy, skilled or educated workers. Methods of knowing populations were introduced in order for bio-politics to work, so society saw the introduction of wide-scale surveys on health, birth rate, disease, sexuality etc, as well as the human sciences including sociology, epidemiology and eugenics (Markula and Pringle, 2006).   Although seemingly positive, bio-power contributed to the production of a population of "controlled, regulated and healthy bodies" (Cole et al., 2004: 212) through the production of knowledge, movements, exercises and regimes imposed on populations. Rather than needing to impose punishment, through bio-power individuals and populations are motivated to take individual responsibility. Foucault suggested that bio-power resulted in new forms of discrimination.

Through these disciplinary techniques, subjects internalise methods of surveillance and monitor themselves; "the subject is watched by others, watches herself and watches others" (Klaufman, 2006: 580). Therefore, subjects align themselves according to the 'truth' discourses that normalise the body, this was known as subjectivation; which ensures both that the individual self-governs, and reinforces particular identities, and that the individual is subject to other's control (Foucault, 1983).

Foucault has been widely criticised for this rather 'gloomy' view of the workings of power and he himself recognise that his early work had focussed too much on techniques of domination (1988b). Whilst he always suggested that as soon as there was a new power relation there was the possibility for resistance, his later work, provided somewhat complex tools to identify the

ways in which individuals can influence power relations (Pringle and Markula, 2005) which he termed technologies of self. These technologies of self, discussed below inform the discussion of the stories later in this thesis. Foucault's early work was important because it recognised that our positions, or identities are always shaped by discourse, yet Foucault began to conceptualise that experience was important, and humans have some agency in forming their own identities in relation to these discourses. Thus in order to consider the effect of the discursive constructions of parenting it is important to understand how these are interpreted by the parents themselves.

1.4. Technologies of self

> There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all (Foucault, 1985:5)

Foucault always implied that humans were free, thus to some degree he always positioned resistance to domination as plausible, however he was not often clear how subjects did this, until in his later work (see Foucault, 1985; 1986) when he began to reflect on the "constitution (of subjectivity) via lived practices within power relations" (Thorpe, 2007: 208 (author's addition). In the history of sexuality, he emphasised the notion of the power struggle, for example how homosexuals are in a power struggle with the government and vice versa. Although these relations are not always equal, because there is a struggle then there is always the possibility to change the situation (Foucault, 2000a: 167).

Foucault, although not denying the potential of reform, was wary of it, because he rejected the notion of the alienated human being breaking free from social, legal, political and institutional boundaries and questioned the idea that this would sufficiently result in acceptable relations and condition. Instead, he saw agency as individual practices of freedom (2000b). As Pringle and Markula (2006) argue Foucault suggested rather than challenging existing social structures, in order to change society the focus should be on "promoting new ways of knowing ourselves and ways of being" (p10). In order to study these practices, inspired by Greek and Roman ancient culture, Foucault (1985; 1986) asked how do individuals transform themselves, or how do individuals change dominant discourses? He called this process of identity transformation technologies of self, which:

> permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection of immortality (Foucault, 1988b: 18).

Examining the techniques of self transformation allowed Foucault to understand not how individuals 'know themselves' but how individuals think, act and transform themselves (Rail

and Harvey, 1995) as a way of 'taking care' of oneself: "to take care of the self is to equip oneself with these truths" (Foucault, 2000c: 285). These truths include understanding one's place within the social system (because subjects are still known within truth discourses and power relations). Through recognising how we are governed we can minimise techniques of domination, use our power ethically to transform our identity (Maguire Smith, 2002; Rabinow, 2000) or problematise how the self is constructed. Through engaging in techniques of self, instead of "conforming to a fixed identity, we can critically reconstruct the way our identities have been formed," (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 144). Thus, Foucault looked at "*problematizations* through which being offers itself to be...thought - and the *practices* on the basis of which these problematizations are formed." (Foucault, 1985:11). In saying this, Foucault did not suggest that actions necessarily changed moral codes because he suggested that the moral code were imposed in particular historical contexts, and were somewhat normative codes or values that one is expected to follow (Kelemon and Peltonen, 2001). For this reason, some have suggested that technologies of self are merely coping mechanisms, they are individual actions taken to, in a sense, deal with the conditions we live in but not actually question or present alternatives to them (see Thorpe, 2008). However, for Foucault, technologies of self were more than this, but to understand this we have to look at what he meant by ethics.

Foucault distinguished ethics from the moral code; whilst, as suggested above, the moral code imposes certain obligations on people, ethics refer to "how the individual is supposed to constitute himself as a moral subject of his own actions" (Foucault, 1983: 238). In other words, Foucault saw ethics as concerned with a relationship to the self, an individual's awareness of how they are subject to the moral code (Thill, 2007) and he suggested that there are different ways for subjects to form themselves as ethical subjects in relation to the moral code, termed the mode of subjectivation. Through the mode of subjectivation, individuals can possibly question the construction of the self (Markula and Pringle, 2006) to perform work on themselves as acts of freedom, because ethics are seen by Foucault as the "form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection" (2000c: 284). He suggests that contemporary society has privileged the Christian, legal and scientific ethics of knowing the inner self, or self-fulfilment rather than the Greek ethic of caring for oneself. Although he did not recommend a return to the Greek social order (where women were worthless except as wives) he did suggest that their approach to self, for the pleasure of life could be useful in finding an ethic other than one "founded on so-called scientific knowledge" (Foucault, 2000d:256).

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In terms of how a subject might do this, Foucault suggested that any act could potentially be transformative, and whilst he did not wish to prescribe a way in which subjects re-invent themselves he did indicate some ways in which individuals could be re-created as ethical beings (Markula, 2003), including, critical thinking and aesthetic self-stylization. As bodies may not necessarily be subversive or oppressed and may instead re-produce dominated or discipline bodies it is important to see how participants themselves critique 'true' or dominant parenting identity. Although critical awareness or self-reflexivity does not necessarily indicate change, thinking is seen as an ethical activity "to get free of oneself" (Foucault, 1984: 351). Foucault highlighted how the Greeks wrote reflexively to themselves and others as a form of critical thought. Self-awareness and critical thought can lead to the transformation of identities, or new types of experiences because "thought is...the very form of action" (Foucault, cited by Rabinow, 2000: xxxv) through which people question who they are, what they do and the world that we live in. The idea of critical awareness is one that is useful when considering the questioning of 'universal' identities; Foucault suggested that ethical beings could disassemble the self (telos). Butler's (1990) work to some extent expands this; she argues that through subversive performance, agents make the categorisations of our identities subject to change. This refusal or re-invention requires critical awareness i.e. how women/men problematise feminine or masculine identities. Through self-mastery or thinking critically about one's own position, and one's own environment one can then think critically about others and society (Markula and Pringle, 2006).

Foucault suggested that aesthetic self-stylization is the constant process of invention or re-invention (2000d) of the self, through one's own knowledge as if it is a work of art. The idea is to think creatively about how one acts, making changes along the way to challenge the natural 'I' and to think of working towards a different self or many selves, as a long-term process (Foucault, 2000d). Through every day practices and exercises developing a different attitude to the world, an attitude that is nevertheless formed in reference to "contemporary reality, both to grasp the points where change is possible and desirable, and to determine the precise form this change should take" (Foucault, 2000e: 316). Practices were central to Foucault's notion of freedom, indeed he saw liberty not as "assured by the institutions and laws intended to guarantee them" (2002e: 354) but as a practice, and thinking about freedom in this way allows individuals to think of autonomy or individual responsibility as something that is not defined by normalisation (Thill, 2007). As I said any activity could potentially transform, however it must be combined with critical thinking or in other words "through self-awareness individuals create new types of experiences that can lead to transgressive practices." (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 151).

To care for self in Ancient Greece meant to care for others. Whilst Foucault suggested technologies of self were primarily individual acts, McLaren (2002) suggests however that they are not removed from social engagement, the self is always formed in relation to communication with, or through the guidance of others; family, friendships, social groups and communities. Furthermore, through knowing oneself, Foucault suggested that it was possible to not abuse power over others, for:

> The good ruler is precisely the one who exercises his power as it ought to be exercised, that is, simultaneously exercising his power over himself. And it is the power over oneself that thus regulates one's power over others, (Foucault, 2000c: 288).

Foucault argued that there was benefit in creating, or forming new kinds of relationships with people (with equal acceptance as the relationships of the family and the marriage) where both individuals gain pleasure as opposed to relationships of dominance (2000f). Thus there is a suggestion that the creation of the ethical self entailed responsibility for others as well as the self (Thill, 2007).

To re-cap then in order to re-create ourselves, Foucault himself felt that: first individuals must refuse the things projected to us are normal, or in other words question his/her current identity and the moral codes that govern her/him as a mother/father, climber, wife/husband. Secondly, one needs to analyse, to reflect and think how they can change their behaviour, and thirdly one thinks about the type of self, or life they wish to lead, to be innovative (Markula and Pringle, 2006; Foucault in Bess, 1988)

1.5. Feminism and Foucault: critiques and convergences

Michel Foucault's work has not always been welcomed with open arms, his work has often been criticised as deterministic and idealistic, confused, inaccessible and impossible to categorise (Fox, 1997). His work has sat uneasily with many feminists, initially due to his lack of consideration of gender, or indeed "any normative basis for evaluating social structures" (Yates, 2002:39) within his work. This criticism has primarily been over his earlier work, where the emphasis on techniques of domination painted a rather repressive view, and offered little use for feminists seeking the emancipation of women. The focus on discursive identities and rejection of a pre-existing rational subject is problematic for feminists because it ignores the lived experiences of women and men who are capable of political agency, as McNay (1994) highlights:

> The emphasis that Foucault places on the effects of power upon the body results in a reduction of social agents to passive bodies and cannot explain how individuals may act in an autonomous fashion. This lack of a rounded theory of subjectivity or agency conflicts with a fundamental aim of the feminist project to rediscover and re-evaluate the experiences of women (p125).

At the same time, the post-structural refusal of knowing anything with certainty has led materialists and essentialists to label post-structural researches as apolitical and pessimistic of human agency (Flax, 1990).   Implying that we are all free subjects ignores the very real constraints of gender, race and class. As Connell argues (2008) post-structural accounts of gender in their focus on individualised forms of resistance ignores the political potential of group action to organisational and structural control.

This has been heavily refuted by post-structural feminists, not least because both value local or micro power relations, seek to deconstruct or destabilise 'universal' or grand narratives and they both highlight how the gendered body is constructed by a multiple discourses (Butler, 1990; Rail and Harvey, 1995; Bordo, 1993).   As identity is fragmented and unstable then it is open to be "rethought, reassessed, and re-imagined so that fragmentation, contingency, and the power of desire are given space within political action" (Helstein, 2007: 80). Thus "we are born male or female, but not masculine or feminine," (Bartky, 1988: 11) and Foucault's influence on gender studies and feminism has led to the examination of how male and female bodies are disciplined to perform masculine and feminine identities in different historical and spatial contexts (Pringle, 2005).   Within sporting contexts, this approach has been useful in seeing how competitive rationalised sport has disciplined and produced a rather regimented, and disciplined masculine body, to the exclusion of female bodies (Dworkin, 2003).   Yet his positioning of identity as unstable and fragments has allowed third wave feminists and pro-feminists to show that men rarely embody the characteristics associated with hegemonic masculinity (Pringle, 2005). Sports produce different masculinities and femininities as athletes negotiate their own sporting experiences (Azzarito and Solomon, 2006).

Foucault similarly offers a useful plethora of tools and analytical concepts to critique the 'scientification' of parenting, whereby specific methods of parenting (mothering) have increasingly been seen as essential for the upbringing of children.   Research has analysed how fathers and mothers identities are discursively produced historically, but also how this has disciplined mothers and fathers and reinforced gendered parenting relations (Kanieski, 2007; Lupton, 1999a; Lupton and Barclay, 1997).

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Post-structuralism highlights how subjects are positioned by multiple discourses, which impact how individuals are seen and see themselves, this is useful in exploring both how individuals are positioned by discourses of climbing and parenting, yet al.so how they experience their identities in relation to these discourses.

1.6. Thesis structure: Using Foucault

Thus far, I have laid out the theoretical contribution that informs this thesis; I now outline how this informs and directs the structure of this thesis. Whilst this thesis is not a traditional ethnography, it is informed by ethnographic principles and post-structuralism to be creative, reflexive and explore new ways of knowing (Richardson, 1997). In doing this, my research approach tries to ground:

> interpretive practices ... ties morality and politics to local understandings, conditions, and resources. [It] is concretely situated in, and oriented to, local accountability structures, frameworks within which actors and actions are defined or define themselves in circumstantially relevant terms with reference to situated values. [It also elucidates] ... the agonistic and resistive micropolitics... linked to local culture, [where individuals have to be] both responsive and responsible to the practical contingencies and moralities of choice and action' (Gubrium and Holstein, 1992: 699).

In part one of the thesis I make use of Foucault's earlier work on power, knowledge and discourse to examine the discursive processes that shape, differentiate and connect climbing and parenting identities. My approach to doing this follows the work of Thorpe (2008), Markula and Pringle (2006) and Lupton and Barclay (1997). Where rather than a detailed investigation of historical text (as Foucault himself did) in chapters two and three I examine power relations resonating from the media, legal, political and expert discourses on parenting and climbing to see how "certain bodies, certain gestures, certain discourses, certain desires, come to be identified and constituted as individuals" (Foucault, 1980a: 98). This involves examining the following:

1) Statements about 'parenting' and 'climbing' which give us certain kind of knowledge about these things.

2) The rules which prescribe certain ways of talking about these topics and exclude other ways-which govern what is 'sayable' or 'thinkable' about mothering/fathering/climbing, at a particular historical moment.

3) 'Subjects' who in some ways personify the discourse-the caring mother, the breadwinner father, the risk adverse, intensive parent, the committed climber, the risk-taker with the attributes we would expect these subjects to have, given the way knowledge about the topic was constructed at that time.

4) How this knowledge about the topic acquires authority, a sense of embodying the 'truth' about it, constituting the 'truth of the matter', at a historical moment.

5) The practices within institutions for dealing with the subjects – medical treatment for the insane, punishment regimes for the guilty, moral discipline for the sexually deviant, for the irresponsible parent-whose conduct is being regulated and organised according to those ideas.

6) Acknowledgment that a different discourse or episteme will arise at a later historical moment supplanting the existing one, opening up a new discursive formation and producing in turn new conceptions of climbing, or parenting, new discourses with the power and authority, the 'truth', to regulate social practices in new ways.

(Adapted from Hall, 1997: 45).

These two discursive fields are then brought together in chapter four, where I use some of the sports and leisure sociology literature to bring together the two previously identified discursive fields.

Whilst some read Foucault as more interested in these broad discourses, rather than the individual that is situated within and by discourse, I recognise that experience was an important part of his latter work. It is not enough to suggest that these discourses present an adequate representation of climbing and parenting without examining those voices that are both silenced and active in constructing the discourse (Richardson, 1997). In part two of this thesis, I outline the methodological approach to collecting the empirical data for this thesis, first outlining the philosophical approach that informs the reflexive journey throughout the thesis. The narrative, life-story approach that was used to collect data in the form of stories and experiences is outlined before highlighting the ethical and philosophical dilemmas I came across when it came to analysing and writing up the data, which led me to experimental or alternative writing forms. These forms reject the use of the scientific-realist tale, and again I refer to Foucault, arguing that creative experimentation informs new ways of understanding both others and ourselves. Writing the parents experiences as stories, highlighted the multiple and fluid, and indeed often contradictory nature of these experiences, and allowed me to show this in a way, that was closer to the way that climbing parents themselves experienced it, and meant that respect for the anonymity of interviewees was maintained. In this part of the thesis, I attempt to clarify how these stories were created and set the scene for the reading of the stories.

In part three of this thesis I present five stories, with a discussion of the relevant themes that were expressed and arose from these stories, particularly around notions of time and commitment, risk and responsibility and morality, all of which relate to constructions of

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parenthood, climbing and childhood. Whilst many (see Sparkes, 2002a; Richardson, 2000) argue that telling what is shown in the stories places miss-trust in the author, however, I feel that this discussion can help, and add to these stories, and makes clear my own voice within the interpretation. Foucault's work has again been useful here, and particularly his latter work, seeking to show the discourses that parents draw on, and how these are used to construct their own identities. This involves an understanding of humans as agents can actively interpret, question 'truth' discourses and possibly create alternative subjectivities.

In the final chapter, chapter eleven, I bring these findings together and draw some broad conclusions, reflect on the theory and methodology and offer some recommendations for future research.

ENDNOTES ————————————

[1] Jereme Bentham's circular prison tower, which made power more efficient, because prisoners were located so that they could be observed by guards in the tower, yet they are unable to know whether they are being observed or not. Thus the prisoners monitor their own behaviour because they feel like they are under constant surveillance, or that the 'gaze' of the guards is always upon them.

Part One

Literature Review

Chapter Two: Discourses of parenthood

In this chapter, I examine the discourses on both 'good' parenting and the social construction of contemporary motherhood and fatherhood. This involves the examination of psychological, sociological, medical, legal, and popular discourses (including parenting manuals) to understand not only what is said about parenting, but additionally how this knowledge is used to shape and construct fathers and mothers.

I show in this chapter that despite alternative forms of parenting, parenthood is constructed as both intensive and gendered. This analysis involves a consideration of some of the historical social, cultural and political changes that have contributed to our understanding of parenting. This is because as Markula and Pringle (2006) suggest:

> discursive formations accumulate meaning within a specific cultural and historical context. Therefore, to trace the discursive formations...one should examine the historical development of the way (parenting) has been understood in a particular culture (p52, author's addition).

In doing this I also use current research examples that highlight the effect of these discourses, or the disciplinary techniques that have been used to normative forms of parenting. Emphasising that intensive and gendered parenting disciplines parents into certain ways of behaving, which does have positive implications for the care of children but is also restrictive, and constraining.

I first look at the dominant discourses that reinforce the traditional stereotypical scenario of intensive parenting mother-carer and father-provider and second discourses that highlight alternative forms of parenting that potentially trouble traditional gender relations, and the notion of intensive parenting. It is important to add here, that any discussion of policy and legislation is concerned with New Labour. This is because, whilst I recognise that the Con-Dem government have implied that they are changing many of these policies (including offering fathers the option of increased paternity leave), the interviewees for this research were all conducted while New Labour was still in office.

2.1. The traditional scenario

2.1.1. Intensive parenting

Intensive parenting as an 'ethic of care' subjects parents to act in quite specific ways for the supposed good of their children. Far from simply child rearing, the ethic of care, or intensive parenting a highly regulated and scrutinised form of parenting that is:

> Construed as child-centred, expert-guided, emotionally absorbing, labor intensive, and financially expensive…the ideas are certainly not followed in practice...but they are, implicitly or explicitly, understood as the *proper* approach to the raising of a child (Hays, 1996: 8-9, author's addition in italics).

Lee (2007) and Lupton (1999a, 1999b) add that intensive parenthood, and particularly motherhood is medicalised, the premise of this concept is that medical knowledge is used to both promote good health, and monitor behaviour and social order (Lupton, 1997). In this case, parents are regulated to act in a way not only to preserve their own health for the good of their child, but also to monitor their children's eating/exercise etc to excessive levels. This is connected to notions of risk, parents are told to conduct their everyday lives, assessing and avoiding potential harms to health, thus Furedi (2008, 2009) suggests that contemporary parenting is increasingly 'paranoid', where children are seen as at risk and parents must take precautions to assess and remove children's experience of risk.

Intensive parenting has a moral element; parents are morally responsible, not only for protecting their child from harm but for incorporating a number of normalised behaviours, including the sacrifice of self for the child, in order to raise their children into a well-balanced adult. This has meant that parents in the UK in particular are under scrutiny from policymakers, so-called experts and other parents.

It is generally recognised that parenting today is different from the past or that this rigorous form of parenting has gained pace in recent years (Changing Parenting Culture, 2007; Henderson et al., 2010). However, a genealogical approach in the Foucauldian sense requires some examination of the historical context, not suggesting that the present is a continuation of the past, but nevertheless, acknowledging that it is important to analyse, to discover the events through or against which certain concepts emerged (Foucault, 1977). This allows one to see that some forms of intensive parenting practices today are linked, to the changes in the

conception of childhood, the birth of the human sciences in the late 19th century, yet al.so how an assumed 'natural' way of parenting changes direction in connection with wider social discourses.

Parenting historically

Historical and sociological analyses of childhood suggest that the definition of childhood is fluid and the importance of children varies contextually and culturally (Cook, 2002; Beekman, 1977). In the seventeenth and eighteenth century there was little distinction between childhood and adulthood, children were seen as young adults, and thus children, and particularly those that were working class, were not sheltered from the harsh realities of the time. As suggested in the previous chapter Foucault saw the 18th to 19th century as the development of technologies of discipline that worked on the human body as its root of power, and it was then that women's bodies were sexualised and medicalised, and as result there was greater concern with the health of children:

> The feminine body was analyzed ...as being thoroughly saturated with sexuality; whereby it was integrated into the sphere of medical practice...whereby, finally it was placed in organic communication with the social body (whose regulated fecundity it was supposed to ensure), the family space (of which it had to be a substantial and functional element), and the life of the children (which it produced and had to guarantee, by virtue of a biologico-moral responsibility lasting through the entire period of the children's education): the mother (Foucault, 1978a:104).

Placing responsibility for health and morality on the mother reflected the state's concern with the health of the population for the means of production (Foucault, 2002b). This mechanism of governance reflects the connection between low and intimate workings of power, with power relations at a macro population level, supporting neo-liberalist ideals "that to govern well is to govern less" (Gordon, 2000: xxviii). Alongside this transformations in working conditions and education throughout the nineteenth century led to considerable changes in how middle-class children were perceived. Childhood became seen as a "distinctive life-cycle stage marked by innocence and requiring careful and affectionate guidance" (D'Cruze, 2004:261). The impact of these changing conceptions of childhood was on how parents should invest in their children, and the focus of childrearing changed from discipline to morality and well-being. Relations between parents and children were regulated so that parents became obliged to provide their children with physical care, and the family became "a continuous physical environment that envelops, maintains and develops the child's body" (Foucault, 2002c: 96).

Chapter Two: A discursive analysis of parenting

By the end of the nineteenth century the legislation against cruelty to children, an emphasis on education, and the targeting of working-class mothers through advice manuals and women's groups meant that life for working-class children had also changed considerably (Hays, 1996; Hopkins, 1994). Caring was carried out in various ways, working-class women fed their children and husband before themselves and would go without if there was not enough (D'Cruze, 2004). Comparatively, middle-class mothers incorporated and reinforced 'domesticity' with a clean, well-managed household, and good parenting was a mechanism for the maintenance and development of a child (Foucault, 2002c).

From the late nineteenth-century, discourses on parenthood have become increasingly regimented with the growth in scientific research on childrearing and parenting manuals (Hays, 1996). Sociologist Richardson (1993) agrees that medical and psychological discourses of childrearing have had significant influences over both how mothers performed and were judged as women. Pleck, (2004) and Griswold (1993) suggest that although to a lesser extent, fathers have also been targeted by these discourses; in the early 20th century fathers were seen as necessary to deter the over-protective or over-feminised influence of the mother. It is not, however, that one direction has developed, but instead, affected by the social conditions at the time, methods of childrearing, as advocated by developmental psychology and child advice manuals, have advocated quite different approaches in a relatively short period.

In the early twentieth-century, behavioural psychologists suggested that 'good' mothering could be learnt and detailed instructions on child development were taught to mothers (Richardson, 1993). This was in part because of political anxiety about the health of the nation, with concern over the number of deaths in the Boer and first World War and the falling birth rate; this population concern influenced perceptions of motherhood, and mothers were positioned as responsible for the health of children (Davis, 2008). From the post-World War One era of the 1920s until the 1940s, the work of New Zealander physician Truby King dominated in Britain. King's advice was disseminated through educational facilities and in many child-rearing manuals (Liddiard, 1923). King's advice demonstrated that above affection; mothers should focus on schedules, consistency and hygiene, as Holdsworth (1988) suggests, "in his eyes, mothercraft was more important than motherlove which hampered routines. Nothing should be allowed to excite or spoil babies; they were not given much love or attention" (Holdworth, 1988 cited in Devlin, 1995:182). King advocated that strict routines were necessary for a child's character formation, and emphasised that hygiene was important for reducing child mortality. This approach is quite different from the method of childrearing valued today, yet it can be seen

to have increased parents responsibility over children's moral and physical, psychological and emotional care (Richardson, 1993: 37).

This approach was disrupted by some of the effects of World War Two, from which a more permissive era of child rearing began, recommending affection and playing with children (Humphries and Gordon, 1993). This reflected individual consumer culture that was developing at the time, mothers were expected to be somewhat indulgent, but at the same time put their children first, and so the emphasis was on the 'special and enjoyable' relationship between mother and child (Richardson, 1993). Furthermore, play was seen as important for children's social, educational and psychological development, thus mothers were further implicated in their role for child development.

The mother-focussed permissive approach was expanded in the 1950's by developmental psychologist John Bowlby's theories on mothering. Bowlby again emphasised that mothers instinctively knew how to care for their children, but he argued that love and care were the most important ingredients of mothering, and therefore that child deprivation was detrimental to a child's development (Hollway, 2006a). This represents a contextual understanding of what it is to be a 'good' and 'bad' mother, which was used to justify the exclusion of women from the workplace. This research had a significant influence on government policy in an era that promoted the nuclear family and a return to the traditional gendered labour force (Richardson, 1993). While policy would not have worked alone, by engaging mothers to take responsibility, encouraging them that caring for children was their primary concern and objectifying mothers who failed, these 'expert discourses' meant that a particular version of motherhood was internalised, and regulated by mothers themselves (Henderson et al., 2010).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Davis (2008) notices a more flexible approach to parenting, a time when parents were told to 'individualise' expert (which was often conflicting) advice in consideration of their own experience and the individuality of their child. Additionally second wave liberal feminist discourse influenced parenting in the 70s and 80s, more women began to work and fathers were encouraged to interact with children (Pleck, 2004). However, there was also a further emphasis on parents to consider the holistic development of their baby, and political discourses made the association between poverty and parenting. Lower class parents were categorised and blamed for passing their poverty onto their children, and thus the disadvantaged were targeted and seen as in need of moral regulation (Gillies, 2005).

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Conceptions and ideas about how parents (and particularly mothers) should raise children are connected to the historical context within which they exist, and thus changes are seen, yet it can also be seen that versions of contemporary intensive parenting emerged as a discourse in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century.

Intensive parenting now

Analysis of social trends suggests that demographically since the 1950's parents have been seen to delay the onset of parenthood, and more middle-class women are in the workplace than ever (Hunt, 2009). Yet at the same time both mothers and fathers are spending more and more time with their children (Hunt, 2009). Warner's (2006) personal account of mothering in the late 1990's and early twenty-first century America suggests that whilst the media of the '70s and '80s promoted and encouraged working mothers, since the '90's there has been increasing pressure on both parents to be immersed in their children. To the extent, that parenting is increasingly regimented, and parents' experiences are shaped by these discourses. As Zimmerman (2008) highlights working mothers have been blamed for a number of social problems, and the responsibility of parents has increased, with expectation for parents to provide emotional, cognitive, physical and social support from pre-birth through to adulthood. Parents are reminded that they can significantly impact not only their child's current life but their future too, to the extent that measures of socio-economic status have been replaced by parenting factors as the cause of child well-being and educational success (Furedi, 2009; Laureau, 1996). The impact of the legitimisation of intensive parenting means that it is virtually impossible for parents to parent alternatively without being characterised as 'bad' parents (Young, 1981). Parents face blame or feelings of guilt for not protecting their child 'correctly' (Furedi, 1997; Richardson, 1993) yet they also face blame for cooping their children up (Guldberg, 2009).

Legally, parental responsibility was introduced by the 1989 Children's Act and is still defined as "all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent of a child has in relation to the child and his property" (The Children's Act 2004). This Act put the rights and needs of children above their parents to ensure the continuation of child welfare (Ives, 2007). Furthermore, recent examination of legal cases suggests that there has been a shift to emphasise parental accountability rather than authority (Reece, 2009) and New Labour's implicit focus on families was aimed at changing behaviour through the moral regulation of parents, who were expected to manage or govern their children. The accountability of parents for 'at-risk' children is in some part, due to the prominence in the media of child neglect cases, where the accountability of child protection has come to the foreground. Whilst this has meant

that both parents and government agencies are also more accountable, these agencies tend to reinforce parental responsibility.

> Regulating and supporting parental obligations for children have been central objectives within New Labour welfare reforms, with particular constructions of responsible parenting as consisting of obligations for labour market participation and facilitating children's educational, health and social behaviour development (alongside investments in enabling good parenting via expanded public services) (Churchill, 2007).

The changes with this shift imply that the authority of parents is weakened and they become reliant on 'expert discourse' that imply morally responsible parents should seek external advice. Alternatively, as Ferguson (1997) highlights: "social work is now an intrusive, investigative practice focused on policing and 'normalization' of the child rearing practices of minority groups" (p222). More than this though, the green paper *Every Child Matters* (Department for Education, 2006) renews state investment in parenting for all families in which children are seen as 'at risk' or vulnerable to risk (Clements, 2007). .

The concern over children's safety is influenced by societal discourses on risk, in many ways society is seen as a place of heightened risk. This has implications on parents' behaviour and not only should parents avoid risks themselves but they should protect their children from them. The discourse of risk and children has had interesting consequences on the construction of childhood, in one sense there is a heightened need to protect children from the ills of society, yet on the other children at risk are more likely be treated according to an adult standard. As seen in legal cases where children are tried as adults and the behaviour of teenagers is seen as something to fear (Guldberg, 2009). The impact that this has had on parenting is to increase both the accountability but to undermine the confidence that parents have in their own ability to parent.

In terms of accountability, parents are encouraged to monitor children's behaviour particularly in public spaces, but even in the privacy of the home parents are told to be vigilant, and use products like baby monitors when they cannot physically be with their babies (Blackford, 2004). Although I do not argue that maintaining children's safety is not important, children should be allowed to make mistakes. As Mercogliano (2007) writes: "'Helicopter parents' can be found hovering protectively over their offspring, ready to swoop in and rescue them at the first sign of trouble...They pave their way, fight their battles for them, and generally deny them free rein to succeed or fail on their own," (p5). When parents are accountable for every aspect of a child's life, their own sense of personal achievement becomes reliant on their children.

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As indicated above undermining the confidence of parents means that they are increasingly reliant on experts to direct behaviour on how to care for children. Parenting manuals and the media have been influenced by psychological research into emotional attachment (Kanieski, 2007), which enforces a form of parenting that is very time-consuming, involving the recognition and ability to meet children's developmental and emotional needs (Donald and Jureidini, 2004). For example, the influence of developmental psychologists has been used to advocate the importance of breastfeeding for adequate parent-child attachment and this is used by the medical profession to reinforce breastfeeding children (as discussed more below). Hollway (2006a) argues that these:

> Psy-disciplines...contribute authoritative discourses, which constructed their objects- the child, the mother-infant pair, the parental couple, and the family---in ways that worked to normalise certain identities (Hollway, 2006a: 443).

Parental determinism, or the belief that a child is the product of parenting skills shapes this parenting identity and can create conflict for parents as they aim to protect children but also produce autonomous and well-balanced individuals (Furedi, 2008; Webb, 2007).

An industry has grown to direct the behaviour of parents, with a number of market-based experts (as opposed to scientific) who inform parents how to raise their children through the medium of magazines, parenting manuals and programmes such as 'Supernanny' (Anon, 2009). These experts are often ambiguous in their direction, either encouraging routine and discipline or encouraging parents to react on demand to their children. In both cases the assumption is that, your early years impact the rest of your life (Gerhardt, 2004; James, 2002) and so parents are encouraged to be involved and structure all aspects of their babies' development or children's lives, from their education to their social, physical and communicative development. To a situation now where parents are blamed for many of society's ills, from depression in children, failure in school to other long-term psychological problems (Furedi, 2008).

'Good enough plus' parenting is enforced as parents themselves are subject to 'the gaze' of others and compared to the norms of adequate parenting. When parents reprimand their children in public, or when pregnant women drink of coffee or alcohol people are quick to comment either discretely or directly to the parents. These discourses are so evasive because parenting is a deeply personal and emotive issue, most parents care deeply they want to give their children the best chance possible. Thus by comparing themselves to these norms, and

measuring their child's (and their own) progress according to national averages of children's development it is not surprising that parents experience feelings of guilt and anxiety.

As has began to be implied above, whilst an intensive form of parenthood regulated both mothers and fathers behaviour, parenting is still gendered, and discourses on parenting are predominantly focused on the mother (Waylen and Stewart-Brown, 2008; Guendouzi, 2006).

2.1.2. Gendered parenting

Although cultural alternatives have provided parents with a more equitable division of labour parenting is still seen as a gendered practice. Lupton and Barclay (1997) suggest that research into parenting has primarily been directed on the mother, having been inspired by feminism this has focused on how dominant patriarchal ideologies and fathers have been inherent in the continuance of women's social and economic inequality. Rather than a biological deterministic view, or blaming fathers for the positioning of mothers I take the perspective that whilst mothers do have multiple experiences the transition to a mothering identity is clearly structured by expert, medical, legal and popular discourse (Draper, 2000). This discourse has been powerful in conveying that motherhood is a natural part of being a woman (Littunen, 2002; Gillespie, 2001) and pro-family, or conservative discourses emphasise that mothering is "the primary frame by which women communicate and sustain their identity" (Faircloth, 2009: 15). Problematically, when mothering is seen as women's primary social role, mothers are positioned as the primary caregiver, which leads to sexual division within the household (Everingham, 1994) and thus Fox (2001) argues that gendered parental responsibilities have been relatively resistant to change. Additionally little research looks at the construction and experience of both mothers and fathers. As Bulanda (2004) and Lupton and Barclay (1997) suggest in a nuclear family both parents work together and understand their role as a parent, in part, from each other.

2.1.2.1. Mothers as primary caregivers

Mothers report their knowledge on how to care for their child as natural, yet Miller (2007, 2005, 2000), Hays (1996) and Everingham (1994) all suggest that the role of the mother varies culturally, and multiple discourses subject mothers. As Wallbank (1996) argues working mothers, for example, receive mixed and often contradictory messages:

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> On the one hand, legal and social discourses continue to reflect the idea of the traditional nuclear family in which the mother cares and man provides. On the other hand, social and economic factors such as high male unemployment, increased access to paid work by women and the state's increasing emphasis upon the notion that families should be self-reliant all serve to encourage women's participation in work outside the home (p21)

There is therefore not one single construction of a 'good mother', and other discourses give different meanings to mothering such as access to employment (Johnston and Swanson, 2006) and on race and class (Adkins, 2002). Yet despite the development of contraception and legalisation of abortion, giving women increased choice over whether or when they have children (Gillespie, 2003; 2001; 2000), the notion of motherhood as central to feminine identity still resonates, as Douglas and Michael (2004) clarify:

> …the only truly enlightened choice to make as a woman, the one that proves, first, that you are a 'real' woman, and second, that you are a decent, worthy one, is to become a 'mom' (p5).

Not only this but also certain discourses of how-to care for children have become dominant and are normalised so that mothers are compared to this (Miller, 2007; Elvin-Nowak and Thomasson, 2001; Wall, 2001 Wallbank, 1996). Guendouzi (2006) suggests that the dominant contemporary model of motherhood "is a product of both hegemonic institutional discourse and discourse expressed by women" (p902). Mothering then is both a public consideration, represented and governed through expert, media and legal discourses, which normalise and represent versions of parenting for a wider audience, but additionally styles of parenting, are also internalised and reinforced on self and others by mothers themselves (Lee, 2008).

Mothering is increasingly child-centred and risk-adverse; mothers are positioned as individually responsible for child development, yet they are told to seek 'expert advice' to guide them (Lee, 2008). Thus while women may reflect feeling in control over their child-care decision Knaack (2005) suggests that in reality "choice has been constrained, to the point where it has become a directive" (p12). At a time when women are vulnerable and insecure about their behaviour, new mothers behaviour is regulated by health visitors, midwives (Stewart, 2008) and parenting manuals (Knaack, 2005) to the extent where intensive motherhood acts to define mothering as an all-consuming identity requiring sacrifice and confining them to their bodily functions (Ruddick, 1989).

Two areas where discourse has particularly constrained mother's choices are pregnancy, and feeding children. These two areas have been medicalised. Foucault (2000d) suggests that the

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explanation of human conditions by medicine arose in Britain in the 19th century and through which "human existence, human behaviour, and the human body were brought under an increasingly dense and important network of medicalisation that allowed fewer and fewer things to escape" (p135). These behaviours are seen as pathological as Ann Oakley explains:

> in the contemporary industrial world, medical science and allied disciplines, in claiming specialist jurisdiction over all aspects of reproduction, have become the predominant source of social constructs of the culture of childbirth (Oakley, 1993: 20).

Discourses of risk and concern for harm of a baby are used to direct and discipline women's pre-pregnant, pregnant and post-partum bodies. Mothers-to be are given advice over everything from diet, household appliances, alcohol and exercise. For example current governmental advice in the UK suggests that during pregnancy; women should take folic acid, avoid alcohol in the first 3 months in case of miscarriage and should never exercise so that their heart beat goes above 140bpm (directgov, 2009a). Pregnant women should also attend clinics, have regular tests including urine tests and weight measurements. These measurements are then compared to a national average in order to further direct mothers-to be awareness of the health of their child, as Lupton highlights "there is no such thing as 'no-risk' in pregnancy" (1999a: 66). The same can be said for baby feeding; one of the adhering reasons used to justify women's early importance in childcare is the 'necessity' of breastfeeding (Knaak, 2005). Discourses around feeding vary contextually but the current advice indicates that mothers should breastfeed until 6 months for the health of their baby and to secure mother-child attachment (Office for National Statistics, 2007). Unquestioned scientific 'knowledge' over what is best for baby (currently breastfeeding) is used to encourage mothers to feed in that way, while mothers who bottle-feed are seen as taking risks. Thus despite the fact that many women in Britain choose to bottle-feed, Lee (2008) reports that they often felt guilt and pressure to breastfeed. Knaack (2005), Lee (2008) and Faircloth (2009a) indicate that, rather than simply about nutrition, promoting breastfeeding is a reflection of an increasingly child-centred ideology; how mother's feed their baby is a measure of their performance as mothers (and women). Indeed despite in-conclusive 'scientific' evidence that 'proves' that breast is actually best 'good' mothers are expected to organise their behaviour as responsible and breastfeed 'just in case' of the potential risks of not breastfeeding (Wolf, 2011; Murphy, 2000)

In highlighting the medicalisation of mothering, I recognise the feminist debate over the empowering and unique nature of mothering on the one hand and the view that mothering is patriarchal repression on the other (Miller, 2000). This is where Foucault's conception of power can be beneficial, as it recognises the positive and productive nature of power, in this case that

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mothering experiences are empowering and that the 'knowledge' about mothering does positively make mothers aware of the health of their children. Yet it is implicit that there is a need to question how this knowledge has been used to control mothers and make women accountable (Tsing, 1990). Foucault (1981) argues that the knowledge produced in the field of medicine is used to monitor, measure and objectify behaviour, within spaces like the hospital (see also Stewart, 2008; Dykes, 2006). Phoenix and Wollett (1991) suggest that these acts of surveillance act to increasingly regulate mothers to bring up children correctly. Even if pregnant woman or mothers are not constantly observed, it is enough that they feel under the gaze (Foucault, 1979) of the medical profession, child welfare policies, the media, and other parents. Thus, individuals internalise these discourses and work on themselves, regulating their own behaviour or they face being regarded as incompetent mothers (Tsing, 1990).

Popular media forms have become more involved in framing 'good or 'bad' parenting. From parenting books to newspapers, film and television, the media conveys a range of definitions of motherhood. Hadfield et al. (2007) suggests that the printed media have a significant impact in conveying which mothers and what practices are socially acceptable at the time, for example films and television in the 1950's represented the nuclear gendered families. Today, by, embracing and privileging attractive celebrity mothers the media are suggesting that attractiveness is associated with being a good mother. While alternatively portraying primarily negative stories of teen or elderly mothers the media stigmatise these mothers by indicating that they are selfish and irresponsible (Hadfield et al., 2007). The media's panic about the age of mothers and voluntary childlessness (see Gillespie, 2002, 2001, 2000) reflects a societal dependency on women to care, and in comparison to this is the emphasis that 'bad' mothers put themselves first (Hollway, 2006b). This is reflected in the mainstream British print media reaction, and local climbing media to mother and mountaineer Alison Hargreaves' death climbing the mountain K2 (Frohlick, 2006; Rose and Douglas, 1999) and not to the death of father-to be Rob Hall on Everest (Palmer, 2004). If Hargreaves had been successful, she would have been portrayed as a heroine, but because she died and thus risked her own life in order to achieve success, at the 'abandonment' of her children she was portrayed as selfish.

Analysing television programmes, films and adverts also provides a particular version of motherhood, varying contextually. Some research suggests that television programmes represent the traditional 'nuclear' family scenario in a way that normalises our ideas about family (Lynch, 2005; Williams, 2004). Alternatively Burr and Jarvis (2007) analysis of Buffy the Vampire Slayer suggest that television programmes can question and challenge this notion and portray alternative families, in which families make "choices about membership and responsibility"

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(p276). Robinson and Hunter (2008) expand this work through an analysis of magazine adverts in the USA. Although they suggest that adverts do represent the changing nature of the family through addressing unspecified parents, in adverts where a specific parent is addressed traditional gender relations are reinforced. Thus in the media mothers are still pre-dominantly portrayed as the dominant 'care' giver, while fathers were under-represented and more likely to be shown playing and having 'fun' with children. Media discourses are important because they can inform political ministers (Buston, 1995) and public opinion (Golden, 2000).

Politically, Such (2002) highlights that whilst policy has monitored 'bad' childcare in Britain since post-World War Two; parenting has traditionally been seen as a family obligation, with the state, especially the Conservative government of the 1980s and early 1990's reluctant to intervene to provide financial support. Despite this, these discourses of 'familism' represented an urge to maintain and push traditional family values. These policies discursively position women's identities as mothers, because they make it more difficult for women to return to the workplace full-time. In the late the 1990's New Labour government explicitly placed family within social policy, whilst the government advocated support for all families, policies were often conflicting, expressing an underlying concern with choice but also an emphasis on 'non-traditional' nuclear parenting as disruptive or "destabilising (middle-class) family values and identities" (Gillies, 2005: 73, author's emphasis in brackets). The effect of which was even greater regulation of parents to perform 'good' parenting. Gillies argues that the New Labour focus on parenting rather than mothering disguised the gendered nature of care. Whilst policies sought to support and push women into the workplace, women's wages remain lower, and whilst New Labour showed a significant policy shift in their focus on childcare, there remains a lack of affordable and accessible childcare and thus there has been less support for mothers returning to full time work. Under New Labour, policies suggest that good parenting was increasingly positioned as a distinctly moral activity, normalising the middle-class and positioning parents who do not adopt these moral code as 'other' or 'bad mothers' (Rose, 1999).

This moral gendered code is somewhat restrictive, it acts to perform "a regulatory operation of power that naturalises the hegemonic instance" (Butler, 2004: 43) that is imposed on mothers, and which they then regulate their own behaviour by. As May (2008) found the mothers whose stories she analysed draw on public discourses on motherhood in order to present themselves as good mothers and that in "western society being a good mother is particularly important for a successful moral presentation of self" (2008:479). Mothers therefore seem to be influenced strongly by discourses that suggest a good mother should be sensitive, approachable and secondary to children's needs (Waylen and Stewart-Brown, 2008).

This is because, as mentioned above, it is not just institutions such as the government, the workplace and the media but also mothers themselves that suggest and reinforce intensive mothering. Blackford's (2004) ethnographic research on mothers behaviour in children's playgrounds suggests that mothers observe, measure and govern the behaviour of other mothers yet not of fathers: "by sharing their experiential knowledge the mothers reveal that they self-monitor their own abilities at mothering" (p238). Guendouzi (2006) suggests that working mothers express guilt when leaving their child on the return to work, and that this guilt is due to the comparison with other, particularly non-working, full-time mothers. Littunen (2002) and Hays (1996) research also argues that some mother's expressed that they were naturally and morally better carers and for their children, than their partner, by emphasising the natural attachment, that they have with their child and the emotional support that they provide. Thus at the same time there is some evidence that mothers deter or encourage, albeit unintentionally, the involvement of fathers by acting as gatekeepers (Gaunt, 2008). This reinforces the idea that women incorporate the resonating association of motherhood as central to adult 'feminine' identity (Richardson, 1993: 7).

McMahon (1995) suggests that when women become mothers, through everyday caring for children they come to identify with discourses of what mothers (and women) should do, as Butler would highlight "we do not choose our gendered identity; our gender gets produced as we repeat ourselves" (Youngblood Jackson, 2004: 680). Thus, Youngblood Jackson suggests that identities are produced in "relationships with others and in everyday practices" (p673), in this case by relationships with other mothers and fathers. Research into the relational aspect of gendered parenting indicates that the gendered division of labour increases once couples become parents (Fox, 2001). Gendered divisions of parental labour are so deeply rooted by institutions such as the family and education that in practice, and even with mothers participation in the work force, women still do considerably more childcare than fathers do (Mattingley and Sayer, 2006; Gornick and Meyers, 2003). These regulatory discourses shape and form women as mothers (and carers), and are binary opposites to discourses that shape fathers as providers

2.1.2.2. Fathers as providers

> The lived reality of a traditional ideal...seems to persist in the Western world: the father supports wife and children (Gisler, Steinert-Borella and Wiedmaer, 2009:20).

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Currently Nentwich (2008) argues that in families where fathers and mothers display traditional masculinities and femininities, women may feel guilt and "work…has to be accounted for" (p215). Whereas it is acceptable for fathers to work full time and not have, the same requirements placed on them for caring for the child. The construction and deconstruction of the discourses of fathering have been relatively under-researched until recently (see Graham, 2007; Lupton and Barclay, 1997). This analysis highlights that the concept of 'new' fatherhood is not new but instead originated pre-19th century, yet in the 19th century discourses emerged that helped define and establish the knowledge of father as provider. Despite the variety of roles that fathers have demonstrated it is the 'father as worker' discourse that has dominated in Britain.

Weisner-Hanks (2001) implies that it was in 18th and 19th century Europe that one can first see an increased emphasis on mothers role in parenting. This period was known as the cult of womanhood or domesticity, in which middle-class mothers were seen as central to running the household and bringing up children (Hays, 1996; Matus, 1995). This was in part the result of industrialisation. Urbanisation and industrialisation of what was previously domestic 'paid' work lead to a division between the home (private) and work (public) and consequently a distinction between male and female roles. This meant that it became seen as increasingly 'inappropriate' and thus more difficult, for married women to work, which altered gendered family relations (D'Cruze, 2004). A father's place was in the workforce, where discourses and techniques of surveillance in institutions such as schools and the factory produced "men as docile and productive bodies" (Simons, 1996:181) who were increasingly viewed as providing financially for children (Pleck, 2004; Palkovitz, 2002).

Since industrialisation, fathers have traditionally been conceived as economic providers and this is somewhat unquestioned today. Dominant discourses and many institutions still objectify and reinforce fathers as workers, despite the portrayal of the absent (working) father in a rather negative light.

Expert discourses on fathering are not as vast as the work on mothering, yet we can see that psychological and sociological research and legal discourse create and to some extent reinforce dominant discourses of the traditional father (Dienhart, 1998). Lupton and Barclay (1997) observe that psychological research in the 80s and 90s associated fathers lack of involvement with individual measures such as sex role or personality, for example, they highlighted that men who were more masculine were less interested in fathering. The functional perspective of the 1950's reinforces a masculinity associated with the work-force, which depicts fathers as

necessarily providing for children, this discourse has dominated into the early 1990's (Dienhart, 1998) supporting a capitalist value of production (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). Furthermore, the traditional father, conveying dominant discourses around masculinity have been pathologised as "distant, strict, harsh, and authoritarian" (Christiansen and Palkovitz, 2001:88).

Early feminist research has been critical of the male involvement in parenting because as Connell (2005) suggests many feminists saw the men's liberation movement "as a way for men to extract the benefits of feminism without giving up their basic privileges, a modernization of patriarchy" (p41). Early feminist perspectives on fatherhood seemed to either polarise fatherhood as opposite to motherhood or suggest that there was no difference between men and women. The former acted to exclude fathers, implying that women do not need fathers to raise children (see Ribbens, 1994) undervaluing their potential involvement. Whilst the latter highlights how despite both partners working, mothers have taken on much of the childcare and housework (Coltrane and Adams, 2001) suggesting that despite increasing gender equality in institutions such as education and the workplace, parenting remains gendered (Coltrane, 2004). Feminist and pro-feminist research into masculinity has moved on to destabilise assumed 'natural' roles and to consider the underlying and invisible power relations that structure parental work (Matta and Knudson-Marton, 2006). Literature inspired by Connell's (2005) work on masculinity sought to understand fatherhood as a masculinity issue, through a framework of gender relations and the concept of hegemonic masculinity, researchers were able to conceive of fatherhood as diverse yet simultaneously understand that a "version of masculinity occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations" (Connell, 2005: 76). Thus from this perspective the 'father as provider' discourse reinforces associations of masculinity with paid employment (Morgan, 2002) and is suggested to be a position used by men to reinstate their superiority, or re-produce hegemonic masculinity. Problematically this approach often oversimplifies fathering and can serve to re-establish the 'male breadwinner' role and the hierarchy between men and women as a somewhat natural position, and therefore typologise fathers in ways, which are then translated into authoritative expert opinion about what constitutes a bad father.

Legal discourses have been central in maintaining fathers' position in the workplace. In 1991, the then Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher implemented the Child Support Act, which stated that fatherhood was determined by DNA, and that any biological fathers were financially responsible for their biological children. Although fathers had to support their children, they were not given parental rights, instead it was still marriage or the relationship with the mother that determined this (Ivans, 2007). Thus this law reinforced the traditional nuclear family and it

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"instilled and perpetuated the notion that a father's responsibilities towards his children are met if he provides for them financially" (Ivans, 2007: 15). Even the recent Henshaw report on child support (Department for Work and Pensions, 2006) implied that financial maintenance is the moral responsibility of the father. Britain has been decades behind other European nations in legally implementing paternal leave, and currently still offers less time than elsewhere in Europe (Burgess, 1997).

The media also reinforce discourses around fatherhood, and provide fathers with important information on childcare (Hinckley, Ferriara and Maree, 2007). Lupton and Barclay's (1997) analysis of popular television programmes demonstrate how in different eras and mediums different discourses of fathers dominate. From the professional, loving, yet disciplinarian Bill Cosby in the 1980s *The Cosby show* to the single and unsure fathers in British soaps of the 1990s. Wallbank (1996) argues that in comparison to expert discourse, the media have challenged notions of traditional absent men, yet this is often done in a way that mocks fathers and questions their ability to raise children. Advertisements have been slightly more traditional in their approach; Coltrane and Allan (1994) concluded that adverts in the US portray men as providing for their children. It seems that "popular representations of fatherhood, therefore, are equally prescriptive (to academic discourses) in their portrayal of the 'good' and the 'bad' father" (Lupton and Barclay, 1997:91).

Riley (2003) suggests that whilst there are a plethora of ways in which men can father, notions of men's work identity as confirmation of masculine identity dominate, and therefore men are judged and seen as masculine when they provide for children. Discourses around providing are so dominant that they are internalised by men, and non-breadwinning males are seen as abnormal and understood by men as lacking masculine identity (Riley, 2003). Draper (2000) and Walker and McGraw (2000) suggest that because of men's access to financial resources alternative discourses of a more involved father has not been seen within empirical evidence; despite increased female employment and male unemployment the stay at home father is still the minority case. Gillies (2005) supports the notion that few fathers in the UK reduce their work hours once becoming fathers, and highlights that even when fathers do spend more time with their children this rarely challenges traditional gender relations (Anon, 2009). Undeniably as child welfare, research suggests providing financially for a child is vital for children's well being (Christiansen and Palkovitz, 2001). Yet the problem arises when providing is equated with male success and status and seen as more important than caring for children.

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Lupton and Barclay (1997) remind us that maternal thinking is not natural but due to the time spent interacting with children, and therefore that this kind of 'mothering' need not necessarily be done by a women (p133). They found that fathers who invested time and energy into childcare developed an understanding of their children's needs.

2.2. Alternative Discourses

As I emphasised above what we know about parenthood has "evolved through disruptions...not a truth reflecting 'real' (parenting) knowledge created in logical scientific succession" (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 54-55, author's addition). Instead, there are many different ways of parenting and parents are subject to other discourses on how to parent. The above discourses although currently seen as dominant do not solely construct a fixed parenting identity, the other side of the half-told story of middle-class parenting is a consideration of alternative constructions of parenting and mothers and fathers. Using a post-structural framework allows one to recognise the multiple discourses and experiences of parenting, and how gender can be both done and un-done or troubled (Butler, 1990; 1993; 2004).

Contemporary discourses suggest that with increased academic and media focus on fathers' involvement in childrearing there has been a shift from mothering to shared parenting (Phoenix and Woollett, 1991). Increasingly mothers are seen to balance work and caring for children, while fathers are more involved in childcare (Nentwich, 2008). Nentwitch goes on to suggest that alternative parenting helps to trouble the idea of fixed identities and the notion of gender identities as binary. However as I shall suggest discourses of involved fathering could still serve to reinforce intensive parenting.

2.2.1. Mothers in paid work

Whilst Brannen and Nilsen (2006) highlight that, rarely has the dominant discursive position of the father breadwinner/mother carer binary been accomplished except in some middle-class families, post-World War Two and the impact of the feminist movement in the 1970s led to increased opportunities for mothers to maintain alternative identities, and more women are involved in work than ever before. As Graham (2007) suggests the discourses that encourage mothers to work have been perhaps one of the biggest social changes to impact parental identities. Hinting at a post-modern world where combining motherhood and work is no longer problematic discourses of maternal employment are important to consider in the construction of mothering today, because middle-class mothers are often involved in some form of paid work.

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Nevertheless, these competing discursive remain problematic for middle-class mothers and Kaplan (1990) recognises that from the late 1980's there has been 'new' representations or a reinforcement of pro-nuclear family discourse.

The emergence of second-wave feminism in the seventies and the growing number of working mothers had significant impacts on sociological research into parenting (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). Feminism and parenting have had a somewhat tempestuous relationship, with women promoting and striving for space in the work place, motherhood and family were seen as the antithesis of freedom for women, and indeed motherhood was seen as somewhat oppressive (Ribbens, 1994). Therefore, the feminist movement and feminist research have been influential in challenging the association of a fixed woman's identity being solely fulfilled by motherhood.

In the 1970s and 1980s women, rebelling against their own mothers experience, wrote memoirs that encouraged mothers to break away or to challenge the normative intensive version of mothering (see Lazarre 1976; Pleck, 1971). Work outside the home, or maintaining time and space outside the home and away from childcare was seen as empowering for mothers (Warner, 2005). Therefore, second-wave feminists fought for equal pay and working rights for women. The legal and social changes brought about by this movement did lead to the reduction in gender discrimination within businesses, and women were able to access and enjoy fulfilling careers. From this perspective, women who stop working in order to mother full time are seen as reinforcing gender inequality (Hirschman, 2005). Yet feminists also see that the emphasis on paid work has brought about the double shift, mothers are now expected to earn money to support the family but also come home and take care of the children (Hochschild, 1989).

Social-psychological discourses, following on from work on maternal deprivation research continued to assess the impact of female employment on the development of children (Gottfried et al., 1994). From which it was suggested that maternal employment was only one of many factors that impacted child development and thus could not be termed as sufficiently detrimental. Instead following on from second-wave feminism it was implied that working mothers may in fact be 'better' mothers because they had higher self esteem, were more likely to feel satisfied with their family life and were more sensitive to children's needs (Such, 2002). These discourses have largely influenced the acceptance of dual-working parents and the belief that both parents should contribute to household finances, although there still seems to be some discomfort towards full-time mothers (Dean, 2001).

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Johnson and Swanson (2003) suggest that the media's promotion of working women is somewhat contradictory. On one hand there is the promotion of working women who are shown and encouraged to prolong having children, to the negative portrayal of poor non-working mothers who rely on state-benefits. Yet on the other hand, there is the positive coverage of footballers' wives, and of middle-class 'yummy mummies' who appear not to work. Thus it seems that it is morally advisable for 'poor' mothers to work, but less acceptable of middle-class mothers, who should morally adhere to notions of intensive mothering (Hays, 1996). Whilst Johnston and Swanson's (2003a, 2003b) review of women's magazines in 1998 and 1999 demonstrates that the popular media do represent mothers as capable of achieving identities outside of mothering, they suggest that the media maintain the binary between working and caring. As Kaplan (1990) adds:

> It is true that dominant media are not monolithic (i.e., many different, contradictory discourses may be seen at work at the same time) and the sheer enormity of the production increasingly guarantees gaps and spaces for some alternate discourses. Nevertheless, unconscious cultural constraints still function to prevent expression of certain kinds of images. (p410-411).

Indeed Kaplan argues that whilst second wave feminist discourses were more implicit in the media of the 1970s and early 1980s, whilst these are still present in popular film of the late 1980's to early 1990's, they are muted by renewed discourses of the sentimental mother, the biological child and the nuclear family.

Policies are central in helping women become parents but also maintain employment. Some European countries have re-constituted their welfare system to encourage women to be reliant on the "labour market rather than (or as well as) on their partners or the state to provide for their needs, their children's needs, their future pensions, and so on" (Williams, 2004:27). To deal with the so-called care-deficit that this produces countries have had different approaches to ensuring adequate provision for children (from cash benefits for carers to promoting shared childcare). The New Labour form of governance from the late 1990s has focussed on resolving conflict between family life and employment, intending to help parents balance work and home (Such, 2002). Rather than necessarily promoting gender equality Gillies (2005) suggests that these policies have encouraged both parents to work, so mothers are encouraged to both care for children and earn a wage. Furthermore Such (2002) argues that despite increasing state provision the approach of the government has actually further reinforced the financial independence of the family institution from the state.

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Supporting Families (Home office, 1998), for example, aimed to increase the number of mothers in the workforce, because paid employment is seen to contribute to the stability of the family and thus mothers (and especially lone mothers) are morally inclined to seek employment. Mothers who work have been further supported by the *Work and Families Act* (2006), which resulted in changes to maternity leave, such as extending paid and unpaid leave. However this was only for mothers and whilst in the short-term maternity leave is said to be beneficial, in the long term extended leave can decrease their wages and career progression relative to men (De Henau, Meulders and O'Dorchai, 2010). De Heneu et al. go on to suggest that "the better childcare policies (high availability, accessibility, and quality, low cost, etc.) are, the less women will adjust their time preferences in favour of home time when children enter the picture" (De Henau, Meulders, and O'Dorchai 2006: 3).

State-provided childcare has previously been neglected by the UK, where the emphasis has been that family and childcare is a private concern, and that businesses should (but are not necessarily supported in doing so) provide access, support and flexible working conditions for mothers, however in the last ten years there has been significant state funding toward childcare. *The National Childcare Strategy* (Home Office, 1998) aimed to provide good and affordable child-care in every neighbourhood, by making money available to provide after school care, free nursery places for three and four year olds. The strategy has also created Childcare Tax Credits, more commonly known as Working Tax Credits to assist low-mid income parents by paying for private or voluntary child-care. This policy was "geared towards enabling parents and especially women, to reconcile work with family life," (Letablier, 2005: 48) with more options for childcare mothers have increased flexibility over their working hours. However these initiatives do not always have parents best interests at heart, they have tended to be directed by an ethic of work i.e. at promoting all mothers to work, rather than by an ethic of care, and so are used to control lone mothers (Brannen and Moss, 2003). Furthermore, Child Tax Credits are only accessible when both parents work sixteen hours a week, and in order to be able to afford to pay for childcare parents often have to work longer, as these don't cover the costs of formal childcare. New Labour's policies have promoted mothers employment yet because the majority of women still don't earn enough to be independent they are not gender equitable, furthermore they are somewhat contradictory when policy has also enforced family responsibility as primary (Gillies, 2005).

It is for the establishment of a career that many women prolong having children in the first place (Such, 2002). Furthermore as Bailey (2000) suggests for some women "their working identity offered a sense of continuity" (p68) through the transition to motherhood. Offering mothers

alternative discourses to that of primary caregiver can be empowering for mothers, what is desirable though is that maintaining both subjectivities is not seen as problematic. Whilst there is a blurring between dominant (caring) and alternative (working) discourses within the popular and political discourses, there remain tensions between mothers working and caring, just as will be described in chapter four there are tensions between subjectivities of motherhood and climbing. Thus as Hays (1996) argues the choices offered to mothers are either full-time caring or employed mothers who also provide the equivalent level of care as full-time carers do.

2.2.2. Involved fathers

The concept of the involved father is not new, Tosh's (2005) analysis of masculinity in nineteenth century Britain argues that a discourse of an active and involved fatherhood was relatively dominant among middle-class men in pre-Victorian Britain. Although this was by no means the only representation of fathers at this time, there is significant evidence that implies fathers took an active role in childcare in the eighteenth to early nineteenth century (Pleck, 1987). In particular, discourses of the 'good' father included teaching children moral and religious values and providing entertainment for young children (Williams, 2008; 2004b; Tosh, 2005; Pleck, 2004). This discourse on fatherhood was shaped by the cultural notion of childhood, because childhood was perceived as sinful, it was a time for discipline: reinforcing religious values and training children for work (Hays, 1996). Thus, men as 'exemplars of morality and reason' should discipline children in order to counteract the possible consequences of emotional and affectionate mothering (Pleck, 2004; Hays, 1996).

Additionally Griswold (1993) argues that some human science research in the early twentieth century began to conceptualise middle-class fathers as a fulfilling and empowering experience and suggesting that these fathers began to take more interest in learning about fathering. However, discourses characterised fathers as socialising agents, or as essential for the provision of an appropriate gender-role for children. This was influenced by Freudian psychology and there was a concern that boys with little interaction with men may become homosexual (Pleck, 2004).

In the 1960s and 1970s, Lupton and Barclay (1997) highlight a surge in social science research, with knowledge from disciplines such as sociology and psychology being implemented into all levels of society and the increased surveillance and measurement of individuals in all social settings (p36). Subsequently discourses on fathering became more intensive (Hollway, 2006; Devlin, 1995; Richardson, 1993). Psychologists began to develop research onto the impact of

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fathers on child development and personality, suggesting that fathers were more involved and that this was the origins of 'new fatherhood.' The emphasis was still on difference with research suggesting that father-child interactions are more playful, while mother-child interactions are care-related and affectionate (Lamb, 2004; Lamb et al., 197). This research thus "supports traditional gender roles...(which) serves to present a fixed notion of masculinity and femininity" (Lupton and Barclay, 1997:45).

In recent years there has been the widespread belief reflected both in expert and legal discourse, as well as in popular images of fathers of a conceptual shift, suggesting that:

> British culture has manifestly witnessed a turn toward a new construction of the 'good father'. New fathers are routinely encouraged, for example, to improve 'bonding' with their children by attending classes that show them how to play with their children or how to read to them. Recently fatherhood has become politicised as some claim better 'work-life balance' policies are needed to make sure father can be more involved with parenting. Dads should spend more time at home with their children and less at work. (Faircloth, 2009b)

The discourse of the moral, involved or intimate father is not the 'new' binary opposite to father as provider but it can positively challenge the traditional gender binary between men and women, as it promotes shared parenting and allows men to develop a fathering identity (Johansson and Klinth, 2000). Yet it also means that fathers, like mothers experience increased regulation over how they parent with discourses emphasising the types of behaviours that fathers should adhere to.

Psychological research has tended to reinforce a rather restrictive view of fathering that has been implicit in defining and normalising involved fathering. Where earlier research focussed on "mens maladaptation to fatherhood, for example their psychiatric morbiditiy or their negative influence for family functioning" (Draper, 2000: 36) recent research has been more complementary of the role of fathers. Nevertheless, a psychological perspective still focuses on what fathers are, rather than what they do. This is then used as evidence about what comprises a good or bad father (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). It is no longer enough for men to be "rational, goal-means orientated, career orientated, and disciplined" (Johansson and Klinth, 2008: 58). Instead good fathers are engaged, available and responsible (Lamb et al. 1987). They should provide financial support, emotional support for the mother before, during and after childbirth, be actively involved in childcare and helping with housework. Through emotional involvement with children and partners, it is suggested that fathers are able to develop and display a nurturing role (Lamb, 2004).

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Popular media discourses also represent and reinforce images of fatherhood. The media have been quick to symbolise 'new fathers and diverse families, with written and visual media, 'othering' absent fathers and privileging the emotional relationship between fathers and their children. Draper's (2000) analysis of newspapers and television programmes highlights the portrayal of fathers as taking part and spending time with both sons and daughters, not just practically but in their emotional lives as well. Magazine adverts depict nurturing fathers are becoming more popular; for example perfume, or moisturiser adverts feature images of fathers with children. Films and television programmes since the 1990s (see *Three men and a baby* and *The Simpsons*) have shown fathers either as primarily responsible or as taking an active role and spending time with children. Newspaper and magazine reports on celebrity dads, using articles and images of David Beckham and Jamie Oliver talking about or pictured with their children to reinforce discourses of family orientated men (Ley, 2009). The media can be an important way of challenging traditional discourses and representing a variety of masculinities and femininities because they help shape children's perceptions and parent's actions (Kaufmann, 1999).

The importance of portraying a public fatherhood in politics is epitomised by the coverage of Gordon Brown leaving Downing Street, when newspapers like *The Daily Mail* (anon, 2010) and *The Telegraph* (Kirkup, 2010) capitalised on his relationship with his wife and children. In his final speech as prime minister Brown himself reinforced the importance of his family with the words "and as I leave the second most important job I could ever hold, I cherish even more the first as a husband and father" (Gripton, 2010). Public fathering can be understood using the panopticon, fathers are encouraged to perform fathering publically under surveillance, showing wider social audiences that spending time being with children is seen as good fathering (Macavarish, in Faircloth, 2009b). This contributes to an image of fatherhood as not necessarily caring for in the private, but being with, in the public sphere.

Legal and political discourse in the UK has been rather slow to reflect family diversity, yet with the increased importance of children and child welfare and the growing number of dual-working families Featherstone (2009) indicates that legal discourse has attempted to consider how fathers can be encouraged to take an active role in parenting. Indeed New Labour pushed to make fathers more accountable emotionally, and both parents are now positioned as important for children's well-being, reflected in the gender-neutral wording of family policies, which no longer refer singularly to mothers but to parents. The 1998 white paper *Fairness at work* (Department for Trade and Industry, 1998) and the statute *Work and Families Act (WFA)* (2006) laid out recommendations to help both mothers and fathers to combine work with time for

families by re-assessing maternity and paternity leave, supporting childcare options and making work more flexible. The result of these recommendations is that since 2003 fathers have been granted paid paternity leave for two weeks and up to 13 weeks unpaid parental leave before their child is five. However, the UK still lags behind other EU countries. Whilst law recognises diverse family forms it also attempts to re-instate the responsibility of 'natural' or biological fathers, and both the financial and emotional role of fathers has become politically central (Collier and Sheldon, 2008). Within New Labour's policies, the emphasis is on choice over legislation thus fathers are morally inclined to engage with children when unpaid leave is financially unaffordable, and workplaces are unlikely to encourage fathers to make the most of flexible working conditions (Featherstone, 2009). Furthermore, these policies have been criticised for privileging the spending time, the reading to or the emotional connection of fathers with children and not on increasing men's practical care-work with children and around the house (Featherstone, 2009).

Dermott (2008) suggests that the emphasis on discourses of new fatherhood can, in some part, be explained by feminism, which has criticised the dominance of fathers as providers. This is because conforming to traditional performances of gender is seen as limiting fathers' involvement in parenting, which in turn upsets the gender balance of caring (Nentwich, 2008; Waylen and Stewart-Brown, 2008). Building on this pro-feminist discourse has stressed the link between fatherhood and masculinity (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). The involved father is said to imply "changes...in masculinities" because caring and displaying emotional attachment have traditionally been seen as the "antithesis of masculinity" (Brannen and Nilson, 2006: 349). Men are able to enjoy parenting, yet at the same time not be seen as un-manly (Vuori, 2009). If fathering is associated with caring then these discourses have been used to encourage men to be in touch with their emotional side so that they can achieve the status of a good father (Dermott, 2008).

Yet Henwood and Proctor (2003) highlight this may not lead to gender equality. Discourses around the caring father allow men to experience fathering in a positive way yet at the same time their "gender privilege allow him the resources to negotiate himself out of the majority of labour and give him the free time and mobility needed to acquire publically accorded status and recognition" (p340). Discourse has served to position caring fathers as 'good' fathers yet researchers seem unconvinced that this position 'undoes gender.' Furthermore, it seems that the discourse of the caring father pushes fathers to parent intensively.

2.2.3. Shared but still intensive parenting?

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Butler (1990) suggests that gendered identities are constructed or performed, yet at the same time she highlights the materiality of the body, identifying that "social structures such as gender, sexuality, race, class and disability frame our existence" (Dilley, 2007:7) and subjects then perform gendered acts (Shugart, 2001). Thus gender is in some way re-enacted by men and women but it can also change, or the categories of masculine and feminine can be de-constructed (Butler, 2004). Discourses about shared parenting can contribute to more equitable gender relations between parents as they construct their identities in relation to each other. Nentwich (2007) highlights that in dual-working parent families, the couple work together to balance work and bringing up their children. In these scenarios both the mother and father have the opportunity to provide and care equally "blurring the gender lines" (Nentwich, 2007: 222) and can also allow both mothers and fathers to develop a self-identity outside their parenting role.

Relations between parents may be more gender equitable, however discourses around new men are connected to discourses around childhood and risk, subjecting fathers to become more active in their children's lives which may strengthen the notions of intensive parenting. Furthermore, as Quirke (2006) argues with both parents working and with the intensification and regulation of childcare both mothers and fathers over-compensate by spending more time with their children. Fathers too are now expected to regulate their parenting through 'expert' guidance, as shown in New Labour's desire for fathers (and particularly) non-working and teenage fathers to attend parenting classes (Faircloth, 2009). Therefore, Hays (1996) argues that intensive fathering is not a solution to the family/work binary and "if men and women shared the burden of the contradiction, the larger social paradox would continue to haunt both of them," (Faircloth, 2009b).

Contemporary mothers and fathers find themselves in a difficult position having to negotiate multiple discourses upon them; implying the level of responsibility and the kind of care that they should provide (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). Recognition and privileging of certain behaviours means that these behaviours can become normalised (Henwood and Proctor, 2003). Mothers and fathers are observed, measured and compared to external discourses of 'good' parenting.

Perhaps the best way to move beyond gendered and intensive parenting is for parents to create alternative models to that of 'the ethic of care' or the 'intensive' model of parenting. As Hays (1996) suggests: "to overcome such problems entirely would require overcoming...the tensions

in modern society highlighted by the persistence of the ideology of intensive mothering" (p178). Peters (1997) highlights that because the notion of a fixed mothering identity is so pervasive it is mothers who have to first challenge and act to reinvent the idea of intensive parenting. Teenage, single, older or homosexual, black or Asian mothers or women that choose not to have children are positioned as 'other' and so objectified as discursively outside of what is seen as 'good' motherhood (Johnston and Swanston, 2003a). Yet detailed and extensive research into these groups can potentially trouble this rather fixed mother identity, and highlight that possible cultural alternatives to 'good' mothering do exist.

There is limited research considering the traditional scenario (heterosexual couples) that highlights alternatives to intensive *and* gendered parenting. However, there is the potential for dual-working families, couples that delay parenting and couples that are involved in leisure or sporting activities to offer a potential challenge to a child-centred model of parenting.

2.2.4. The heterosexual family

Whilst it is not a specific focus of the research I feel that, given the research focus on heterosexual couples, I should at this point comment on heterosexuality in relation to couples and the family. Feminist theories have approached heterosexuality as a socially constructed institution, a practice and an embodied experience that works "to maintain the stability of gender, heterosexuality of desire and the naturalisation of family" (Butler 1998 cited in Evans, 2003: 17). Much of the empirical work into sexuality has focused on homosexuality, however, over the last ten years (see Meah et al, 2008; Hockey et al, 2007; Jackson, 2006; Robinson et al, 2004) there has been a number of feminist studies focussing on what it means to be heterosexual.

The notion of heterosexuality is important to consider in research into couples because as Foucault notes in the 19th century heterosexuality and the home were linked, and whilst heterosexual institutions are unstable and have changed, the dominant discourse of heterosexuality continues to legitimise heterosexual married parents as the normative 'real family' (Hockey et al, 2002). Furthermore, Hockey et al (2007) show how notions of heterosexuality are generational, and through family life, in family spaces children learn how to perform (or can indeed resist) heterosexual identities. Political discourse has reinforced this notion, linking societal problems to marital breakdown, and calling for a return to traditional family values (Hockey et al, 2002). Robinson et al (2004) suggest that the institution of heterosexuality channels women (and arguably men) into marriage and parenthood (p418).

Recent feminist studies, however, recognise that what these "notions mean in practice are open to interpretation" (Hockey et al, 2002: para 6.2) and thus there is a need to look at the way that men and women, mothers and fathers reproduce and negotiate heterosexuality in spaces like the home or the crag in their everyday lives (Robinson et al, 2004; Thompson, 1999). Additionally influenced by post-structural theory there is recognition of the need to speak in terms of heterosexualities, identifying that other identities (class, gender, work, sport age etc) intersect and influence the understanding and experience of heterosexuality.

Whilst perhaps not explicitly discussed, these notions are important in this thesis considering how men and women negotiate norms of heterosexual life; including their maintenance of paid employment and leisured identities (Jackson, 2011, Thompson, 1999).

2.3. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have shown that contemporary ideas about intensive and gendered parenting are not natural; instead, I have shown that they are historical and contextual, and what is known about parenthood is constructed through these discourses, which have indications on appropriate parental identities. Whilst fluid and alternative parenting practices are considered, contemporary parenting discourses also seem to maintain certain binary positions i.e. the caring mothers/traditional father. Furthermore, the dominant model of parenting, intensive parenting has acted to morally regulate and control both mothers and fathers to put their children above themselves. Whilst there is some implication that parenting is positioned as more gender equitable, and fathers and mothers are offered a number of identities, parenting does remain gendered, mothers have to parent, whilst to some extent fathers can pick and choose. In the next chapter I move away from parenting, but use a similar approach as the one I have here to examine the 'knowledge' that has constructed climbing identities.

Chapter Three: Deconstructing a climbing identity

In this chapter, I intend to trace, as Erickson (2005) suggests, a discursive reading of the local climbing community, albeit in this case at a national level of climbing in the UK. Within the sociology of sport climbing has been conceptualised as an alternative, extreme, lifestyle or adventure sports (Ormrod and Wheaton, 2009; McNamee, 2007; Wheaton, 2004; Rinehart and Sydnor, 2003) where the debate has been over the subcultural[1] nature of these sports. This research has questioned whether these activities offer some resistance to what we know and recognise as the dominant way of performing sport (see Coates et al., 2010; Atkinson and Young, 2008; Wheaton, 2007 for a summary of these arguments). The approach I take here is informed by the post-subcultural work because contemporary subcultural identities are not rigid or stable but fluid with "shifting cultural attachments" (Wheaton, 2007:290). At the same time, I also recognise that certain forms or ways of understanding climbing remain dominant and give a sense of collective community, which indicate we are not free to pick and choose our identities (Wheaton, 2007). Atkinson and Wilson (2002) suggest that using Foucault's methods can bring new light on subcultures, to see how climbing can be both "enabling" and "constraining" (386).

In this chapter I continue on from the previous one, interested in using Foucault's (1982) concept of discourse and disciplinary power to examine historically how climbing discourses have produced what we know about climbing, and that these practices have disciplined and normalised climbing (and gendered) bodies. As Markula and Pringle (2006) argue:

> A sporting identity, therefore, is not a discourse, but is created within discourses that shape sport, sporting practices and sporting bodies. In addition, no sporting identity can be assigned as 'resistant' or 'dominant' but should be understood as formed within a complex set of discourses in a particular historical and cultural context. (p216).

This is not necessarily repressive and can be positive because:

> Mastery, the consciousness of one's own body, becomes positive *only* through the invasion of the body by power: gymnastics, physical exercise, muscular development (Foucault, 1978: 28, emphasis in original).

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As Markula (2006) suggests it is not that the activities themselves are oppressive or liberating but instead it is how bodies are defined within these distinct cultures "and how these definitions are used in relations of power to dominate" (p 30). Through looking at discourse, one can see how normative climbing identities are produced yet at the same time because discourses are historically and culturally contingent they are subject to change.

3.1. Climbing ethics (rules?)

Climbing as an everyday activity is free from codified rules and regulations, and climbers in public emphasise a lack of competition or rules within their activity, instead climbers are required to adhere to a code of ethics (Donnelly and Young, 1999, 1988). Donnelly (2003) indicates that ethics are:

> based on the premise that given enough time and enough resources (human, financial, technical) anything can be climbed. Therefore, some guidelines are needed to give a mountain or cliff a sporting chance – ethics introduce an element of uncertainty to the outcome because, in order for sport to exist, the chance of failure must also exist, (p295).

The impact of these ethics, is that despite being created by climbers and thus viable to change they have become strict codes that regulate behaviour to maintain climbing's exclusivity and authenticity (Kiewa, 2002). In other-words, these ethics are rules or discourses "that systematically form the objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1972: 49).

Ethics differentiate climbing form and style by indicating the acceptable behaviour (amount of equipment used etc) within a particular form of climbing in order to balance the amount of risk with difficulty. For example because mountaineering is very dangerous an unlimited amount of equipment is needed, whilst bouldering is seen as relatively low-risk and so less equipment is used but problems have a higher degree of difficulty. These ethics then dictate acceptable practices in climbing in terms of the type of climbing, the style of ascent and the amount of risk taken.

3.1.1. Climbing historically

Erickson (2005) sees that "style is a set benchmark with which to evaluate climbing…It is not about the diversity of ways of climbing, but rather it is a statement about which type of climbing is best" (p374). I am suggesting that subcultural privileging of a style does not just value a way

of climbing but serves to normalise this practice upon climbers. As Erickson argues, style differentiates groups and dictates to others the way in which a climb should be done. The dominant British climbing style is traditional climbing (Lewis, 2001, 2000; Donnelly, 2003; Heywood, 1994), which has been supported by condemning other styles of climbing and privileging those who use this style. I look historically at the development of climbing style, focussing initially on how traditional climbing style and its dominance has come about and become normalised within the UK. I will then look at the integration and acceptance of sport climbing, suggesting that today whilst traditional climbing is the norm, that there are various alternative forms of rock climbing, these discourses subject climbers, disciplining bodies to specific regimes (Sparkes, 2004).

Rock climbing as an activity of pleasure was originally considered as a part of mountaineering, when rocks in the Lake District, Scotland and Wales were used by the professional-middle-class mountaineers as a leisure activity to practice and to fine-tune alpine skills in the late nineteenth century (Crook, 2003: 8). The birth of rock climbing has been popularly accredited to Walter Parry Haskett-Smith's climb of the *Napes Needle* in the Lake District in 1886 (Crook, 2003; Lewis, 2001). This is despite evidence of numerous previous ascents of climbs, popularised in stories and poems by the likes of William Wordsworth (Craig, 1996). Lewis (2001) suggests that this climb has stood out because it attracted the national media attention at the time, perhaps for its level of difficulty and aesthetic qualities (looking like a mountain peak) and thus became relevant in the history of rock climbing. Furthermore Haskett-Smith had no experience of alpine climbing and so his ascent of the climb demonstrated future possibility for what might be climbed on rock alone, as well as who could claim to climb these routes (i.e. non alpine climbers). Thus this climb legitimised and gave recognition to rock climbing as an end to itself, albeit one that inherited and incorporated some of mountaineering's history and ethics (initially including the climbing club elitism of the middle-classes). What can be seen to have arisen was not necessarily a shift but a disruption in the style of climbing, no longer was climbing only about reaching the summit by the most straightforward route but instead this challenge could be met by climbing complex and often dangerous rocks (Kirby and Loxham, 1991).

The growth of climbing rocks changed many of the dynamics in climbing, the sport was now more accessible to the working class, and new regional rock climbing clubs were formed (Lewis, 2001). Crook (2003) suggests that despite the regional divisions:

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> Tactics used for climbing were the same...and although there were no written rules climbers began to develop strategies and formats for carrying out climbs within an ethical code, which was passed on by word of mouth. The ethical code amounted to the rules of the sport and was based on a shared understanding that climbing was essentially centred on notions of style whilst making any given ascent, (Crook: 2003: 9).

This placed importance on style or how one climbed rock, which remains the biggest debate within climbing today (Nettlefold & Stratford, 1999). Crook (2003) goes on to suggest that it was during this time, the early twentieth century that climbing without permanent aid began to be seen as the pure form of climbing, a higher form of climbing as distinguished from the lower form, where ropes were used to aid a climb. Climbing without fixed aid became known as adventure, traditional or free climbing, and grew in popularity in the period before World War One in Britain (Lewis, 2001). This growth in part was also a distinction from the climbing form that was popular in mainland Europe, now known as sport climbing, where climbers placed permanent pitons or bolts in the rock as means of protection.

In the UK, the use of pegs or pitons required an ethical debate, whilst there was the use of fixed protection in the late 1940s and early 1950s with the desire to climb harder routes, this was only allowed where it was seen as necessary on certain rock types, and leaders own protection was still the style that was preferred (Crook, 2003). Despite this after World War Two working class climbers began to use new forms of protection, such as machine nuts, which seemed to escape ethical debate. This was because the nuts could be removed and the general rule that still stands today is that in traditional climbing leaders can use any devices to protect themselves that can be removed from the rock by the second climber (Crook, 2003). Thus it can be seen that there were strict guidelines and adherence to the limited protection that could be used by climbers and even when new ropes and technology came in, risk and skill were valued over technical innovation. Therefore, Crook suggests that the privileging of these ethics disciplined the increasing number of working class climbers, in post-war Britain, who had no real allegiance to a particular style and were under no coerced pressure by traditional climbing clubs to uptake these ethics. Climbers were tied to a specific way of knowing their body, albeit in a way that produced pleasure, and regulated their own ethical behaviour accordingly. This was essential because the climbing community had no way to check the validity of a claim to an ascent and thus climbers relied on the climber being honest about the ascent and the style in which they completed the climb (Donnelly, 1994).

The 1980s and 90s saw the biggest changes in the climbing world with improved and increasingly available equipment, the growth in indoor climbing (training) walls and the growth

of alternative styles of climbing within the British Isles. Growing popularity of sport climbing amongst British climbers like Ben Moon and Jerry Moffatt in Europe, led to increased pressure to bolt in the UK which led to a divide or rift within climbing (Donnelly, 2003). The 'great divide' or debate between sport and traditional climbing has been a source of contention among not only climbers (see Wilson, 1998) but also among academics (see Lewis, 2004, 2000; Donnelly, 2003; Kiewa, 2002; Heywood, 2006. 1994). Contention between these forms is to some degree over the environmental effect of bolting, but primarily over the differences in their approach to uncertainty and adventure, as both British mountaineer Chris Bonnington and Italian mountaineer Reinhold Messner summarise below:

> Rock climbing, like any sport or human activity, is in a constant state of evolution, each generation of climbers trying to pass the efforts of its predecessors. Within this evolution, there are two conflicting trends: the desire for adventure, which is all about risk and the unknown, and the instinct of self-preservation combined with an ambition to achieve success (Bonington, cited in Bailey, 1985: 6).

Whilst Messner below is referring specifically to the bolting of alpine routes, his extreme view was common among British climbers in the 1970s and 1980's:

> Expansion bolts are taken for granted nowadays; they are kept to hand, just in case some difficulty cannot be overcome by ordinary methods. Today's climber does not want to cut himself off from the possibility of retreat: he carries his courage in his rucksack, in the form of bolts and equipment. Rock faces are no longer overcome by climbing skill, but are humbled, pitch by pitch, by methodical manual labor; what isn't done today will be done tomorrow. Free-climbing routes are dangerous, so they are protected by pegs. Ambitions are no longer built on skill, but on equipment and the length of time available. The decisive factor isn't courage, but technique; an ascent may take days and days, and the pegs and bolts counted in the hundreds. Retreat has become dishonourable, because everyone knows now that a combination of bolts and single-mindedness will get you up anything, even the most repulsive-looking direttissima[2] (Messner, 1971).

Sports climbers had a different code of ethics, and valued the possibilities of practising and perfecting routes with a high degree of difficulty while maintaining self-preservation, they indicated that the European form of climbing was not a replacement of traditional climbing but an alternative. The traditionalists on the other hand, influenced by climbers like Ken Wilson, attempted to remove the bolts from newly bolted crags (Ward, 2006). Like the conflict between skiers and snowboarders, despite the increasing rationalisation of traditional climbing itself through improved technology and more information or 'beta' available about routes (Heywood, 1994), sport climbing has been conceptualised as 'in-authentic' institutionalised and commercialised. In opposition traditional climbing is seen as adventurous and an act of

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"embodied freedom" (Lewis, 2004: p89). Thus, traditional climbers fought for their style mainly on historically grounded morals, and at the centre of this debate was authenticity. Authenticity has been a debated term within the subculture literature[3]. This has been well argued elsewhere (see Donnelly, 2006; Wheaton, 2007) but to define my use of the term here, I do not use it to romanticise or privilege a particular form of climbing as 'real' or fixed. Instead authenticity itself is seen as a fluid and changing conception[4], recognising that it has been used to create and maintain difference (Donnelly, 2006; Wheaton & Beal, 2003) and that institutions such as the media and climbers themselves legitimise the 'knowledge' of authenticity (Weinzier and Muggleton 2004). Nevertheless climbing as an activity is also experienced as meaningful, "facilitating a spurious sense of belonging with participants" (Blackshaw, 1999: 10). Within this thesis, whilst commercialisation and societal changes are commented on, authenticity is related to the micro-politics between climbing forms (Hardwell, 2007).

Thus these discourses were used by traditional climbers to "sustain regimes of truth that act to marginalise other ways of knowing and help sustain or produce problematic relations of power" (Pringle and Markula, 2005: 477). After years of dominance in Britain as the only form of rock-climbing, traditional climbing was competing with an alternative discourse over the knowledge of the authentic climbing styles. As Erickson (2005) highlights these debates served to categorise, compare and divide climbers. These processes, which objectifies the individual, could be what Foucault (2002e) refers to as dividing practices.

The debate between sport and traditional climbing was somewhat resolved in the 1980s and '90s through the designation of space; traditional climbing crags and grit-stone were to be left free from bolts whilst many hard and often loose limestone crags and indoor walls became a space for sports climbers. Van Ingen (2003) suggests space is influential in Foucault's analysis of power, this is most explicitly demonstrated in Foucault's analysis of the use of the panopticon as a method of surveillance in prison, yet additionally the meaning of space is constructed through discourse (Barnes, 2009; Fusco, 2007; Yate, 2002). These discourses are then imposed on humans within that space because "spaces can become...sites where only certain activities and movements can occur" (Fusco, 2007: 53). Applying this to climbing, space or landscape is meaningful because of both the associated activity, the personal memory of climbs as well as the historical context of the crag, which are passed down through folklore and recorded in guidebooks (Lewis, 2001). Although the meaning of climbing landscape was in some way contested through the integration of sports climbing, climbing discourse continued to highlight that space should be primarily preserved for traditional climbing. As demonstrated by the late

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1990s ethics guidelines of the British Mountaineering council (BMC) who are the primary organising body over climbing in Britain:

> It is the policy of the BMC that the use of bolts and other drilled equipment is only legitimate on certain agreed quarried crags and agreed sections of certain limestone crags. Lists of agreed locations will be maintained by the local area committees (British Mountaineering Council, 1999).

Ebert and Robinson (2007) further highlight that according to the Mountaineering Council of Scotland's code of good practice (2004) areas with a historical local and anti-bolt ethos should be respected. These discourses, then act to impose restrictions on how to climb in that space and these meanings shape climbers' connection to him/her-self. Limiting the space of sport climbing continues to suggest that sport climbing has less value within the climbing community in UK.

3.1.2. Contemporary climbing: Fragmentation and Diversification

Some twenty years after the outlined debates between sport and traditional climbing, the worries that traditional climbing would disappear seem to have been dismissed, as John Dunne comments "look at Pembroke. I took the bolts out of The Big Issue there ten years ago. They're still out, and no one's put any back in - and we can be proud of that." (cited in Turnball, 2004). Research suggests that traditional climbing has remained dominant in the last fifty years in Britain (Donnelly, 2003; Lewis, 2000) yet despite this it is unquestionable that climbing has changed.

These changes, in part are a result of the increased popularity and diversity within climbing. In the last ten years there has been a boom in climbing popularity; individual BMC memberships doubled between 1990 and 2010 and Active Sport figures highlight that climbing was one of the top ten fastest growing sports in the UK between 2006 and 2008 (Gardner, 2009). This popularity is a result of (and has resulted in) improved access to climbing through indoor walls and increasingly valid alternative forms of climbing. In a post-modern society, it has been suggested that sport subcultures have become increasingly diverse and fragmented (Wheaton, 2007). This is somewhat 'true' of climbing now, through looking at contemporary climbing media and guidebooks it is possible to note the multiple discourses over climbing style that "come into play in various strategies" (Foucault, 1978: 100). Thus whilst traditional climbing is still represented as dominant, various forms do exist; including mountaineering, ice, mixed alpine, traditional, sport, bouldering, indoor climbing, deep-water soloing and dry tooling

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(Davidson, 2006). These forms are seen as increasingly accepted, where guidebooks have tended to either only document traditional routes, or separate the climbing forms, latest editions of Rockfax (see Glaister, 2010) and the BMC's definitive guides (see Clark and Robinson, 2010) include all outdoor climbing forms (e.g. sport, bouldering and traditional climbing). Furthermore, Crook (2003) suggests that up until the 1990's bouldering problems were rarely recorded, named or graded.

This diversity is noted in the BMC's (2004) ethical guidelines, written only five years after the 1999 ethical guidelines outlined above, whilst their position to bolting remains the same, the BMC recognises the diversity as a positive part of climbing:

> Nowadays the sport is more fragmented than ever. Dry-tooling, deepwater soloing, modern bouldering, headpointing; none of these were around in 1967. However, there is still a great deal of respect for those who can master different disciplines. That remains the great strength of British climbing. Plenty of climbers are still interested in the head games as well as performance, and still prepared to climb on everything from gritstone boulders to granite peaks in the Himalaya. The narrower the game becomes, the narrower the rewards and the narrower the minds of those who seek them. (British Mountaineering Council, 2004)

The acceptance of style and difference within climbing blurs the representation of the authentic traditional climber and instead indicates a discourse of inclusivity; knowledge that many climbers portray to the public world (Robinson, 2008; Hardwell, 2007; De Léséleuc et al., 2002). This allows the creation of new possibilities rather than privileging a normalised form, which reduces the exclusive and elitist nature of climbing (Ward, 2006; Turnball, 2004). With the expansion of indoor climbing walls climbing has become more accessible to participants with geographical access limitations and diverse backgrounds (Hardwell, 2007). Furthermore, more climbers take part in a variety of climbing forms (Hardwell, 2007). Heywood (1994) argues that as climbing becomes rationalised, discourses become increasingly complex and contradictory, to demonstrate his point he highlights the BMC's conflict between promoting climbing in order to sell membership and magazines and protecting climbing from growth (for the sake of both the limited resource of rock in GB as well the authenticity of climbing).

With the fragmentation of climbing, despite overlap as discussed below, these forms have become categorised and seen as quite different from each other, as Hardwell (2007) indicates: "It is as if...different activities are being compared."(p90). Bouldering for example is seen as sociable and often accessible, valuing short, powerful and gymnastic movements, and competition, ethically limited equipment is a pre-requisite and rocks should be and are kept free of chalk marks that identify the movement pattern, however the working and trying of problems

is acceptable. Sports climbers, as suggested above, are said to value the athletic quality of climbing whilst taking minimal risk, these values have been popularised in films like *Cliffhanger* (1993) where climbers are portrayed pulling themselves up over-hanging rock. Whilst indoor climbing is accessible, valued for training and social purposes, ethics and styles are similar to those in bouldering and sport climbing (Crook, 2003).

Despite indication of increasing acceptance of forms of climbing, and understanding that multiple discourses create different experiences, the hierarchy of authenticity is produced and frames climbers identities, making some behaviours acceptable and excluding 'others'. An understanding of this is helped through Butler's (1997) conception of performativity, Butler might suggest, whilst these binaries can be broken down, it is through the repetition of practices that discourses produce their effects, i.e. man/woman or specifically the 'traditional' climber, the 'sport climber' and so on. As De Leleuc et al.'s (2002) ethnographic research on a group of climbers in France shows climbers acted and sought to develop their sense of community through the exclusion of others. Academics themselves have argued and maintained a distinction, a binary between traditional climbing and other forms, for example Lewis (2001) sees the 'organic bodies' produced through traditional climbing as something dualistically opposed to sport climbing and what he terms 'metropolitan bodies'. It is the differentiation from non-climbing or other climbing forms that help define what the traditional climbing body is, which Lewis suggests is: organic, corporeal, self-determined, solitary, plays with uncertainty and works with nature (p119). This climbing body he describes is formed in escaping from the conditions of a mechanical, routine, alienated society. Thus with increasing commercialisation it is perhaps understandable that the climbing community may seek to 'protect' climbing from outside influence and that certain discourses become identifiable as forming particular climbing identities (Robinson, 2008).

3.1.2.1. Styles of ascent

Whilst climbing forms and the ethics and values within these may be more diverse, within the British climbing media a particular style of ascent, the 'onsight', is valued above others. I will first discuss alternative forms of ascent, before suggesting that the categorisation of styles and valuing of particular ways of climbing regulates climbers to the ethical norms of climbing.

Ethics about styles of ascent vary within climbing form, for example in bouldering and sport climbing, practicing or working out and failing on routes before climbing them clean (known as redpointing in sports climbing). This generally means that climbers can train and learn the

routes that they are practicing. This ethic has been incorporated within traditional climbing, known as 'headpointing' where climbs are pre-practiced on a top rope, or failed on, before they are led clean. This form of climbing was made acceptable or seen as popular in Britain in the 1990s, after the release of cult climbing film *Hard Grit* (1998), which featured hard traditional routes, setting the trend at the top level of climbing. However, Crook (2003) argues that headpointing in traditional climbing has only been seen as acceptable amongst 'hard' climbers.

In contemporary climbing culture the ethics of style of ascent can be seen as increasingly important. This is because most routes in Britain have already been climbed and it is therefore not so much about climbing to the top but about what style is used to get there (Nettlefold & Stratford, 1999). This ethic dictates to a climber the possibilities of how they may use their bodies, and the recording and privileging of ascent style, through stories, in climbing guidebooks and discussed in the climbing media ensures "that climbers attempting similar types of ascent employ similar means" (Donnelly, 2003: 295). Whilst ethical differences between climbing forms exist, the purist form of ascent within all forms of climbing is seen as the 'onsight', or the ground up, clean ascent of a climb with no prior knowledge (Beta) of how the climb is done. This is an ethic that has been particularly respected within the traditional climbing community and one that is most demonstrated by non-elite climbers and recent films like *'Onsight'* (2008) try to preserve the value of this style of ascent. The media are central in the representation of and maintenance of normalised bodies; primarily they encourage the self-surveillance of subjects (Thorpe, 2008; Bordo, 1993). The privileging of forms of climbing, or the categorisation of climbing forms regulates climbers to certain ways of climbing, and more importantly to be 'true' to the climb, and more importantly to yourself. As climber Ricky Bell, expresses 'onsight' climbing is where you "don't cheat the route, basically, but, more importantly, you don't cheat yourself" (Ricky Bell in *'Onsight'*, 2008). Whilst not all climbers do 'onsight' routes and climbers can choose how they climb a route, climbers are respected for attempting the 'onsight' climb. New climbers are told and shown that only climbs that are led get the tick in the guidebook and that they must be honest about the form of ascent they do, many climbers will only tick the route at all if they climb it 'onsight'.

As in other sports, climbers learn to use their body in a way that meets the ethics of the sport (Johns and Johns, 2000), this discourse is productive, it works on the level of pleasure, creating in climbers the desire to abide by these rules (Foucault, 1988a). Climbers learn that the knowledge and maintenance of styles and ethics are essential to participation as a climber (Heywood, 2006) this is on some level to maintain the exclusive and 'authentic' nature of climbing (Donnelly, 2006). Furthermore privileging styles can lead to the exclusion of others.

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As Erickson (2006) argues the emphasis of traditional climbing ethics, or the privileging of a particular way of climbing, and the influence of these ethics on climbers he sees as an attempt to "eliminate the 'others' from climbing" (p70) or to maintain something special and distinct about the activity. The 'real' climbers that are both physically and mentally prepared, especially when pushing grades, to take risks, versus the 'posers' within the competitive sport climbing and indoor walls. The discourses of risk in relation to climbing will be discussed further below, before that, I further the discussion that has arisen here on authenticity in climbing. In these post-modern times, how is there continuity or the experience of collectivism without reverting to essentialist, stable notions of identity? As Muggleton (2005) argues, that whilst identities are transitory, participants maintain a sense of commitment to their community or subculture.

3.2. Commitment

Wheaton (2004) argues that the experience of 'adventure' sports varies dramatically, this is primarily around the way that the sports are consumed and practiced. Research suggests that in post-modern culture, where subcultural attachment can be fluid, that the 'real' or 'authentic' participants are those that show commitment to the activity (Wheaton, 2004; Rinehart and Sydnor, 2003; Wheaton and Beal, 2003; Wheaton, 2000a; Beal, 1996). As Blackshaw (1999) demonstrates in his life-world study of a group of working-class lads, there is a sense that whilst things have changed, and the possibility of a fixed identity is indeed an impossibility, that drawing on discourses of commitment maintains a sense of continuity:

> Yet, even with 'the lads', things have changed, have become ambivalent. Everything has come to mean the same yet different. Yet it is still the same. Determined to maintain our sense of belonging, a refashioned and reconstructed 'lads' has emerged. In terms of our leisure lives, this means that we now hold a cool disregard for the present and the future and that we embrace the past. It is a new chapter in our existence. However, this new chapter requires nothing new, only our continued commitment. (Blackshaw, 1999: 168).

However Michelle Donnelly (2006) decentres even the 'real' notion of the stable, collective existence. She suggests that because discourses surrounding adventure sports frame spectators, and different participants experiences and identities, that individuals are subject to different definitions of how participation or commitment to climbing is demonstrated. If we look at what statements exist, or the way that commitment is discussed we see that meanings associated with participation in climbing vary. For Robinson (2008) highlights, participation in climbing is due to a myriad of reasons, and identity is constructed in relation to these. I suggest that

commitment in climbing is framed through discourses of consumption, improvement that reflect the incorporation of training techniques and sports science and through the value of movement.

3.2.1. Consumption

Gramscian inspired analyses of subcultural involvement perceived of style as symbolic of resistance to dominant sporting culture, whilst post-modern perspectives suggest that these 'alternative' styles have been commodified so that there is little distinction between mainstream and alternative sporting cultures. This superficial and materialistic view of 'adventure sports' has been prolific in the mass media (see films like *Cliff Hanger, Point Break* and *Blue Crush)* in the last twenty years where participants are portrayed as young and image-based (Wheaton, 2004; Wheaton and Beal. 2003). Alternative sports participants (and even non-participants) have become a target for the marketing of clothes, equipment, magazines, films, games and music (Bennet and Lachowetz, 2004). Atkinson (2010) thus argues that adventure sports "In the end...did little to subvert or reinvent athletic practice, as they became ultimately enframed by 'technical ways' of doing and interpreting sport in society" (p1252). Ethnographic research into subcultures similarly finds that consumption of these activities and of (certain) relevant products are used globally to symbolically represent an attachment to these activities, and among insiders of the activity they are an important although not an essential demonstration of authenticity within particular adventure sports (Wheaton, 2004; Wheaton, 2000a). Thus following work on the body as a "site of consumption" (Atkinson and Wilson, 2002: 387) I suggest that certain products are represented as constructing a climbing identity, or that using these products demonstrates commitment.

Consumption is said to be characteristic of a late-capitalist society, and adventure or lifestyle sports inherently incorporate some of these images. Participants are sold not just an activity but products that are given meaning within the activity (Wheaton, 1997). Whilst of course many of these products have a practical use, Crook (2003) highlights how climbing wear has developed and that particular climbing attire, since the 1950s has shown a connection both with popular culture and the outdoor industry. Changes in climbing styles have generally been introduced by top climbers, something that companies picked up on, using these climbers to sell their products (Crook, 2003). Both 'top' climbers and climbing media play an important role in promoting climbing as consumable (Thorpe, 2008) and so advertising and marketing are seen "as reflecting, rather than dictating, the desires of consumers, with consumption offering control over communal meanings ascribed to self and social relations" (Orend and Gagné, 2009: 497). However, in adhering to this consumption, or wearing certain products the climbing body

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becomes merchandised (Marinho and Bruhns, 2005). This is what Frank (1991) has called the mirroring body, a body that reflects what is around it, so that wearing particular clothing (like down jackets) or the use of particular brands (like E9/Moon/5.10) and equipment comes to reflect the 'authentic' climbing body (Sparkes, 2004).

Issues around consumption and authenticity can be quite complex because whilst anyone may wear climbing gear, some climbers would suggest that they are 'in-authentic' if they 'wear' the clothing and do not climb.   Therefore, the consumption of certain clothing or certain products acts to divide and exclude others, e.g. carrying a rope on the outside of a bag, or a bouldering mat are used to distinguish between forms of climbing as well as to differentiate between climbers themselves (alluding and maintaining a hierarchy within climbing) and other users of the outdoors (Crook, 2003). Embodiment of discourses of consumption reflects the assumption that the post-modern identity is displayed through buying and using certain products (Orend and Gagné, 2009) and what to buy is influenced by specialist media (Wheaton and Beal, 2003). UK Climbing is the most consumed climbing website in the UK; with over 11, 000 visitors per day (UK Climbing, 2009) they have a specific section on gear which is heavily influenced by their partnerships with advertisers.   These distinctions enable and limit possibilities of representation of a climbing self and through looking at adverts and websites we can see a climber or "some identity (or poststucturally thinking, some subject position) that we recognise and take up as our own" (Helstein, 2007: 81).

Consumption is not only in terms of products and in terms of clothing but it is the consumption of space or environment that is an important part of climbing, I discussed briefly, above how space has been marked and framed in reference to different forms of climbing. For example grit and sea cliffs have primarily been used for traditional climbing whilst some limestone or slate crags that are not easily protected are bolted so used for sport climbing, whilst small crops of often easily accessible rock are used for bouldering. The similarity between these forms of climbing is the use of the outdoors, or the consumption of nature. Like many adventure sports the use of the outdoors is an important part of taking part, climbing ethics are constructed, and the governing body for climbing in Britain acts, in order to maintain and protect the environment. In a sense trying to re-create or maintain a sense of nature as a sublime space that needs to be protected, but also using a natural, remote and unpredictable environment opposed to an urban, crowded and restricted one (Simmel, 1997; Lewis, 2004). The outdoor space produces feelings of wonder and amazement in the climber (Atherton, 2007) and climbing allows participants to interact with this environment, a shared experience that Mellor and Shilling (1997) argue brings groups together.

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I agree with Lewis's (2004) suggestion that that climbers embody "a profoundly ecological relationship between themselves and the cliff environment" (p89) and that this can *potentially* disrupt the disciplined body and offers political resistance to '"ecologically disastrous leisure" (Lewis, 2004: 98, additionally see Wheaton's, 2008 research into surfers against sewage). However, at the same time I am somewhat critical of the extent to which many climbers really do significantly contribute to protect the natural environment, particularly with the willingness of many climbers to travel wider distances to crags and worldwide to popular climbing areas abroad. Furthermore, whilst the embodiment of nature may promote and encourage exclusivity and community among some groups of climbers, when it is seen to indicate authenticity as a climber, it also excludes other climbers, especially at a time when many climbers are learning to climb indoors and find the natural environment less accessible to them (Cloke and Little, 1997).

Whilst discourses of consumption may provide a significant way of representing the climbing body, Wheaton (2004) indicates that there are perhaps "less visible" (p9) indicators of identity for insiders of adventure sports that are more 'authentic', such as demonstrating commitment through time, style and progression.

3.2.2. Time, movement, and progression

> The 'authentic climber'... is one for whom climbing is everything (Robinson, 2008: 51)

Both academic and specialist media forms categorise climbers in terms of their commitment; from the climbing elite; to the weekend warrior; to the occasional climber or bumbler (Macleod, 2009; Robinson, 2008). This commitment is demarked primarily by time. The authentic climber has been increasingly seen as one who commits or sacrifices time, money and perhaps even social relationships in order to climb. To become a climber is primarily seen as involving hard work and effort (Robinson, 2008: 71). Many climbers then construct their lives around climbing, by working in the climbing industry or having jobs that enable them to climb as much as possible.

On one level, climbers are seen to "use bodily expression and performance to subvert—at least symbolically...discipline and control. They contend that a creative (act) may also be thought of as a form of 'free expression," (Atkinson and Wilson, 2002:386, author's addition). Climbing is seen a lifestyle that offers space or transcendence from the everyday or mundane (Robinson, 2008). Commitment to climbing may be important to participants at a time when gender, race

and class identities are seen as fluid, because long-term participation provides participants with some continuity and individual distinction both in society and within climbing. Yet Atkinson and Young (2008) also highlight how these sports increasingly support values of neo-liberalism, where the emphasis is on self-regulation, individual choice and responsibility rather than collective social benefit. This somewhat narcissistic or hedonistic view of climbing culture promotes self above other and reinforces a hierarchy or a continuum that differentiates climbers (Robinson, 2008). In order to maintain authenticity climbers are subject to discourses that necessitate the continual demonstration of time and effort. To some extent, the authenticity is maintained through a climber's reputation, which is "integral to how they were perceived in the climbing community" (Robinson, 2008: 71). Although the reputation of a climber has long been related to achievement of hard climbs in an ethical climbing style, Hardwell (2007) suggests that since the 1970s better equipment, more information about routes and 'training' walls have meant that climbing has adopted a scientific approach, which has encouraged climbers of all abilities to aspire to climb harder. Although, this is not specifically related to financial gains, the desire to climb harder has disciplined climbing bodies.

Importantly, privileging hard climbing and authentic practices can be seen to exclude other ways of knowing. Although it has been implied that climbing is distinct from the disciplinary practices of dominant sport (Lewis, 2000; 2001) or at least climbing has been romanticised as free and unstructured, and climbing media in the 1990s downplayed the focus on elite sporting performance (Heywood, 2006). Contemporary media forms, climbing guidebooks and the practices of the climbing community convey Foucauldian ideas over the 'docile' body i.e. one that disciplined and regimented (1977). Thus, examinations have shown that both elite and recreational level sport can produce disciplined bodies (Heikkala, 1993).

The disciplined body is produced through the "organization and regulation of time, space, and movement (which) train, shape and impress bodies with… habituated gestures, procedures, and values" (Shogun, 1999:9). Although I do not deny that the movement on rock, or indeed in an indoor wall is an emotional and embodied experience for climbers I suggest that climbers are also subject to discourses that imply how to move, or how to use their body. This then becomes recognised as 'good climbing. Climbers' movement becomes regulated early on in their climbing career; this is both in terms of climbing technique and in terms of strength. To some extent the British climbing media and climbers have sought to reward and emphasise good climbing technique and style over strength, as writer for UK climbing Charles Arthur (2003a) comments: "Fact: the difference between ordinary climbers and to climbers is footwork, not big arms." This knowledge is reinforced by monthly articles on training tips in *Climber* magazine

and this advice that is given readily on climbing forums. The spectator gaze and self-surveillance techniques are used to normalise this movement as experienced climbers' show and tell new climbers how to move their body. As Dant and Wheaton (2007) highlight:

> acquiring the bodily skill is also an induction into a community or subculture of those who share the skill; the subculture, which may have other features, will take the embodied ability as a key feature common to its members, and their distinctive lifestyle and identity (p10).

This has a direct influence on the time that climbers give to their activity because they are told that only through lots of time and effort can beginners improve technique; so time commitment and sacrifice to climb is important. Climbing ability is assessed visually by technique and in comparison to grading systems. To many climbers grades are suggestively unimportant (Kiewa, 2001) however, climbers desire to do better (Heikkala, 1993) and pushing boundaries in climbing is the 'jouissance' for individual as well as providing climber's status within the climbing community (Lewis, 2004: 323).

The first reference to grades as an assignment of difficulty in Britain was at the end of the 19th century (see Jones, 1900) where climbs were rated from easy to exceptionally severe. Although it is beyond the scope of this work to provide a comprehensive overview of the complex history and current, and different, grading systems in place in Britain (see Crook, 2003 for this). The recognition here is that a grading system can act as both a tool, which climbers compare themselves to and it can lead to competition between climbers. For most climbers this is not through formal competitions, and therefore externally climbers would suggest that climbing is not competitive or as Donnelly (2003) suggests that competition is distinct to sport climbing and bouldering. However, as Robinson (2008) highlights, traditional climbers are also concerned with maintaining their status among others in the climbing community and especially their peers who climb at similar grades. Grades within all forms of climbing allow climbers to measure and maintain their performance to a socially constructed standard. Thus, individuals define themselves as 'good' or 'bad' climbers' in relation to a grading system.

Foucault (1979) says that the use of measurement has meant that subjects can be compared to a norm. This does not necessarily in itself indicate that hard climbing is what counts, and at grassroots, a survey into BMC members suggests that over 80% of climbers climb no higher than Hard Very Severe (British Mountaineering Council, 2010). Yet despite this the climbing media privilege hard climbers and the ascent of hard climbs, for example, traditional guidebooks do not give a technical grade[5] for grades below severe. Crook (2003) suggests this

is a beginners grade, and this indicates that below this grade requires no technique. Furthermore climbing above 'extreme' is represented as a benchmark for a climber, as can be seen from the following quotes from climbing websites and magazines. Not only do they suggest this is the holy grail of 'good' climbing but have detailed advice on how a climber can get to this level:

> E1 has always been a benchmark grade at a crag and with the right preparation, a positive approach and lots of time well spent on routes, at the wall and training, hopefully this no longer has to be a boundary but the start of great things to come (McAlese, 2010)

> This article is aimed at the hundreds of climbers out there who are leading around the VS/HVS mark, but wistfully looking across the crag at that classic E-something and thinking "I wish I was good enough to do that". Well, you *can* be good enough, as long as you're prepared to put in some hard work, and be patient. (Evans, 2006)

Climbing E1 is thus seen as a breakthrough for climbers at an individual level, or the level that climbers should be aspiring to. The coverage of ascents by climbing websites and within climbing films reinforces the pursuit of excellence at the top end of climbing: the "climbing community typically regard as admirable those climbers who surpass existing standards of climbing excellence by pushing further the limits of achievement" (Ebert and Robertson, 2007: 60). Thus climbers are subjected to discourses that lower grades are not as worthy of coverage and hard climbing is normalised. This view influences the production of guidebooks, for example a beginner's guide to climbing on UK Climbing suggests that "The new editions of a guidebook will have nothing new at your grade, but will have upgraded loads of VDiffs to VSs" (Arthur, 2003b). The same can be said of bouldering, most British bouldering guides now use the V grade system[6], which originally started at V1 and goes up to V15. The problem with this system is that it is rather elitist. Whilst climbers in Britain did try to account for this by grading the climbs at the lower end as −V0 or VB (beginner grades), these problems are not always in recent guidebooks and at the lower end V0 is seen to encompass a wide range of difficulty. This means that it is very hard for beginners to see improvement and so they stand out as 'abnormal' whilst the hard climbers is seen as the 'true' climber (Foucault, 1979).

Previous analyses of the disciplinary techniques of sport suggest that the normalising effect of discourses produces the docile body, which is "useful to the social body" (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 61) in that it is disciplined by discourses of health, fitness and well-being. Through surveillance by others and the internalisation of these discourses the docile body self-monitors its own performance (Smith Maguire, 2002). The 'normalised fit body' is increasingly being produced within climbing, with the desire for pushing boundaries leading to the scientific examination of climbing (see Low, 2005; Watts, 2004; Booth et al., 1999; Watts et al., 1996)

and this being passed down to climbers. Many climbers increasingly take part in all forms of climbing in order to train specific muscles or muscular systems. The climbing fitness industry has taken off, climbing walls have never been so popular, and these increasingly offer climbing movement and training classes, with specialist coaches.

The disciplined climber monitors one's own performance and commitment through comparison to grades and others as well as in the logging of climbs. Heikkala (1993) highlights how athletes regulate their behaviour through training diaries, which can be seen as a form of self-confession (in the Foucauldian sense) of one's performance. Foucault (1978) was against confessional acts as he felt that they caused people to act in a way to conform to their own identity, which limits possibilities of freedom (p166). Logbooks are used by climbers to monitor the climbs that they are doing; i.e. regulating the frequency and amount of time that they spend climbing, the grade they are climbing and in the style of ascent in which they climb. As demonstrated in the logbook on UK climbing; climbers tick the climbs they do and the style of ascent, even if the logbook is private, they are effectively enforcing a confession of the level and the way in which they ascend a climb. This recording and the writing of comments means that climbers measure their performance; how much have they climbed? What grade are they climbing? Have they showed improvement? How does this compare to others? The reassurance of seeing those climbs and grades "is a welcome orderly grid to cling to, and a means of justifying one's existence" (Heikmann, 1993: 402). Furthermore, subjective self-control produces performance (Howe, 2007). Lupton and Tulloch (2003) indicate that discourses on performance and improvement influence and relate to the understanding and experience of risk.

3.3. Discourses of risk

Theoretical analyses of risk in rock climbing conceptualise risk-taking as voluntary (Robinson, 2008; McNamee, 2007; Heywood, 2006; Lewis, 2004; Donnelly, 2003; Donnelly and Young, 1988) a practice that Lyng (1990, 2005) calls edgework. This is based on the recognition that risk taking in rock climbing is voluntary, unlike competitive sport, there are not the structures or financial pressures that encourage participants to take risks in order to win. Thus it has been conceived that participants take seemingly un-achievable risks, which put them in real and immediate danger, by choice.

Society is said to be increasingly risk adverse (Beck, 1992; Giddens, 1991, 1990) and thus the increasing popularity of adventure sports where risk-taking is valued is somewhat confusing (Laurendeau, 2006). This conceptual difference is something that is increasingly interesting for

ethnographic researchers (Giulianotti, 2009) and a number of theoretical frameworks have sought to explain why adventure sports participants take seemingly high risks for limited rewards. Socio-cultural frameworks include Lyng's (1990) theory of edgework, which considers voluntary risk-taking at the micro and macro level. Lyng (2008) suggests that participants take risks both for the sensations and the challenge or sense of control in contrast to a "society increasingly dominated by the forces of alienation, bureaucratisation, loss of community and disenchantment" (p 89-90; see also: Laurendeau, 2006, 2008 and Robinson, 2008). Other approaches have used; Heidegger to understand how technological advancements have shaped risk in adventure climbing (see Lewis, 2004), figurationalist inspired work that sees risk-taking as an embodied act of thrill seeking or a quest for excitement (Breivik, 2007). Additionally a number of empirical projects seek to understand the social stratification of risk-taking (Fletcher, 2008; Laurendeau, 2008; Lois, 2006; Palmer, 2004). Despite the potential of a Foucauldian framework in analysing the social construction of risk (Lupton, 1999b) there is a notable gap in the use of his concepts in studying risk-taking in particular groups.

I suggest that risk is socially constructed both within the wider society but also within local cultures, so what may seem as high risk in wider society, may not be seen as such within the rock climbing community. In order to understand how risk in rock climbing is constructed I consider how institutions, practices and both societal discourses and local discourses within the climbing community construct or produce 'truth's about risk (Lupton, 1999c) showing that messages about risk are contradictory and shifting.

3.3.1. Societal discourses on risk

Guilianottti (2009) and Lupton (1999b) see Foucault's work on governmentality as useful in the analysis of risk, both within society and in sport. From this perspective risk is "a governmental strategy of disciplinary power by which populations and individuals are monitored and managed so as to best meet the goals of democratic humanism" (Lupton, 1999b: 4). Thus populations are surveyed and categorised as at risk, and the control and regulation of risk is increasingly put upon the individual (Simon, 2002). This is characteristic of neo-liberalism, which aims to produce individuals that monitor and regulate their own behaviour (Giulianotti, 2009).

In practice, this has meant that in post-modernity humans have generally taken greater steps to manage and avoid risk for self-improvement. However, this perspective also allows one to identify discourses that see risk-taking as positive. As Simon (2002) suggests since the 1990's risk-taking in some areas has become associated with rewards, as seen by the acceptance and

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promotion of financial risk-taking in the stock market (with the consequent backlash when the risks are too high and things go wrong) as well as popular discourses that have popularised risk-taking in extreme sports. I will discuss both these discourses now, recognising the wider societal discourses on risk that position climber's risk-taking experience.

Governmentality works at two levels, at the state or population level where certain social or community groups, activities or events are labelled as at risk and strategies are used to control them, and at an individual level where individuals are expected to take responsibility for uncertainty. Expert knowledge is seen as pivotal within Foucault's concept of governmentality; these experts have been pervasive in calculating and advising populations on strategies so that individuals then monitor their own behaviour according to these discourses (Lupton, 1999c).

An example that shows how risk has become increasingly individualised is the legal case of Trustees of the Portsmouth youth activities committee (a charity) v Poppleton [2008] EWCA Civ 646. This case was an appeal by a climbing centre to a judge's decision that the climbing centre was partially responsible for the Gary Poppleton accident; Poppleton fell at the centre and was left tetraplegic. In the appeal, it was highlighted that climbing as an activity was seen as involving some risk and therefore that the wall was not liable, it was made clear that the British legal system places individuals as responsible for their own behaviour and for accidents that occur in activities that involve risk, as shown here:

> Mr Norris (the climbing centre's QC) submits that there is, or should be, a policy of letting adults take care of themselves and the judge's judgment in this case (in the first trial) embraces over- regulation and is contrary to the law's increasing emphasis on personal responsibility (para 13, author's added addition).

This indicates as Guilianottti (2009) highlights that rather than expecting the state, places of work or sport to provide support and cover for people who have accidents, individuals themselves are seen as needing to take "personal responsibility for their health" (p543). Governmentality considers not that subjects are forced or directly controlled to manage their risk-taking, but instead strategies, discourses and institutions act to deter subjects from taking risks. Furedi (1997) highlights that there is an increased risk consciousness, from which 'civilised' individuals are morally inclined to avoid risks, and those that do take risks are seen as "foolhardy, careless, irresponsible, and even 'deviant'" (Lupton, 1999c: 148).

These discourses aim to produce humans that seek safety or exert self-control and regulation, they were techniques that sought to produce docile individuals in order to ensure the well being

of individual and society and to "achieve order and promote discipline" (Mythen and Walklate, 2006: 385).

However, Kusz (2004, 2003) emphasises that there has been a shift in the media portrayal of extreme sports participants from the early 1980s and 1990s to the late 1990s. Whilst in the 1980s participants were demonised as work-avoidant young slackers (see also Law, 2001), by the late 1990s a somewhat heroic view of participants prevails. These sports are now promoted for all ages and emphasising prevailing discourses on health and fitness, which position activities like climbing as good for well-being.

At a national level there is an increased public fascination with 'risk sports' both in following them as a spectator and in actually participating in them. As adventure sports have received commercial interest they are 'known' as dangerous, with the risks taken by top practitioners valorised or glamorised (Coates et al., 2010; Robinson, 2008). Within global discourses, risk-taking in extreme sports is over-emphasised, the participants themselves emerge as stars, who are encouraged to take risks in order to create a spectacle, and sell products, As Palmer (2004) suggests:

> the discourse that surrounds these sports plays with the notion that they offer more than sports as they are customarily imagined; lifestyle sports take their adherents faster, higher, and further than all others, and it is from the considerable media resources that accompany adventure sports that this extreme athlete emerges a fearless figure, supremely brave and ever adventurous. (p57)

The media most often portray events of conquest or the overcoming of obstacles i.e. first ascents, and accidents (Coffey, 2005, 2003; Rose and Douglas, 2000) which privileges discourses of individual triumph and self-improvement. This is shown in their coverage of acts of conquest, including Tony Hawk landing the first 900 on a skateboard in the 1999 X games, Shaun White doing the tomahawk at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics and events such as the skicross at the Winter Olympics. The valorisation of risk has had implications in the scope of these activities. These activities are not singularly the lifestyle of participants but appeal to a mass audience and coverage has contributed to the popularity of climbing, with more people climbing not only in indoor walls but also in the number of people climbing mountains (Rosen, 2007). Similarly, there is a fascination with the portrayal of accidents, especially those where the victim overcomes adversity, the 'heroic' tale if you like. This is seen in the popularity of books such as Joe Simpson's *Touching the void* (1998) and the coverage of disasters such as the Everest disaster in 1996 or the story of Aron Ralston who cut off his own arm in order to live when trapped by a boulder for six days. Although these events are responded to with a certain amount of outrage and contempt at the risks taken there also seems to be a feeling of admiration,

sympathy and fascination with human possibility (Simon, 2002). The acceptance of adventure sports is somewhat characteristic of a neo-liberal society, in which McDermott (2007) highlights the modern subject is a "disciplined, autonomous, rational, choosing individual" (p310). Simon (2005) sees risk takers, to some extent, as characteristic of these subjects, and he argues that discourses that encourage risk-taking produces subjects that are valued by neo-liberal governments.

There are two potentially problematic effects of discourses that produce risk- takers. Firstly, the glamorisation of risk ignores the physical and mental preparation by participants. It encourages top-adventure sports stars to take risks that they would not take ordinarily (including climbing in bad weather conditions or snowboarders taking part in competitions where the tracks are unsafe) in order to win competitions, make headlines and maintain sponsorship. Secondly, the discourse of extremity is increasingly a global one and although the benefit of this is that climbing is accessible to more people, there has been a massive growth in the adventure tourism industry. Although this has been portrayed elsewhere as packaged adventure or the *disneyfication* or *mcdonaldisation* of risk that is characteristic of a rationalised society (see for example Loynes, 1998). Palmer (2004) and Watters (2003) highlight that when things go wrong the marketing of risk 'for all' is dangerous. Within adventure travel, risk is positioned as "ultimately controllable, as long as expert knowledge can be properly brought to bear upon it" (Lupton, 1999b: 5). Thus instead of acquiring the skills themselves, individuals refer to 'expert's, and mountaineering is sold as an activity where any individual can reach the top of a mountain. As Krakauer (1997) surmises, anyone with enough money can buy their way up Everest, and when the large proportion of participants are inexperienced and reliant on experts, if accidents do occur, participants have little knowledge of dealing with risk. This contributed to the Everest disaster in 1996 when eight people died.

These wider discourses on risk are important, considering that climbing is part of society and thus these discourses and strategies will inform climbers' risk-taking practices; however, I also suggest that local discourses or shared meanings also need to be analysed to understand how risk is conceptualised within particular communities (Lash, 2000).

3.3.2. Climbing discourses on risk

Most of the adventure sports literature has positioned risk-taking as psychologically, physically and symbolically meaningful for participants, and sociological explanations have centred on "the cathartic properties of risk-taking in the context of the uncertainty inherent in the current

rapid rate of social change," (Stranger, 1999:265). Lewis (2004) takes this to the extreme, suggesting that traditional climbers are "prepared to die for their leisure experiences" (p. 81). At the same time, West and Allin (2010) suggest that many climbers do not take risks per se, instead they seek to control and manage the risks. Here I wish to show that both these discourses appear in the climbing community.

As highlighted above maintaining the image or romanticising the sense of risk that is involved in climbing is conceptualised as resistant to a world that is increasingly rationalised and risk avoidant and it considers the sensation that uncertainty brings participants (Dougherty, 2007; Ebert and Robertson, 2007; Lewis, 2004; 2000; Heywood, 1994). Atkinson and Wilson (2002) highlight how analysing embodied forms of activity allows one to identify the low-level everyday practices that are resistant to 'known' or dominant discourses. Thus, discourses of risk-taking in climbing could be seen as promoting an embodied and rewarding experience that provides climbers momentary feelings of transgression from societal norms of risk avoidance. In a sense then pushing oneself to take risks in climbing could be seen as what Foucault terms a 'limit experience' or when one's body and mind is:

> deliberately push[ed]...to the breaking point, hazarding 'a sacrifice, an actual sacrifice of life...it seemed possible to breach, however briefly, the boundaries separating the...pleasure and pain-and at the ultimate limit, life and death (Miller, 1993: 30).

Thus, it is not inconceivable that risks are limit experiences that climbers perform to push boundaries of normality to maintain a sense of deep pleasure, however, it is also important to recognise that in taking risks climbers are subjected by the local, but equally relevant discourses on risk within climbing (Lash, 1992).

Heywood (1994) has argued that all forms of climbing are becoming increasingly rationalised and that some technological innovations make climbing safer, however, to some extent discourses on risk in the climbing community encourage risk-taking, and produce risk-takers. This is primarily seen in the value of the dominant form of climbing (traditional) in Britain, which is not only the most risky but in order to ensure some level of risk in all forms of climbing, as suggested above, climbers have a code of socially constructed ethics. These ethics correspond to the level of danger and difficulty in particular forms of climbing in order to maintain some element of risk (Donnelly, 2004).

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The climbing media have a key role in the construction of risk-taking, with British media forms like climbing websites, guidebooks, magazines and films covering a traditional climbing style above other forms. Magazines are filled with:

> Epic tales of suffering and endurance in far flung corners of the world. Jaw dropping photos of huge cliffs and improbable lines. These beam out of every climbing magazine around like a siren call, seducing new and old climbers alike, feeding adventure and planting the seeds of new dreams. (Hey, 2002)

Coverage, particularly by websites and in climbing films is not limited to but focuses on the ascents of new and hard routes by top climbers. Although hard climbs do not always equate to high risk, climbers are encouraged to "adopt a minimalist approach to climbs perceived as difficult by others, ensuring that ascents are seen as highly ethical" (Hardwell, 2007: 26). Thus, climbing films (see; *'onsight'*, 2008; *Committed*, 2007; *Hard Grit*, 1996) often highlight the risks that climbers take in a positive light. Focusing on the dangerous and hard side of climbing they overlook the amount of practice that climbers have on a route before attempting to lead the route.

In a similar way to Stranger's (1999) recognition of how the surfing media can enhance surfer's imagination and memory of the sublime, and consequently of the desire to experience the thrill of surfing, Belk and Costa (1998) suggest that these media representations construct for mountaineers "contemporary fantasy construction" (cited in Tumbat, 2003: 31). Through the production of desire, Stranger suggests that local media can "facilitate greater levels of risk-taking" (p 273).

Guidebooks have been important in constructing risk as part of the history of climbing, folk-tales relay climbers of the past taking risks for the pleasure of the sport, at a time when a leader's fall would often lead to death, thus these climbers have been awarded heroic status. Furthermore, these books maintain ethics that ensure a level of risk; boulderers' are reminded that using mats although advisable for environmental reasons, will make the problem easier because it is effectively safer (Grimes, 2007). Technology and equipment are seen as useful to preserve some form of safety but not to the extent that risk is removed (Hardwell, 2007). In saying that climbers are willing to die for their sport and providing suggestions of how climbers can maintain their risk-taking with increased rationalisation Lewis (2001) perpetuates the importance of risk-taking, and reinforces a somewhat 'heroic' image of climbers. This normative position is used to "encourage individuals to engage voluntarily in self-regulation in response to these norms" (Lupton, 1999a: 26). In other words, climbers are encouraged or pressured to take risks to establish both self and collective identities.

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Not only the media, but other climbers, those seen as 'experienced' climbers normalise these discourse. In a sense, they can act as legislators or experts about risk (Beedie, 2007) who pass this 'knowledge' onto new and inexperienced climbers. This shown in Donnelly and Young's (1994) work on identity formation within climbing, they suggest that novice climbers learn from other more experienced climbers appropriate ways to deal and talk about fear. In their initiation they are often 'sandbagged' i.e. taken up a route that will be somewhat testing for the novice in order for them to prove themselves as climbers. It can be seen then that climbers who take risks are respected within the climbing community, and climbers' behaviour is judged both by others and by the self according to their alignment to this norm. Foucault refers to this as normative judgement (1977). Privileged and dramatised stories of risk promote the idea that risk-taking for individual achievement is the primary purpose of climbing. Climbers learn and express the appropriate sub-cultural signs of self-control over both their physical body at risk i.e. through movement, the use of protection and avoidance of the Disco leg (Bate and Arthur, 2006) as well as over their emotional body i.e. not to show overt signs of fear, and learning more appropriate 'techniques' of discussing fear (Donnelly and Young, 1994).

Thus far, I have analysed the discourses, and ways in which climbers are encouraged to take risks. However as I said initially discourses around risk-taking within the climbing community are complex, contradictory and actively debated, although on one hand risk-taking is important, so is an awareness of one's own capabilities for the demonstration of controlled, systematic preparation and knowledge of these risks (Robinson, 2008; Kiewa, 2001). As Heywood (2006) discusses there is "a constant oscillation between the two" (p456). Climbers are encouraged, to not necessarily take, but to minimise and control the risks (West and Allin, 2010).

Climbers refer to the process of learning how to climb as an apprenticeship, during this process climbers are encouraged to progress slowly both from seconding climbs to learning to lead in adventure or traditional climbing, and then through the grades ensuring that they develop sufficient skills to be able to analyse and minimise the risks. This is very much a process of learning how to assess and control risky situations and how to use one's body, Howe (2007) highlights: performance "can be trained...in the sense of a detailed and specific knowledge of the sport" (p51). In becoming a climber, climbers learn the difference between acceptable and unacceptable risks and good climbers are those that are adequately prepared for the risks that they take (West and Allin, 2010).

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The individualisation of risk management is shown in climbers' response to climbing accidents. The climbing media will usually blame the individual by pointing out poor error and judgement, or they will suggest that it was down to bad luck, an evaluation Lareundeau (2006) found was expressed by skydivers. Simon (2002) argues that this is in order to regulate future actions, an act of surveillance over risk-taking behaviour. Blaming individual mistakes justifies to the wider climbing community that if you act appropriately and manage your own risk-taking then accidents can be avoided. The management of risk does support neo-liberalism where individuals take "responsibility for their actions" (West and Allin, 2010:1236). Maintaining control in a risk situation is not just a sensation of feeling in control but it involves the identification of oneself as a climber through demonstrating the mastery of an important skill (Young and Dallairre, 2008).

3.4. Gender

Gender analyses of adventure sports have suggested that these activities potentially offer alternatives to the heterosexual patriarchal structure of traditional sports. This is in reference to the possibilities of alternative masculinities in sports such as climbing (see Robinson, 2008, 2004; Plate, 2007); windsurfing (see Wheaton, 2004, 2003, 2000); skateboarding (see Beal and Wilson, 2004; Beal, 1996, 1995); surfing (Evers, 2009; Booth, 2004) and snowboarding (Anderson, 1999). As well as the possibility of empowering women or creating alternative femininities in sports such as climbing (Dilley, 2007, 2006) and snowboarding (Laurendeau and Sharara, 2008; Thorpe, 2006, 2005) and windsurfing (Wheaton, 2002; Woodward 2000; Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998). However, these sports have also been seen to replicate and reinforce dominant gender relations where women are excluded, sexualised, or marginalised and that men and women are positioned and embody traditional gender distinctions (Kiewa, 2001).

This part of the chapter uses the work of Foucault and post-structural feminists (including the work of Judith Butler, 1990). Foucauldian inspired feminist explorations of sport highlight that masculine and feminine bodies are not 'natural' but nevertheless that sport has been used to discipline both men and women's bodies into multiple ways of acting (Pringle, 2009, 2005, 2001; Thorpe, 2008; Markula, 2001; 1995, Cox and Thompson, 2000; Shogun, 2000; Bordo, 1993; Heikkala, 1993; Bartky, 1988). This has shown, for example, that discourses of heterosexuality and physicality, in producing masculinities and femininities have acted to constitute a gendered binary between men and women and these biological understandings have then been used to reinforce differences between men and women as 'natural.' Influenced by Foucault, Butler's (1990) work has set out to question these 'true' binaries of masculine and

feminine, instead she suggests that there is not a pre-cultural body and instead that gender is an identity "constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylised repetition of acts" (p141). It is from the repetition of these acts or the internalisation of discourses that certain bodily performances are recognised as masculine or feminine. Yet Markula and Pringle (2006) add that these discourses can create alternative masculinities and femininities that potentially challenge "dominant understandings of masculinities (and femininities)," (p102, own addition in brackets). The media representation will primarily be used to show how climbing can be seen to differentiate masculinity and femininity in ways that mark and produce 'naturalised' male and female bodies but also how climbing is a construct that potentially destabilises natural gender distinctions (Pringle and Markula, 2005; Caudwell, 2003).

3.4.1. Masculinities and femininities in climbing

The concept of physicality has been used to imply masculine sporting prowess and physical power, which has tended to 'naturalise' men as strong and active whilst women are perceived in opposition as weak and passive (McDermott, 2004). However, Dilley (2007) argues that the experience of physicality or being physically active can be empowering for women because being physically active and strong is somewhat contradictory to emphasised femininity. Furthermore climbing has been seen to offer more opportunities for alternative masculinities because climbing values graceful movement as much as physical strength (Plate, 2007). As Dorian (2003) highlights, climbing competitions allows non-muscular and skinny men to compete.

The increased number of female climbers within niche magazines and on climbing websites reflects the increased participation by female climbers. At the turn of the 20th century as rock climbing became recognised as a sport on its own it became less exclusive. Miriam O'Brien was the first female to break away from male assistance by leading a women only ascent of the Matterhorn in 1932 (Birkett & Peascod, 1989). Female rock climbers increased in visibility in the sixties and seventies, when under the influence of the counter-culture movement advocational subcultures were seen to perceive adventure sports like climbing as a way of life (Ryan, 2005). These developments coincided, in post-World War Two Britain, with the legality of divorce and abortion and the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act and consequently increased work rights for women, women had more freedom than ever before. Furthermore, second wave feminism led to the devaluing of sport as a male only domain and more women started to participate in adventure sports (Thorpe, 2007). Ryan (2005) suggests that more women became involved in climbing because increased rights "gave women more confidence to

break out from their stereotypical and culturally imposed roles and encouraged many to enter what had previously been bastions of masculinity."

However, despite increased participation and presence of female climbers in the climbing media, and the representation of female climbers as respected participants, the increasing value of physically 'hard' traditional climbing or 'sporting achievement' in Britain has meant that women are under-represented when climbing traditional climbs, and this is particularly within British climbing films, where women are virtually non-existent. The physically enduring and dangerous nature of climbing that is portrayed by the climbing media has tended to be associated with normalised masculinity (Koivula, 2001) and this is further reinforced when female bodies are absent (Mackay and Dallaire, 2009). Foucault (1981) refers to these as processes of exclusion, which "ensure that boundaries are kept and only certain people are allowed to access these privileged subjectivities" (Erickson, 2006: p392). Marking characteristics in this way acts to differentiate groups and dictates to others the way in which sport should be done. By focusing on hard climbing and reinforcing the importance of grades the climbing media enforce a differentiation between men and women based around physicality and ability. As Thorpe (2008) found in snowboarding there was an assumption that women did not perform at the level of men and that they were therefore "less deserving of coverage" (p206).

When women do potentially challenge men's superiority, their achievements are treated with doubt or are often explained by men as women having a 'natural advantage'. This is seen in the media treatment of the ascent of *the Meltdown* by Beth Rodden, which was in part attributed to her small hands: "Her sequence involves an ultra-thin two finger lock and some crazy high-steps that are probably impossible for a tall dude with fat fingers" (Lowell, cited in Geldard, 2008). Wheaton (2004b) equates the perceived threat of women's sporting prowess to participants' masculinity as indicative of a discourse of laddishness, which included men normalising behaviours that "distanced themselves from behaviour or activity associated with femininity" (p136).

Thorpe (2008) additionally suggests that despite alternative female bodies (lesbian, muscular etc) the media tends to privilege particular versions. Potentially the commercialisation of climbing and other adventure sports have seen an increase in sexualised images that emphasise women's passiveness and femininity (Appleby and Fisher, 2005). Loomis (2005) and Ryan (2005) indicate that whist the climbing media do represent the action shots, and the achievements of women that there has been an increase in climbing adverts for climbing brands

that sexualise non-climbing women, as well as images of scantily clad, heterosexually attractive female climbers, generally climbing sport not traditional routes. MacKay and Dallaire (2009) suggest that the strategy of these discourses is to establish heterosexuality. Problematically this portrays an image that, whilst sport may be a pleasurable experience that allows women to create new meanings of sporting involvement for men and women, women also have to "conform to cultural ideals associated with female bodies" (Cox and Thompson, 2000: 7).

As Helstein (2007) among others has noted, these representations maintain the contradiction between conventional or emphasised femininity and athletic performance, the privileging or representation of discourses that emphasise gendered movement are internalised by male and female climbers and serve to discipline bodies that are masculine and feminine (Dilley, 2006; Bartky, 1988).

Particular climbs have been assigned to male and female bodies, for example, steep, overhanging climbing requires strength and so is defined as a male style of climbing, while women are associated with more slabby, technical climbs[7] (Plate, 2007; Robinson, 2008). Thus it does seem that a discourse of physicality and muscularity serve to position men's bodies as athletically strong and active whilst women's are passive and weak (Cox and Thompson, 2000). Dowling (2000) argues that the physicality of sports, or the association that participating in sport produces muscular bodies, has been somewhat off-putting for some women because the muscular female body is modified in accordance with discourse of female heterosexuality (see also Markula, 1995). It seems that women are expected to perform to a set standard yet display appropriate performance of femininity and the representation of female climbing bodies as taut but thin demonstrates how female sporting bodies and sexuality have been "produced by men for men – the male gaze" (Caudwell, 2003:231). Muscularity is equated to sexuality, by which women are under surveillance to constantly represent their heterosexuality. Yet following Butler and Foucault's work it is conceivable that female climbers who demonstrate commitment and disrupt normative femininity through muscularity and ability can potentially disrupt the performance of emphasised femininity. This is not just symbolically, Simone de Beauvoir notes that the feelings of being physical are empowering for women:

> Not to have confidence in one's body is to lose confidence in oneself. [.] It is precisely the female athlete, who being positively interested in their own game, feel themselves least handicapped in comparison with the male. [.] Let her swim, climb mountain peaks, pilot an airplane, battle against the elements, take risk, go out for adventure, and she will not feel before the world that timidity (de Beauvoir, 1989: 373).

Chapter Three: Deconstructing a climbing identity

The representation of physically competent female climbers subverts the sexualised female body with one that is skilful and powerful, this makes alternative discourses available for women. It allows female bodies to be recognised for their competencies and not what they look like.

Not only is this empowering for women, but the representation of physically strong and active female bodies is embraced by many male climbers (Plate, 2007). Wheaton (2004) and Robinson (2008) have both implied that adventure sports can potentially produce masculinities that are ambivalent; where co-operation and camaraderie are valued above competition. These discourses of support and inclusivity for both women and alternative masculine bodies coexist alongside discourses of improvement that disciplining climbers.

The climbing and mass media can represent quite a narrow view of masculinity, i.e. a strong and 'heroic' masculinity and instead Plate (2007) and Robinson (2004) suggest that climbing masculinities are not only multiple but are contextual, and transitional, relating to climbers position within the climbing community and other life spheres. The importance of trust in climbing can enable men to express their emotions, and to develop intimate friendships with both men and women, and the discourse of nature can produce men that enjoy climbing not for the competition and status but for being in the natural environment (Robinson, 2008). Robinson (2008) warns though that it is simplistic to overstate the importance of climbing for producing alternative masculinities, and whilst in one context men may develop and perform alternative masculinities, on others they may perform masculinity for their own advantage. This is discussed more in both the next chapter, and in the rest of this thesis, however, first I wish to look at how risk discourses relate to constructions of gender in climbing.

3.4.2. Risk discourses and gender

Palmer (2004) suggests that the discourse of risk-taking is gendered, whilst women do take risks and through doing this disrupt notions of a gender binary, discourses of risk can continue to normalise gendered difference in risk-taking.

Research has argued that risk-taking in sport (both traditional and adventure sport) has been associated with dominant masculinity (see Robinson, 2004) so that "while men engage in risk leisure activities in an attempt to conform to dominant notions of masculinity, women's conceptions of risk-taking in sport are also highly related to assumptions about appropriate

gender performance" (Young and Dallaire, 2008:239). Thus, it seems risk-taking and fearlessness are examples of discourses that act to divide both men from other men and from women as Jordan (2005) argues is apparent in mountaineering:

> With every rope the suffered second-guessing, petty jealousy and recrimination, not to mention the resentment of men who felt challenged when women achieved the same feats that they had heralded as pushing the limits of what the human body can endure. After all if a woman could do it, how dangerous could it be? (Jordan, 2005: 20).

Ray (2009) suggests that examples of risk-taking in adventure sports are portrayed by the mass media as acts of individual conquest and courage (p250) which is synonymous with a white middle-class, able-bodied masculinity most effectively shown through the lack of black, disabled or women in these stories. Similarly, the niche climbing media glorify the falls and injuries of male climbers, these discourses contribute to the construction of risk-taking as performing masculinity, whilst femininity is associated with discourses of risk avoidance.

These discourses act to normalise unequal gendered power relations, ignoring both the similarities between men and women, as well as the differences between groups of women, and groups of men. Problematically if risk-taking is positioned as a privileged part of rock climbing and is seen as necessary to performing masculinity (Plate 2007) then it may potentially impinge women participating and their status within the climbing community. This is because if women don't take risks then they may not be accepted as climbers, yet if they do take risks the can be seen as selfish (Palmer, 2004).

These discourses of risk influence how men and women experience and understand risk-taking, for example Tulloch and Lupton (2003) suggests that men and women perceive risk differently, in relation to social constructions of masculine and feminine behaviour. Lois (2001, 2005) supports this argument, her research showing that men suppress emotion and emphasise self confidence when in a high risk situation, whilst women felt that they were both more aware of risks, and more likely to display their emotions. It would seem that the contradictions between risk-taking and femininity were embodied by women, because Lois suggests that this meant women saw themselves as marginal in the group, as Dilley (2007) explains: "the physical show of emotions through tears and facial expressions, is considered feminine, and thus, a sign of weakness" (Dilley, 2007: 11). Similarly, it can constrain, and normalise notions of masculinity, Robinson suggests that "the risk sport of climbing is intimately wrapped up in a masculine image and identity in very traditional ways" (p160) and she suggests that men are admired for

taking risks, and suppressing fear. Thus, if men show emotions or fear, then their masculine image could be seen as 'at-risk' (Connell, 2002).

Whilst these discourses indicate that certain understanding about gender have become 'normative' or established and thus constrict particularly women taking risks, at the same time Young and Daillaore (2010) and Robinson (2008) both argue that men and women challenge the link between masculinity and risk-taking. As Pringle (2001) argues sport also produces men and women who resist discourses of 'hegemonic masculinity' and 'emphasised femininity', for example, producing men who question and reject the notion that "*real men* take and inflict pain without overt emotional displays" (Pringle, 2001: 426, emphasis in original). As discussed above the discourse of risk-management or the control of risk is prevalent in climbing, so climbers can be valued for avoiding risk, and both Kay and Laberge (2004) and Robinson (2008) indicate that this discourse can constitute adventure sports as spaces for both men and women. Furthermore, research has indicated that women involved in sport take the same risks as men (Malcolm, 2006). As both Young and Dalliare (2010) and Pomerantz et al. (2004) highlight that just like men, some women enjoy taking risks within adventure sports for self-improvement, and the emotional enjoyment. Whilst notions of risk-taking and femininity have been positioned as contradictory female climbers are disciplined as climbers, and thus could be seen to resist normalised ways of performing femininity by taking risks (Young and Dallaire, 2008; Beal and Wilson, 2004; Kay and Laberge, 2004; Pomerantz et al., 2004).

Thus whilst accounts of risk do seem to be influenced by gendered understandings of climbing, climbers positions within other discourses cannot be ignored, as will be discussed in the next chapter, discourses of responsibility can construct mothers and fathers experiences. Furthermore, discourses of ageing may discipline climbers' bodies to think critically and approach risks differently because it is often young people that are admired for taking risks (Robinson, 2008).

3.5. Discourses of class, race and age

As Wheaton and Tomlinson (1998) argue, although diverse identities exist certain characteristics are prevalent. Gendered sporting identities are related to notions of race, class and age.

3.5.1. Class

Chapter Three: Deconstructing a climbing identity

Post-war work into subcultures using Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, suggest that class was a central factor in the formation and growth of subcultures, and that working-class groups (such as MODS and rockers) symbolically resisted the wider class culture (Atkinson and Young, 2008). This approach influenced empirical research into adventure sports such as skateboarding (1995) and snowboarding (Coates et al., 2010) and although still a useful concept for understanding alternative sporting forms has come under criticism among post-subcultural sociologists since the 1990's (Weinzierl and Muggleton, 2003) and more recently among sociologists of sport (See Wheaton, 2007). One of the main criticisms being that class is no longer a fixed indicator of subcultural identity, as well as ignoring race, age and gender.

Historically speaking climbing is somewhat different from the board sports of surfing, skateboarding, windsurfing and snowboarding. Until post-World War Two climbing was exclusively a pastime of the upper-to-upper-middle-classes (Simon, 2005). This elitism was maintained by climbing clubs that were the primary means of meeting other climbers and being offered places on climbing expeditions. In opposition the masses were represented as unable to understand and appreciate the sublime quality of the mountains (Lewis, 2001). Post-WWII saw an increase in the number of working class climbers, where the iconic figures of Joe Brown and Don Whillans raised the levels of climbing, Crook (2003) suggests this change was in part due to the increase in leisure time and more accessible countryside, because cars became more affordable. In terms of access and acceptance within climbing it does seem that class boundaries in climbing have blurred, this is especially with the growth in climbing walls and bouldering, which has meant that climbing is more accessible to less affluent participants. However, Fletcher (2008) and Wheaton (1997) suggest that adventure sports participants are still predominantly members of the professional middle-class, in climbing this is particularly so among traditional climbing, which requires a lot of time and equipment (Robinson, 2008; Hardwell, 2007). It could be suggested that leisure continues to "foster different types of collective identities among class groups" (Wheaton, 1997:304) and adventure sports in particular are the pursuit of fragments of the professional middle-class (Featherstone, 1991). It seems then that although participation is not limited by a fixed class identity that class identities may impact involvement and commitment in particular forms of climbing.

3.5.2. The invisibility of race

Although this research does not attempt to examine the meaning of race or ethnicity with regard to British climbing or the participants in this research, I feel a few words are needed to highlight

how climbing is 'white.' By this, I suggest that whiteness is a concept that "functions to achieve the subjection of the individual to form the individual as a racial subject." (Ehlers, 2008: 334) and discourses of whiteness establish differences based on the visibility of the body.

The exploration of racial identities within adventure sports is lacking (see Wheaton, 2009 for an exception) and there is little consideration both of how racial identities are constructed and experienced and interact with discourses of gender, class, age and sexuality. Kusz (2004) looking at the adventure sport rhetoric indicates that these sports are represented and are distinctly white spaces. Within climbing space, particularly outdoor climbing, and within the climbing media whiteness is constructed as the norm and non-white participants are invisible or marginal. Erickson (2006) suggests that the romantic image of climbing as resistant to modernity hides the privileging of white masculinity, which is the identity that is revered within climbing.

3.5.3. Ageing bodies

Adventure sports, particularly the board sports of snowboarding, skateboarding and surfing have been considered as the bastion of youth; perceived as activities through which primarily young males resist authority and bureaucracy (Beal, 1995). Climbing is somewhat distinct from these sports in that it has, although perhaps not a diverse participant base in terms of race has long been practiced by men and women of many ages, and the 'older' established climbers are treated with respect within the climbing community. However, ageing discourses, and the practices and transitions associated with age do influence how climbers experience and maintain their identity. Powell and Biggs (2003) suggest that Foucault's work demonstrates how 'natural' truths have been established and are used to discipline ageing bodies. Characteristic of this is; the relative lack of attention to ageing bodies in the media, where the experiences and faces of youth are in full force, and a rather functional or pathological chronological approach to ageing which does not consider how age is complex and identities are multiple (Humberstone, 2010).

Despite this Allin and West (2010) demonstrate that age influences one's experience of climbing, for example, how older climbers were more cautious of risking injury and aware of their limitations. Robinson (2008) highlights that as climbers' age, their position in other discursive fields influences their climbing identity, such as when they develop careers or establish families. Conceptions of age that dominate in society seem prevalent in climbing, for example, it is somewhat expected that 'older' climbers should spend less time climbing, and

those that maintain their time-commitment to climbing, when it is not their career, are positioned as "an object of pity" (p117). Thus, it is suggested that the functional model of the regulated lifecycle still is used to make sense of climbers' age. However, Humberstone (2010) highlights how identities established in leisure and adventure sports can influence the experience and 'truths' about age, suggesting that some participants contest chronologically based assumption about age.

3.6. Chapter Summary

Within this chapter, I have analysed many of the discourses that construct what is 'known' about climbing. I have provided a brief history of rock climbing forms and this has shown how there are multiple discourses that construct a climbing identity, pointing out that these discourses change, and thus what is positioned as authentic is also likely to change. In relation to risk-taking, both societal and local discourses were often contradictory, with both risk-taking and risk-management encouraged. In relation to gendered discourses, climbing can be seen to produce both normative and alternative gendered identities. Whilst an analysis of these discourses does present a somewhat critical, and perhaps negative view of how climbing identities can be disciplined and normalised, this is disconnected from people's reactions to these disciplines, which is examined in part three of this thesis. Yet using Foucault's earlier work remains important, as Andrews (1993) highlights to analyse the "discursive formations that surround sport" (p.162) to try to understand how identities are created. Markula (2004) adds that a discursive analysis helps to show that supposed 'natural' identities are not fixed, but instead produced through discourse, which can challenge oppression.

The next chapter in this thesis will bring the discursive formations of parenting and climbing together, primarily through analysing the research on leisure and parenting, and examining the competing discourses of risk and responsibility in relation to parenting.

ENDNOTES ─────────────

[1] The concept or subculture has strong connotations of the work that was theoretically informed by neo-Marxist approaches by the Birmingham based Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) on post-war subcultures. This work was based on empirical research into post-war working class men who were seen as resistant to dominant mainstream culture and parenting culture. This work still has value today and remained influential in research into adventure sports in the 1990s and the noughties (see Coates et al., 2010; Beal, 1996). However, the approach has come into criticism both for its over-romanticism of the notion of resistance, the

over–emphasis on class, and for the portrayal of subcultures s rather static (Weinzierl and Muggleton, 2003). Late 1990's analysis of adventure sports subcultures (see Wheaton, 2004) have instead played down the oppositional nature of these activities, suggesting that in post 1990's culture that style and these activities have been commoditised so that there is little distinction between the sub-community and dominant culture. Thus, there has been a challenge to using the term subculture, with alternatives including lifestyle, tribes, and genres. However, these researchers maintain that these activities are important in the identity construction of participants, and can provide long-term commitments, when gender, class, family and work identities are increasingly fragmented (Atkinson and Young, 2008). Therefore, Atkinson and Young (2008) imply that, theoretical differences considered, the term subculture remains a useful one, and it is a term I use at times throughout this chapter.

[2] The most direct-route

[3] Those using the CCCS approach saw authentic subcultures as political and resistant, they were 'real' and defined themselves in opposition to what they saw as dominant mainstream culture, whilst opposed to this post-structural and postmodern takes on subcultures emphasise the "fragmented and contradictory nature and practices of identity," and of authenticity (Wheaton, 2007: 293). Suggesting, instead, that there are different types of involvement, and ways in which difference, and status is established; including through commitment, consumption of products, language or media. This means that post-modern and post-structural theories of subcultures are anti-essentialist, instead of an 'authentic' natural climbing identity, what is authentic comes into play through discourse, which is reiterated by climbers. So instead of 'being' a climber, one acts or performs a climbing identity.

[4] For example, in the late nineteenth century, rock climbing was positioned as in-authentic in comparison to mountaineering (Crook, 2002), during the 1970s and 1980s traditional climbing was seen as 'authentic'.

[5] The grading system for traditional climbing in the UK has two different categories, one is the adjectival grade, indicating the overall difficulty and severity of the route (ranging from Easy (E) Moderate (M) Difficult (Diff) Very Difficult (VDiff) Severe (S) Hard Severe (S) Very Severe (VS) Hard Very severe (HVS) to Extreme (goes from E1 to E10 at the moment) and the other is the technical grade (from 3a-3c; 4a-4c; 5a-5c; 6a-6c; 7a-7c; 8a is the hardest technical grade on a traditional route)

[6] The bouldering grade system was the B system, which was conceptualised by North American John Gill in the 1950s, before bouldering was a sport on its own, it only had three levels B1 was the highest level of difficulty on a traditional route, B2 was a bouldering level and B3 was a route that had only been climbed once. He thought that this approach would both increase the popularity of climbing, but not encourage bouldering to be all about grades. This approach did not really take off, especially when bouldering became seen as a self contained activity, and instead this was replaced by the V grade system, designed by John Sherman at Hueco Tanks in the 1990s. In Britain originally British technical grades (see above) were used to grade bouldering problems which were better at accounting for differences in grades at the lower end of the system, but less so for the harder problems. In the 1990s the B grade was created by Alan Williams to extend the V grade system into the lower grades. This system has gone out of fashion and now in Britain most guidebooks and indoor climbing walls use the V grade system, the British technical grade, or, on occasion the font grading system is used.

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[7] Slab climbing: Climbing sloped rock so the style of climbing is quite technical requiring good footwork and balance.

Chapter Four:
Competing discourses:
Gendered climbing and parenting

Although leisure studies has explored mothers' (see White & Clough, 2001) and fathers' (see Kay, 2009) experiences of personal and family leisure, the experiences of parents and families that are involved in a particular sporting activities has had very little attention in sociological research. In adventure sports, in particular, although research has explored male and female's gendered experiences there has been, with a few limited exceptions, little attention to the experiences of parents (see: Spowart et al., 2010, 2008: Robinson, 2008; Summers, 2007; Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998). Whilst the previous two chapters focussed on the discursive fields of climbing and parenting separately, a Foucauldian approach to understanding identities recognises that: one's identity is not fixed or separate from other spheres for example at work, as a father/mother/husband/wife climber (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). Therefore I attempt to bring these two fields together and recognise that "these subject positions might stand in complete contradiction to each other" (Helstein, 2007: 85). Climbing makes an interesting activity for the analysis of parents 'experiences, with many of the discourses of climbing seemingly contradicting the discourses of intensive parenting. This is not only because of the high commitment in time that is required by climbers but also because of the potential risks involved, as Furedi (1997) suggests parents who take part in risky activities are potentially stigmatised. Thus although our identities are fragmented, so that parents who climb are subjected to discourses of climbing and parenting, the interaction between the two can be somewhat ambiguous.

Both early and more recent feminist research in sport and leisure has tended to focus on the experiences of mothers in leisure (Raisborough, 2006; Henderson, 1996; Oakley, 1974). This was primarily over issues of access, suggesting that although personal 'out of home' physical activity is seen as potentially liberating for women, their location "within a gendered social order" (Raisborough, 2006: 243) has meant that mothers are socially constructed as primary caregivers, and so have limited time for their own leisure. Today although access may have improved for women and mothers, the dominance of the ethic of care or intensive mothering is somewhat at odds with activities that can be quite consuming. As Maher and Lindsay (2005) highlight: "the notion of leaving a child for pleasure, self-gratification or even self-enrichment is represented as the most unacceptable form of maternal practice" (cited in Spowart, 2010:6).

However, post-structural approaches to women's leisure highlight the need to take into account that although the 'ethic of care' may constrain women's leisure it is also enabling and participating in leisure, or maintaining an identity as a climber allows mothers to create space for themselves.

Furthermore, Such (2002) argues research into leisure and gender needs to take into account men's experience of leisure. With the expansion of research into men and masculinity in the last twenty years there has been increasing consideration of fathers leisure time, this research suggests that men's experience of fathering is changing. With increasingly high expectations on the fathers role in childcare (Hobson, 2002) fathers are now positioned as central in directing family and child leisure (Coakley, 2006).

In this chapter, then, I bring out some of the discourses that arose in the preceding two chapters; primarily those of commitment and risk, by using the literature within the sociology of leisure and the sociology of sport to discuss both how parents maintain their individual leisure, and how this is gendered. I will then discuss some of the literature on family leisure, before finally discussing how the contradiction between risk and responsibility has been gendered.

4.1. Parenting and commitment to personal leisure

Whilst Such (2006) suggests that the transition to both fatherhood and motherhood alters the experience and meaning of personal leisure, more often than not curtailing their "opportunity for autonomous leisure" (p 193), she also suggests that the implications and negotiations of leisure time are gendered with different expectations upon the mother and father.

4.1.1. Commitment to climb OR mother

Functionalist approaches in the 1950s and 60s classified leisure as free time outside paid work, feminists were somewhat critical of this andocentric definition because it excludes the experiences of adults who are not employed, thus ignoring the unpaid obligations of domestic work and childcare that mothers endured (Standing, 2001; Wearing, 2000, 1998). Furthermore Pfister (2001) highlights that women, and especially mother's time is not easily "compartmentalised into 'time for work' and 'time for leisure'." (p76). Since the 1950's female employment has risen, and with industry changes resulting in more part-time or temporary service jobs more mothers have accessed work. In 2008, 70% of women were employed and two thirds of mothers were in some form of employment (UK National Statistics, 2011). This

rise in employment led researchers to study the impact of employment, as well as how equitable employment policies influence mothers leisure time (Kay, 2000). Whilst employment figures may suggest a more equitable scenario, this does not necessarily lead to changes in gendered parenting (Henderson et al., 2001, Henderson, 1996). Instead, feminists suggest that women were in fact doing a double or second shift, taking paid employment and continuing to do the majority of the housework and caring (Hays, 1996; Pfister, 2001; Hochschild, 1988). Similarly, whilst access and opportunity for leisure may have improved for women, they remain constricted by discourses of moral and intensive caring, a practice that never ends and so their own leisure time is the first to suffer (Stalp et al., 2008, Stalp, 2006). Both Robinson (2008) and Thompson (1999) indicate that fathers are able to maintain the time and space to continue playing sport because their partners enable and support it.

Odih (2003, 1999) using a Foucauldian approach, suggests that time has been dualistically gendered, whereby femininity has been constructed by discourses that position women's time as relational or for the consumption of others, and men's time as linear. In attempting to break this down she suggests "that particular versions of 'masculinity' or 'femininity' are never inevitable" (Odih, 1999: 13) but that nevertheless both women's "ascribed domestic role...and subordinate position in the public sphere encourage a disproportionate experience of relational time by female subjects," (p30). This is particularly relevant when concerned with mothers, 'good mothers are seen as putting their family first before their own personal leisure time (Wimbush, 1988). Individuals become the bearers of discourse, internalising and acting out specific or ideals of behaviours, and so an awareness of self as mother, has meant that mothers have expressed a sense of guilt at sacrificing time with their children in order to make time for themselves (Spowart et al., 2008; Shaw, 1997, 1994).

This can be somewhat problematic for mother's continued involvement in climbing, because not only does both traditional and sport climbing take a lot of time, but as indicated in chapter three, the continual demonstration of time commitment is part of performing a climbing identity. Therefore mothers who climb, find themselves torn between maintaining their climbing identity and working at 'being a good mother'. Professional climbers Catherine Destivelle and Lynn Hill, who suggest that their climbing had significantly reduced since having children (Loomis, 2005), have noted this constraint. Mothers report finding it difficult to leave their children, or to focus on climbing once becoming parents, even when their children accompany them on a day out, mothers would find themselves watching over them while their husbands or partners continued to climb (Stirling, 2009).

Chapter Four: Competing discourses

Representations of femininity are "bound up with behaviours which deny the value of self and autonomy, and define meaningful existence as achieved through the care of others," (Odih, 1999:17). Instead of accessing their own leisure, mothers are expected to sacrifice and facilitate their partners and children's leisure time, to not do so means women risk categorisation as selfish, or unfeminine. As Gillespie (2001) argues, scientific and political constructions of femininity have centred on the desire and embodiment of notions of mothering, whilst women who are non-mothers have been vilified, or are seen as deviant to notions of femininity. The 'othering', or making un-natural, of voluntary childlessness, serves to reinforce the 'normalness' of women's capacity to care.

However, post-structuralism and Foucault always allows of alternative meanings, and "competing desires and identifications may mean that the 'appropriately' gendered discourses may be resisted" (Harlow, 2002: 68). Therefore, there is the rejection that the ethic of care is the only discourse that directs women's behaviour, recognising that not only do women have different experiences but also that new discourses of femininity make way for different experiences and identities.

In the 1980's and 90's TV shows such as *Friends*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Sex and the City* told women to have fun, to think about one-self and to be independent. In the UK many women are choosing to have children later on in life, or not have children at all, because of the perceived loss of freedom and lack of fulfilment they perceive motherhood to bring (Gillespie, 2000, 2001, 2003). The responsibility and lack of flexibility associated with mothering can be a deterrent for many serious leisure practitioners to become mothers (Dilley and Scratton, 2010; Loomis, 2005; Wheaton, 1998). Their subjectivities as a climber related to discourses of "self-fulfilment and individualism" (Dilley and Scratton, 2010:133) and help frame their rejection of motherhood, and emphasised femininity, thus serious leisure could be a domain in which women can create these alternative femininities. This phenomenon does not seem to be limited to Western women. Nomaguchi (2006) suggests that increased leisure and personal time for women in Japan has led many young middle-class women, to put off having children to a later age. Nomaguchi suggests that this is a form of resistance to a Japanese culture, a culture which still positions the mother as completely responsible for her child. By choosing activities over motherhood, these committed women were able to demonstrate a femininity that is distinct from a nurturing role; adventure sports can offer an identity distinct from "roles as mothers and from male partners" (Wheaton, 1998: 263). Is it possible though for mothers themselves to maintain their own, personal space and time?

4.1.2. Mothers maintaining their leisure

Structural or 'modernist' approaches to leisure have taken a somewhat universal understanding of women's leisure, seeing mothers who take time for themselves as resistant to the structure of patriarchy, as the cause of women's oppression (Aitchison, 2005, 2000). However, a post-structurally informed understanding of agency instead identifies that mothers are always produced through power relations, so complex discourses act to define the performance of mothering, but also that mothers themselves can struggle to create new identities at the personal micro level. These alternative identities can be empowering for women, however it is questionable to what extent they trouble normative motherhood. As Spowart et al. (2010, 2008) show multiple discourses "come into play in various strategies" (Foucault, 1990:100) when mothers seek to maintain their sporting identities. Within the literature various strategies are used by mothers to maintain participation, these include: justifying participation by drawing on appropriate parenting discourses, demonstrating subjectivity as a climber, or creating space and troubling normative feminine identities (Allin, 2003; Little, 2002; Wearing, 1998).

With regard to appropriate parenting, Spowart et al. (2010) and (2008) found that the mothers in both of her research projects justified the time they had to themselves by suggesting that it improved family relationships (because they were happier) with both their partner and their children. Additionally in keeping fit, and doing something physical, they saw themselves as demonstrating appropriate examples to their children. It could be argued that whilst these justifications are a more flexible re-working of the all-encompassing, time-demanding intensive mothering discourse, the mothers do not really disrupt the intensive mothering norm. Instead in emphasising they were better mothers because of their leisure participation mothers justified their continual involvement in climbing by framing it alongside discourses of 'good mothering'. This is supported by Thompson's (1999) research into mother's who play tennis, she suggests that some of the mothers would position their time as last, and so only play tennis once their families needs were met, thus not questioning the assumption that women's time is relational. Furthermore, a concern with obesity and fitness of the nation has led to a number of initiatives directed at families, which has reinforced individual responsibility for health and fitness, and parents are disciplined to maintain and monitor their own, and their children's health and exercise**.**

Yet research has indicated that mothers placed value on their own time, and actively negotiated their lives to maintain it (Spowart et al., 2008; White and Clough, 2001). As discussed in

chapter three, within climbing certain practices and movements have become normalised, and subjects are disciplined, often unknowingly to adhere to these practices. Raisborough (2006) suggests that when women are involved in 'serious leisure practices' where commitment and activity identification are central to participants' sense of identity they will prioritise, and drop other social engagements or house-work in order to maintain their activities. In this way these practices and the spaces that these identities open up, can be empowering to mothers, because maintaining personal space allows mothers to feel more in control of their daily life (Currie, 2004) and leisure offers a reprieve from everyday responsibilities and the mundane aspects of childcare. Additionally the constant re-working of one's-self as a mother and as a climber, allows mothers' to retain a sense of themselves as a climber. Although as Odih (1999) argues this does not necessarily lead to the disruption of dominant knowledge, there is the potential for disruption of gendered power relations. Through creating this space, and making time, mothers can resist the discourses that have positioned them as constructed in relation to another i.e. in relation to their children or their partner, and instead they can develop their own identity and sense of belonging to a particular subculture. Pederson (2001) supports this suggesting that elite level sport allows mothers opportunities to achieve status not only as a mother but as an athlete. Continuing to make time to climb then can challenge beliefs, or disrupts established gender truths that mothers are not entitled to their own leisure (Wearing, 1990) and so it is resistant to persistent notions of mothering and femininity (Stalp, 2006). Through engagement in personal leisure, they are resisting 'truths' of a good mother that is always selfless (Bialeschki and Michener, 1994).

At a broader level, establishing leisure as an acceptable space for women and subsequently for mothers it is possible to form alternative ways of being (Currie, 2004). Furthermore, it can lead to more equitable gender relations in the home because mothers and fathers must negotiate childcare and domestic work (Shaw, 1994). Indeed, both Spowart et al. (2008) and Thompson (1999) highlight that when both partners were actively involved in a sporting activity that fathers were more likely to support their partner's maintenance of the activity, and share both domestic and childcare.

4.1.3. Fathers and their personal sport and leisure

As suggested above the 1960's and 1970's andocentric functional model of work/leisure was based on certain assumptions about the family i.e. the father as breadwinner, in which father's leisure time was perceived as something quite distinct from his provider role, it was time outside of work, where he was free to choose how to spend it (Roberts, 1970). This research has been

criticised not only for ignoring women and mothers constraints to leisure, but also for changes to family life. Despite this early research, most of the work from the 1980s and onwards on parenting and personal leisure or sport is feminist research into the experiences of women, which has included some research looking at father and leisure from the perspective of their partners (see Deem, 1986 and Kay, 2001). This research has tended to imply that "gender relations constrain women's access to leisure relative to their male partners," (Such, 2009: 76), or that fathers can be seen as entitled to maintain, and thus continue accessing autonomous leisure.

As a response to this research, pro-feminist inspired researchers such as Messner (1992) began to focus on men's sport and leisure, suggesting that sport was a site that reproduced hegemonic masculinity, which normalised men's subordination of women and other men (McKay, Messner and Sabo, 2000). From this top-down perspective, men's sporting experience tends to be categorised as a rather fixed notion. Post-structural analyses of men's experience in sport have instead sought to deconstruct sport, as shown in chapter three, to show that multiple masculinities are produced through sport, because subjects are positioned by a number of discourses (Fitzclarence and Hickey, 2001; Pringle, 2001). Yet Whitehead and Barrett's (2001) post-modern approach to masculinity suggests that specific and contextual notions of masculinity, produced and maintained through discourse, have served as a marker of identity, and they suggest that masculinity is renegotiated and performed by men in order to maintain a sense of belonging. If we apply this to sport, whilst sport can produce a plethora of masculinities, disciplinary practices in sport have acted to construct sport as a socially acceptable space or practice, through which men can develop and express quite limited versions of masculinity (Markula and Pringle, 2006).

Whilst these theoretical approaches potentially provide useful insight into masculinity, fathering and sport, there has been a lack of empirical consideration, of how discourses of fathering and discourses of sport are negotiated by men. Recent research is readdressing this by exploring fathers discursive and subjective experience of leisure and sport (see Kay, 2009; Robinson, 2008). This has suggested both that father's participation in sport and leisure has curtailed (Such, 2002, 2006) but also that men are able to maintain their sporting identities once they become fathers (Coakley, 2009; Harrington, 2009, 2006).

Anderson (2001) and Brown et al. (2001) suggest that despite discourses of 'alternative' fathering, and evidence that in practice fathers spend more time and gain more pleasure out of caring for their children, traditionally dominant discourses of parenting continue to position

mothers as responsible for caring. This has meant that although fathering requires a commitment to domestic responsibility, fathers have been, to some extent, 'freed' to maintain their sporting and leisure identities.

Within mountaineering literature, the feats, experiences and distance of fathers such as British mountaineer Chris Bonnington have been celebrated rather un-problematically, as Summers (2007) suggests, historically, fathers have been able to leave families behind to go climbing. Robinson (2008) explains this by suggesting that some of the fathers she interviewed continued to retain a primary sense of masculine and self-identity through their position within climbing discourses. However she argues that this does not mean that these men were in anyway 'freed' from discourses of fatherhood, and in fact many of them saw themselves as good fathers, noting the quality time they spend with their children.

Perhaps, as Dermott (2008) says, fathers do not necessarily equate the amount of time that they spend with children with their sense of themselves as a 'good' father, instead fathers focus on the elements of bringing up children that allow them to foster close relationships with their children. Problematically this can cause conflict with partners, and serves to maintain gendered power relations between mothers and fathers because mothers facilitate men's maintenance of a sporting identity through increased parental commitment. Robinson (2008) suggests this was particularly true of the previous generation of mountaineers, whilst she argues that contemporary climbing fathers were more likely to seek a balance, or negotiate their fathering and climbing identities, perceiving a need to be responsible partners and fathers. Kay (2006) does indicate that discourses of involved or intimate fathering have impacted fathers experience of sport, because fathers are expected to become more involved in the upbringing of their children. The discourses of compromise and balance produce an involved, flexible father (Such, 2009: p81) where men's sense of themselves as fathers is established through performing what they saw was a moral responsibility, which led them to question and feel guilt for taking time for themselves.

The changing construction of fatherhood suggests that men increasingly worry and reflect a desire to meet ideals of a selfless and caring father (Henwood and Procter, 2003). Furthermore, Such (2009) argues that fathers meaning of leisure changed, with some fathers experiencing leisure as time with or for children rather than for themselves.

4.2. Family leisure and parenting

Chapter Four: Competing discourses

The construction of family leisure has generally been used to support the concept of the nuclear family with functionalist or social-psychological research suggesting that family time supports and facilitates family functioning and well-being (Agate et al., 2009). In a time when the family as an institution is increasingly diverse and identities are fragmented and fluid, the assumption has been that family leisure is good for family development (Harrington, 2006b). Family time or leisure is thus conceptualised as a force that develops "cohesive, health relationships between husbands and wives and between parents and children" (Freeman and Zabrieskie, 2002: 131) as well as providing time to unwind aside from work or as quality time with children. Contributing to this outdoor activities and recreation have been positioned as promoting family cohesiveness and used as a therapeutic technique in the 'treatment' of maladaptive individuals or families (Gillis and Gass, 1993). These activities are generally non-risk activities, and thus whilst it can be said that climbing can possibly create family togetherness, as will be discussed below it is seen as somewhat problematic when it is an activity that involves risk (Maynard, 2007).

Whilst I would not necessarily refute these benefits, this perspective has been rather uncritical in its emphasis on the positivity of family leisure and does not take into account the conflict that family leisure can cause (Harrington, 2006c, Daly, 2001) between family members. Indeed, as will be discussed below feminist research into both men and women's experience of family leisure has highlighted that the provision of family leisure is gendered. Furthermore, leisure research has not critically examined how family time has supported the ethic of care or intensive parenting. Shaw and Dawson (2001) do consider this to some extent, conceptualising leisure as purposive, which considers how parents' value shared activities for the possibility of passing on family and moral values. However this again has not always considered gendered/class/racial differences and the emphasis is again on family leisure as a shared activity, and not that it is often time dedicated to either; children's organised activities (which are not always enjoyable or stress free for parents), or participating in parental leisure or sporting activities. As Harrington (2005) considers whilst family leisure is a meaningful experience for parents, research and practitioners need to consider both "how parents see themselves as 'good parents' through family leisure," (p3) and how mothers and fathers may engage in leisure differently. I consider some of this literature and the sociology of sport research into youth sport that has explored and explained parental sacrifice for children's activities.

4.2.1. Family leisure: A mother's obligation?

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Feminist research seeking to challenge gender inequities, or to indicate how mothers time is constructed for others through the dominance of the ethic of care, has suggested that mothers are more likely to sacrifice their own time for their children's sporting and leisure activities (Green et al., 1990), and the facilitation of their partner's leisure, as I have already suggested. Research into time use and ethnographic research indicate that it is mothers that continue to multi-task, and their leisure time is interrupted by emerging family needs (Mattingly and Sayer, 2006). Therefore, mothers do not necessarily view their time with family as leisure time, instead they suggest that time with the family is an extension of their duty of care and this may contribute to feelings of stress (Such, 2002).

Laureau (2002) indicates that the conception of middle-class intensive parenting, and particularly mothering entails the provision of a number of activities "that dominate family life and create enormous labour, particularly for mothers" (p748). Mothers are positioned as responsible for the holistic development of the child. Although what this entails has varied historically, currently it seems that family time is perceived as 'for children'. This entails that parents are governed to provide activities that are seen to contribute to children's moral, social, educational and physical development. This is not only for the short-term and temporary benefit of children, but mothers are governed to monitor and seek expert advice for the long-term, i.e. they invest in their children as future adults (Briggs, 2009). Furthermore, with the 'obesity epidemic' parents have been governed by discourses of health and obesity, which has positioned them as responsible for the surveillance of their children's eating and exercise habits, and thus have to invest more than ever in the physical activity and well-being of children (Burrows and Wright, 2004). This 'good enough plus' parenting has mean that mothers (particularly middle class mothers) have been primarily expected to invest in organised youth activities for their children, because these are seen as safe spaces so adults can monitor and keep their children safe (see Nelson, 2008) which are positive for the afore mentioned developmental reasons (Coakley, 2009). As Trussel (2009) highlights "mothers seek out organised activities to meet the cultural expectations of being a good mother, children's organised sport participation becomes an important context in the provision of such opportunities." (p24).

The work that mothers do to create and support their children's leisure often goes un-noticed (Thompson, 1999), and both Spowart et al. (2008) and Thompson (1999) highlight that even women that do continue to participate in sport, would still be primarily responsible for organising and supporting their families activities, experiencing guilt at times for maintaining their own sporting practice. The performance of 'good' normative parenting entails putting children first, and in repeating this act mothers do not trouble traditional gender relations,

having said that, a Foucauldian analysis allows the possibility that despite this, family leisure is not necessarily constraining and can be seen as an enjoyable and positive experience for mothers. This is particularly because family leisure time for climbing parents could be in the outdoors, and combining climbing with parenting could potentially allow mothers to maintain time to climb, but also maintain their evolving mothering identity through sharing their experiences with children.

4.2.2. Fathers providing through sport and leisure

Whilst Such (2009) argues that upon fatherhood, leisure becomes less individualised and more child-centred, much of the research suggests that in comparison to mothers, fathers may spend more time playing, and interacting with their children, rather than providing the perhaps mundane and everyday childcare (Brannen and Nilson, 2006; Kay, 2006).

Fathers time with children is impacted both by discursive constructions of masculinity and neo-liberal discourses which have influenced policy and consequently working conditions and rights for fathers. Generally resulting in less flexible working conditions, fathers have been relatively free to choose their amount of involvement with children. However, as discussed in the second chapter, the meanings of contemporary good fathering entail that fathers make and spend time with children; psychological research has contributed to the notion that father-child interaction is important for the development of the child, Trussell (2009) argues that this has contributed to the notion of the involved father. Dermott (2008) distinguishes between the meanings of different time that fathers spend with their children, she indicates that intensive time is time that fathers spend being with children, and this includes playing sports or other activities with children. The increased involvement of men with children may indicate that men are developing alternative fathering identities, with leisure allowing fathers opportunity to develop and foster relations, or interact with children (Hector and Proctor, 2003). Indeed as Harrington (2009) argues 'good' fathers are both seen as, and see themselves as providing or playing sport with their children (additionally see Hutchinson, et al., 2002). However, family and youth sport and leisure may provide a way in which fathers can become more involved in the upbringing of their child without them contributing to domestic responsibilities, and it is thus questionable whether this actually challenges the gendered notion of care.

Additionally it means that both mothers and fathers are expected to prioritise child-centred parenting, parents are seen as a key determinant behind children's initial involvement in sport,

acting both to govern children's health and to pass on values and beliefs. Fathers have been disciplined by discourses of domestic and sporting masculinity that position men both as entertainers for their children and as male role models (through sport) for their children (and particularly their sons) (Trussell, 2009; Harrington 2009; Messner, 1992).

The research into fathers' involvement with children through sport suggests that sport allows fathers to meet their childrearing expectations but maintain a performance of normative masculinity (Coakley, 2009; LaRossa, 2009). As suggested above, middle-class parents see children's activities, including youth sport, as increasingly important because they give children different experiences, teach them educational values, but take place in a controlled and 'safe' space. Parents see it as their responsibility to provide, encourage and 'be there' during these activities, not only for their children's future benefit but as a display of their own parenting. However, these responsibilities tend to be gendered, Thompson (1999) suggests that whilst mothers often did the behind the scenes organising and driving children to and from activities and watching from the sidelines, fathers were often the parent who were playing sports with children, or coaching children's games. This enables both parents to watch and ensure the safety of children in organised and adult controlled spaces (Jenkins, 2007; Blackford, 2004). Through organising or playing sport publically with children, fathers are able to maintain their involvement with their children without sacrificing an understanding of themselves as men, "avoiding the task of actually changing the culture and dynamics of lived everyday family life" (Coakley, 2009:45). Thus Such (2006) argues that fathers involvement in organised youth sport is different from the 'ethic of care' instead she suggests that:

> The notion of 'being with' the children in the context of leisure [sport] therefore is crucially different from the notion of 'being there' for children that is closely allied with theories of an 'ethic of care'. It differs from a theoretical perspective in that 'being with' children is informed by notions of masculinity that are tied to 'providing for' children and family both financially and emotionally. This may be informed by more traditional ideas of fatherhood, which centre on the breadwinner role. 'Being there' is informed by notions of femininity tied to the nurturing and caring role of motherhood. (p. 197).

Additionally LaRossa (2009) has suggested that through sport, fathers can teach their boys how to be men, whilst Coakley (2006) indicates that this is possible he also suggests that fathers may seek out sports, or encourage values of gender equity through sport. In explaining the importance of family leisure, fathers experiences do indicate that for them it is the shared activity, or it is the being together that is important, and this is particularly when fathers are involved in the activity themselves (Kay, 2009) because it allows fathers to pass on their own

values and experiences. However, Kay also suggests that through sharing sporting space, fathers can develop emotional intimacy, communication and a deeper level of interaction with their children. This may potentially allow fathers to develop alternative masculine identities, which fosters intimate relationships with their children. Indeed, Dermott (2008) and Doucet (2006) found that whilst 'being with' children, or spending quality time playing with children was seen by fathers as some of the most significant or important experiences for their fathering identity, it was not the only time that fathers provided.

The literature highlights that the experience, parental sacrifice and provision of family leisure is gendered, however, it is important to remember that the normative notions of mothers and fathers are in flux and not only this but parents are diverse and negotiate parental discourses with climbing, work, age, class etc. As Foucault highlights any practice can be, whilst not necessarily resistant as we are always situated within discursive positions, empowering and create alternative practices, thus engaging in leisure can challenge normative social expectations. Spowart et al. (2008) and Thompson (1999), for example, suggest that there is the indication that when parents are both involved in an activity, they may negotiate and share parenting, and Robinson (2008) highlights that age may make fathers more responsible. Interestingly, Chris Bonington, the aforementioned mountaineer was somewhat more critical of his distance from his sons in his later life. In an article in the Guardian (Tunstell, 2008) whilst Bonington does not regret his life choices, he reflects that it was only with age that he realised the difficulties his children had faced dealing with him being away for long lengths of time doing high-risk climbs. Risk-taking is seen as the antithesis of 'good' parenting and particularly 'good' mothering.

Whilst the literature on parental involvement in youth sport, and family leisure is important, it focuses primarily on organised sport, and children's activities, not on the diversity between families or critically on parental involvement in particular activities, including sporting activities that are also shared family activities. Furthermore, parents and researchers have been relatively uncritical about the potential negative outcomes of organised activities (Coakley and Pike, 2009). As suggested above through encouraging children to take part in these activities parents are cultivating the future success of their children (Lareau, 2002), and Trussell (2009) suggests that this may mean parents try to encourage children not to stop participation, and they may try to push their own interests on their children.

4.3. Responsibility, risk and parenthood

Chapter Four: Competing discourses

Risk is the issue that fills the wealth of mountaineering literature, with books covering ascents, near misses and losses, and climbers, or the family of climbers themselves reflecting on their experiences. Within this literature, Coffey (2005, 2003) suggests that questions about the costs of those risks to families and friends are often not asked, and the mountaineer's risks are often unquestioned within the climbing world. In her books, Coffey seeks to understand why elite mountaineers take the risks that they do when they have a responsibility to 'be there' for partners and families. In bringing these issues to light Coffey indicates Robinson's (2008) assertion that the "extreme influences and effects the mundane" (p 26), or that the perception of risk of injury or death involves thinking not just of the self, but of others, and this responsibility can deter climbers from forming relationships, and from having children (Robinson, 2008; Davis, 2008, personal communication). Whilst the notion of risk and responsibility may have been ignored publically in the climbing media, it is a very prominent one in both the national media and within the adventure sports literature (see Laurendeau, 2008; Summers, 2007; Palmer, 2004; Donnelly, 2003). The national media reaction's to risk-taking strongly alludes to the notion that parents should refrain from risk-taking, and to not do so means that they are ostracised, and labelled as irresponsible or bad parents.

This is particularly because discourses of childhood and of intensive parenting, mean that not only are parents are seen as responsible and personally accountable for childrearing, but children are perceived as less resilient and more vulnerable and parents are expected to virtually remove any possibility of risk or harm (Lee, 2009; James et al., 1998). This has meant that how parents bring up their children, is under the surveillance of the police, schools, and social workers. Although there are some benefits of this regulation and concern for children's well-being when parents or adults are a danger to children's physical and mental health, it has meant that parents' behaviour is regulated when they do not have any criminal offences (Smeyers, 2010). Parents are increasingly accountable for the twenty-four hour safety of their children, and this has meant that parents are increasingly conscious about their children's safety, but also that parents themselves should not take part in activities that involve risk (Furedi, 1997). Furthermore, Laurendeau (2008) and Donnelly (2004) suggest risk is gendered primarily through discourses of responsibility.   As Lee (2009) suggests:

> The idea that motherhood and maternal identity in particular has come to be increasingly influenced by claims about risk, and that, in turn, the construction of the 'good mother' has become closely linked to the development of rules that demand risk avoidance.

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Even among the climbing community Summers (2007) suggests that whilst fathers have been less prone to criticism, climbers have been particularly critical of mothers continuing to climb mountains. Similarly, whilst mothers who climb have reflected on their competing positions, and perhaps justified their continuing to climb, fathers have rarely discussed fatherhood, suggesting that fathers continue to be subjected as climbers above all else. Thus, Summers suggests that differences between expectations of male and female climbers become marked when they are parents. To explore the gendered notion of risk and responsibility I now explore the reaction to climber Alison Hargreaves' death on the mountain of K2.

The death of Alison Hargreaves on K2 in 1995, has arguably been the most reported and discussed death of a mountaineer within mainstream national media (see Rose and Douglas, 1999), mountaineering literature (see Jordan, 2005) and sociological research (Olstead, 2011; Spowart, 2010; Laurendeau, 2008; Gilchrist, 2007; Frohlick, 2006; Donnelly, 2004; Palmer, 2004). Sociological research has analysed this event with regard to its significance in demonstrating how society views risk-taking (Palmer, 2004) as an analysis of the 20th century hero (Gilchrist, 2007) and particularly in demonstrating how risk-taking is gendered. The strong response to her death was not because Alison Hargreaves was at the time of her death one of the world's best climbers, and indeed perhaps Britain's most successful female climber, but instead it was because of her status as a mother.

The dominant media reaction, ignoring that Alison was the primary earner in her family, was one of criticism, demonstrating a cultural aversion to mothers taking risks by condemning Hargreaves as selfish and irresponsible for leaving her children and husband at home to take part in a high-risk activity (Summers, 2007). Risk-taking involves a certain perception of morality, with risk avoidance now perceived as a moral regulation by mothers (Murphey, 2000). As Palmer (2004) notes in response to Hargreaves death:

> We saw the morality of risk-taking go into overdrive. As a mother of two, Hargreaves had effectively abandoned her children by taking such extraordinary risks. The particular cultural definitions and limitations imposed upon Hargreaves ensured she would never dramatically, if fatally distinguish herself from the crowd as a climber, but rather as an errant, unthinking mother (Palmer, 2004: 66).

Gilchrist (2007) suggests that the reaction to Hargreaves death was in part influenced by the conservative government's promotion of the nuclear family as a central moral and responsible institution within British society. This rhetoric positioned the family as fundamental to the regulation of society, and state legislation and activists groups served to impose regulations on

parents, and particularly mothers which "placed a requirement on the individual to consider their own actions and the consequence of such actions as part of the family interest" (Gilchrist, 2007: 401). Hargreaves' behaviour was seen as putting herself before her children. In marked differentiation from this, Donnelly (2004) describes the press reaction to the death of father-to be Rob Hall on Everest a year after Hargreaves death as quite different, with little mention of his upcoming fatherhood. Mass media reactions to the death of male climbers position the risk-taking or irresponsibleness of men as acceptable, brave and heroic (Palmer, 2004).

Thus whilst fathers seem to have been freed to a certain extent from this criticism, the risks involved in climbing and the construction of mothers as committed and responsible, is constructed as somewhat contradictory. Motherhood therefore has a significant implication on women's future climbing participation, because these constructions influence not only how mothers climbing are perceived, but how mothers see themselves (Frohlick, 2006). As discussed in chapter one the maternal body has been labelled as risky and targeted by scientific and medical discourse from the 18th century, and these 'truths' were used to morally deter women as future mothers from taking part in physical activity, due to a fear of infertility (Hargreaves, 1993). Although these 'truths' have long been proven wrong, what has remained is a societal expectation that a mother should not put herself at risk for the sake of the baby. Therefore, how discourses of responsibility and risk are understood within the activity, the community, and in society, construct masculinity or femininity and will affect the way in which women and men take risks.

The mass media, and societal representation of risk-taking re-confirm and support culturally dominant notions of masculinity and femininity with regard to risk and responsibility (Olstead, 2010), and serve to position climbing and mountains as masculine practices and spaces; whilst women, and especially mothers are expected to stay at home looking after their children (Fohilik, 2006). These messages constrain women's risk-taking practices, and mothers behaviour is regulated by the surveillance of others, this is particularly when motherhood is at its most visible, whilst pregnant. As Upton & Han (2003) suggest during pregnancy women's bodies become almost a public property; prior to her death Hargreaves had received criticism both within the climbing community and within the media for climbing the Eieger[1] whilst she was pregnant. This is because the pregnant body, framed and understood through medical discourse, is responsible for both mother and un-born child (Lupton, 1999a).

It seems that mother's risk-taking remains problematic, despite the increase in participants in risk-taking activities, and that mothers climbing is commonplace; there is still debate as to

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whether this has changed the way society views risk-taking by mothers. Even when Hargreaves' achievements were celebrated, her subjectivity as a mother was always present in these narratives: "for mother-mountaineers, mountaineering and motherhood discourses are completely entangled." (Frohlick, 2006: 487). This is drawn upon in the narratives of mothers, as Olstead (2010) indicates a tension between taking risks and being a responsible 'good' mother meant that many of the mothers she interviewed felt guilty for taking risks. Hargreaves herself expressed remorse and conflict at her desire to keep climbing and to be a mother to her two children (Rose and Douglas, 1999; Hargreaves, 1994).

However, for women who maintain their risk-taking activity the feeling of guilt is limited, because they persist in taking part. In justifying their risk-taking mothers highlight how having time to themselves, and maintaining their activity makes them better mothers (Rose and Douglas, 1999). This is somewhat similar to male mountaineers: "At the end of the day, climbing probably is irresponsible. But we're better parents because we're doing things that fulfil us" (Chris Bonnington, cited in Coffey, 2003:163). Although Laurendeau (2008) suggests that the negotiation of risk and responsibility is contingent on normative, or socially established understandings of femininity and masculinity, which restricts alternative ways of performing gender, this does not mean that there are not multiple ways of knowing and doing gender. Hargreaves was a professional climber as well as a mother, something we can see that she herself recognised:

> I can be two people, Alison the climber and Alison the mom. Climbing is my career. That's what I do every day. Just like the normal working mom, she just gets on with the job, you concentrate on what you do (cited in Frohlick, 2006: 483).

As Gilchrist (2007) persists, along with the morally irresponsible position of the mainstream media, Hargreaves' maintenance of her climbing identity alongside being a mother was celebrated by some journalists, and taking risks can be seen by women as a potential resistance and re-configuration of forms of femininity (Pomerantz, Curry and Kelly, 2004). It can possibly over-ride the notion that being responsible is the only 'way of being' for mothers and instead representing and re-telling the cultural narratives of mothers like Alison Hargreaves can provide new ways of being for mothers.

The missing voice in much of the literature on Alison Hargreaves is that of her husband Jim Ballard (JB), his voice can be heard readily in Hargreaves book (1994) of the family's summer travelling around Europe in 1993. It is JB who supports Alison Hargreaves climbing and looks after the children whilst she is away. The lack of recognition or acceptance of fathers taking

primary responsibility over their children is, in part, related to the cultural association of risk-taking, and mountaineering with masculinity. As has been suggested above within the climbing and the mass media risk-taking has tended to be represented in gendered terms, and men's risk-taking on mountains has traditionally been associated with heroic acts of conquest, or of leaving families behind to go on adventures (Fohilik, 2006). However, this is a rather monolithic representation, and does not really take into account how fathers risk-taking is experienced, especially as has been suggested in chapter two, if fathers are spending more time and developing relationships that are more intimate with children. As it could be expected that their identity performances as climbers are also influenced by discourses of responsibility, indeed Furedi (2009) suggests that both parents are increasingly risk-conscious, and there is some indication of this change within climbing literature and the climbing media. Andy Kirkpatrick, for example, has often voiced his concern for leaving his children behind and, in an interview with Coffey (2003) highlighted conflict between climbing and parenting:

> Ella is four now and at the airport she started crying. It's the first time that's happened. I thought, my number's up soon. When there is competition between my kids and climbing, I shall stop. Which is terrible for my wife, because I wouldn't stop for her. (Kirkpatrick cited in Coffey, 2003:155)

Robinson (2008) indicates that men with families suggested that they take fewer risks as they got older and had increasing work and family responsibilities, even at an elite level fatherhood caused climber Ian Parnell to question the risks that he took and stop soloing and trips to the Himalayas (Stirling, 2010). As another father in Stirling's (2010) article highlights:

> Dying whilst doing something you enjoy is a nice sentiment, but incredibly selfish if used as a justification for doing something that results in your death. (Heason, cited in Stirling, 2010).

4.4. Chapter summary

This chapter has brought together the discursive fields of parenting and climbing, looking at some of the contradictions between the two, and examining the research primarily from the sociology of leisure that has explored mothers and fathers access to individual leisure. This research has shown that whilst the notion of intensive parenting increasingly implies that both parents should sacrifice their own time for their children that the maintenance of leisure has remained gendered, this is primarily because mothers have been the primary caregiver and with strong cultural connotations, their participation has been constrained by parenting. Nevertheless, mothers were not victims, whilst they may not always create alternative ways of

parenting, taking part in leisure could be empowering. The research on fathers maintenance of their personal leisure was somewhat ambiguous, showing that, whilst, feminist research has suggested fathers are free to maintain their activity at will, there is some suggestion that discourses of alternative fathering has influenced father's experience of leisure.

The focus on family leisure showed that much of the research has been problematically overly positive, ignoring diversity between families and the impact of discourses of parenthood. Whilst the research on parenting and youth sport, highlighted that mothers and fathers are both expected to provide and support children's activities, how they do this is to some extent gendered. What is perhaps missing in this research is both a critical look at family leisure in the outdoors and how parent's leisure activities (i.e. climbing) can become the focus for family activities.

This chapter finished by exploring how the notions of risk and responsibility have become increasingly contradictory with the current 'knowledge' about children and parenting. Linking responsibility and risk showed how the media's representation of risk and responsibility is a gendered one. However using a Foucauldian approach allows for contradictions and provides room to explore how both mothers and fathers negotiate their responsibilities to their child with engaging in voluntary risk-taking. Despite this, there is little empirical evidence that analyses this issue. It is therefore important that their voices are heard, and it is important to question how the gendered notion of risk-taking and responsibility influence mothers and fathers experiences' of their everyday environments.

Within this literature review, I have attempted to destabilise 'fixed' notions of parenting, and of climbing, by showing how these notions have come about. Whilst this last chapter has begun to bring in some of Foucault's latter work looking at how individuals make sense, and work to construct themselves in relation to the discourses that they are situated in, this work comes in further in the following chapters. Here, I seek to explore the experiences of parents, particularly in relation to climbing through what I would suggest is a narrative-storied approach.

ENDNOTES ————————————

[1] A mountain in the Bernese Alps in Switzerland

Part Two:
Locating and representing parents who climb

Chapter Five: Methodology

This chapter is split into two parts, in the first part I justify the methodology that I will employ for this thesis. Undertaking a doctoral thesis entails the engagement with the philosophy of research, and the theoretical and empirical grounding of research methods is seen as a necessary step in the justification of 'good' research. The debate underpinning the philosophy of research has largely been between positivistic and interpretive[1] approaches, and not necessarily with quantitative or qualitative research. I agree with Blackshaw's (1999) critique of the often extensive and 'scientific' rationale behind this discussion and I certainly do not wish to imply to claim a 'knowing' in a complete sense the worlds of the parents whose stories I tell, nor do I claim to validate, in a universal sense, the way in which I have conducted research. However, the engagement in the philosophy of research has been an important part of my research journey, both informing the way in which I see the world, the way in which I empirically approach the research itself and in the way that I convey the worlds of the parents.

In Coates (2010) I referred to my research journey as a process through the distinct moments in qualitative research that are outlined by Denzin and Lincoln (2005). This overview has been beneficial in framing the development of my understanding of qualitative research, and has provided a framework for my own interpretive way of seeing the partial and local world that I study. In this chapter, I map out the moments in research in terms of the emerging paradigms, clarifying and expanding on how I have come to see the social world through post-modern (and mainly post-structural) lenses, with feminist influences. Importantly I consider the representation of empirical data as a significant philosophical consideration and in this discussion, I intend to clarify how my subjective moral, ethical and theoretical perspective has framed the representation of the worlds of the parents.

 In the second part of this chapter I intend to show the how's and what's, or the methods (primarily from the use of in-depth narrative interviews) that were used to collect the data. I am somewhat open and reflective in my description of the methodological process of data collection through to the representation of the research.

5.1. Moments in research and the paradigms debate

Denzin and Lincoln's landmark book *The Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2005) surveys the development of emerging philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research, in North America in the twentieth century. The most recent edition (2005) suggests that there are eight distinct moments in the history of qualitative research, yet as Sparkes (2002a) accentuates these moments overlap, and it is not that as one philosophy of research appears another one disappears. Despite this and emergent trends for cross-disciplinary, cross-paradigm and mixed method approaches, two competing viewpoints stand out:

> Qualitative research embraces two tensions at the same time, on the one hand, it is drawn to a broad, interpretive, post-experimental, post-modern, feminist, and critical sensibility. On the other hand, it is drawn to more narrowly defined positivist, postpostivist, humanistic, naturalistic conceptions of human experience and its analysis. (Nelson et al., 1992: 4 cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 7)

These two positions, broadly categorised as interpretive and positivistic, differentiate not only on their methods of data collection (i.e. quantitative and qualitative), but additionally they offer researchers opposing views or understandings of the social world and of what knowledge is (and consequently how one can begin to study the world). Alternative belief systems or views of the social world are known as paradigms, which are shaped by three factors: ontology, epistemology and methodology (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

Ontology refers to beliefs about the nature of reality, it is concerned with what actually exists and what we know about this i.e. is reality imposed on or the product of the individual? (Sparkes, 1992). Johnson (2000) argues that these are important considerations in sociology because so much of our beliefs about the social world are "abstract and cannot be observed directly" (p214).

Epistemology is concerned with knowledge, it raises questions such as: how do we know what we do? What kind of knowledge is this (i.e. scientific, spiritual) Whose knowledge is valid? Moreover, how do we justify what we claim we know? (Rich, 2002; Such, 2002).

Finally *methodology* is concerned with how we gain knowledge of the world, i.e. how does one go about finding out about something? What is the best way to do this? This will depend on the ontological and epistemological beliefs of the researcher.

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Although Guba and Lincoln (1998) suggest that there are four paradigms: positivist, post-positivism, critical and interpretive, it is the ontological, epistemological and methodological differences between positivism and interpretivism that are most marked. Sparkes (1992) says that different ways of seeing the world are not innately inherent within the researcher, but are developed and adhered to through experiences and learning from a particular research community. Following on from the Foucauldian approach that I laid out in chapter one, this may seem an obvious point, but in a sense the education and communities that I have been part of have influenced and challenged any fixed notion I had of understanding human behaviour. Away from the positivistic teachings of school, psychology and many of the modules that underpinned my undergraduate degree in sports science, my lecturers, and fellow students in the sociology of sport encouraged me to think critically about sport and 'knowledge'. Although I probably did not understand or recognise it at the time, this brief initiation was the start of a new understanding of both methods of research and how to understand the social world interpretively.

This research takes an interpretive constructionist[2] stance that has been influenced by feminism, however, I initially map out the positivistic paradigm to demonstrate an understanding of what it is that the interpretive perspective rejects.

5.1.1. Research as science: Positivism and post-positivism

Although qualitative research can be traced back to empirical thinkers of the enlightenment period, it is in the *Traditional period* (moment 1) of the early to mid 20th century, that these ideas were formalised and labelled as positivism. Fundamental to this position, was the idea that humans could be studied in the same way as the natural world: "the methods employed by the natural science can be applied to form a science of man" (Giddens 1974 p3 cited in Sparkes, 1992 p17-18).

Within the enlightenment, the human sciences arose as an authoritative voice, which influenced the view of the human world. Following this, a positivistic perspective believes that the human world can and should be studied in an objective way. This entails a systematic, logical and rigorous, or a scientific approach to observing and measuring behaviour with the aim of producing credible, reliable and valid research (Hammersley, 1995). This research aims to be generalised to produce universal laws for the explanation of human behaviour, revealing the truth about the world.

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For these reasons, much of the social science research in this paradigm uses quantitative methods to produce figures that could be statistically analysed to produce 'scientific facts' and universal 'truths'. However early qualitative researchers, including ethnographers and anthropologists were also relatively positivistic. Qualitative work at the start of the twentieth century was usually on different cultures where 'distant' researchers claimed to make 'expert/objective' observations and interpretations about the 'other' that they were observing (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). Ethnographers adhering to the positivistic paradigm, argue that reality is independent of the researcher's beliefs, or what has been described as an external-realist ontology (Andrews et al., 2005; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003; Lincoln and Guba, 2000). Thus, researchers argue for a value-neutral approach to research, where data can be tested against, or developed into a framework, and one should make systematic observations that are guided by senses and not by the values of the researcher. Presently this paradigm still dominates researchers' early thinking due to its prominence in school and research methods programmes as the principal way of conducting and reporting research and Sparkes (1992; 2002) suggests that positivism has been dominant in sport and in the social sciences.

During the next moment, more researchers were using qualitative research methods, however during what was called the *Modern period* (post-WWII – 1970's) researchers wished to align these methods with 'valid' criteria. This is known as a post-positivistic viewpoint, which Denzin and Lincoln (2003) suggest is more accepting than positivism, because researchers believe that it is not always possible to be objective, but that one should aim to remain neutral and to make methods and decisions as visible as possible.

Post-positivists, although like positivists are realists, they adhere to an ontology of critical realism, which suggests that although an external reality does exist it may not be possible for a researcher to capture or understand this fully (Holinshead, 2004; Guba & Lincoln, 1998). Instead of stating results as fact, post-positivists assess their research alongside established criteria in order to suggest that findings are 'probably true' (Guba, 1990). However, researchers adhering to the post-positivistic paradigm maintain that there is one knowable truth, and so ignore the possibility of multiple perspectives including the values of the researcher.

Although the post-positivistic viewpoint still influences today, the dominance of this discourse was disrupted in the 1970s when the influence of feminism and counter-culture politics led researchers to question the objective and authoritative role of the researcher (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). The idea that people can be studied as living in 'fixed realities' (Cuff et al., 1992) was challenged with the growing belief that our understanding of the social world is

"socially constructed and culturally relative" (Hammersley, 1995:3). As indicated, this more critical approach owes much thanks to the feminist epistemologies that emerged, known as feminist standpoint research, from which "the starting point of research was the lived experience of women," (Humberstone, 2004: 120). This research focussed on marginalised voices, and was political in nature, emphasising the subjective by highlighting that personal experience could be political (Stanley and Wise, 1983). Although taking a somewhat universal approach to women's experiences[3], this research began to challenge the notion of a singular reality, and questioned the neutral position of the researcher (Stanley and Wise, 1993, 1983).

5.1.2. The development of interpretivism

The development of new paradigms, theories and strategies in the social sciences throughout the 1970's and early 1980's contributed to a consideration of not only qualitative research but also the politics and ethics of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). It became possible for sociologists to make sense of the world without numbers (Richardson, 2008) there was a *blurring of boundaries* (moment 3) between art and science, and a consideration of the author's presence (Sparkes, 2002a; Harding, 1987). Diverse methods were used to explore human action and the social world, reflecting an interpretive turn, which began to seek *Verstechen* (understanding) of the meanings that people give to their world (Schwandt, 2000). I take the interpretive paradigm to be an umbrella term that can be applied to a range of philosophies such as hermeneutics, phenomenology, ethnography or social constructivism/constructionism. The interpretive approach is seen to offer an alternative to positivistic and post-positivist paradigms (Yanow, 2006).

Foucault (1988) showed that power and knowledge are irrevocably linked, and in particular, he was somewhat critical of how human scientists used the knowledge they 'found' to produce the 'truth' without questioning the effect that this knowledge has. For example, the reduction of human behaviour to genetics has been used to justify women's 'natural' subordination to their bodily functions (mothering) which restricted women's participation in the workforce and sport. Following these assumptions I suggest that my perception of the interpretive paradigm is influenced by post-structural and post-modern thought that makes it problematic to assume that research can possibly be objective, or that there is one universal 'truth' to be discovered. This does not mean that there is no point in doing research. Instead the notion that "truth is what we *pragmatically* believe to be the truth until somebody else comes up with a better idea" (Blackshaw, 1999:49, author's emphasis in italics), recognises that it is important to keep having conversations and doing research in order to keep developing an understanding of the

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social world. As Sparkes (1992) writes, an interpretive ontology moves away from realism to one of relativism rejecting the assumption that reality is single and external, and rather that realities are multiple, and there may be many different descriptions of reality. Furthermore, this view recognises that as human- beings social scientists are more than just neutral observers, and their values shape the research process, and so making sense of the other is an interpretation by the researcher (Leledaki, 2007). That is, rather than viewing the researcher's beliefs as separate from the research, the interpretive paradigm is epistemologically subjective; the researcher is inherent in the research process and must, therefore, question their own authority (subjectivist epistemology). In adhering to notions of subjectivity in its approach to understanding the other, the interpretive approach uses an ideographic methodology (Sparkes, 1992). Whilst I do not propose one way of approaching qualitative research, interpretive researchers seek to study micro-level experience and the different meanings and understandings of this experience (Such, 2002) by using methods to attain how people make sense of their world in their "local, contextualised" (Humberstone, 2004: 120) setting.

Blackshaw (1999) is critical of how, despite the ontological and epistemological juxtapositions of interpretivism and the suggestion of an adherence to post-modern arguments about the social world, positivism often remains influential. This he argues is because interpretivists seem to have maintained a rather singular way of conducting research (interviews, for example), rather than recognising that there are multiple ways of knowing. Instead, Blackshaw rejects a scientific method for a subjective cultural studies approach, through which he abandons 'normal' reporting and justification of data collection. Whilst I do not discredit the way he does this, or his evocative telling of the cultural world he studies, to follow his approach would not do justice to my own journey or to the parents that inform my research.

In a sense then I was somewhat caught between the post-modern doubt of a correct 'way' in which to conduct research and the feminist critique that in adhering to a post-modern sensibility one is somewhat unwilling to offer potential social change which can undermine the emancipation of marginalised groups (Benhabib, 2008). This does not mean that 'anything goes' but rather that one should not be caught up in "prescribing a right way to investigate" (Silk et al., 2005: 9). In following Richardson's (1997) suggestion to pay attention to new ways of knowing and telling I found a medium, that meant that the post-structural deconstruction of difference does not have to be disjointed from a feminist approach that listens to the voices of others.

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5.1.3. New ways of showing and telling

The development of new paradigms, a multitude of theoretical approaches and the post-modern questioning of truth (Lincoln, 2010) in the mid -1980's led to what is known as the *crisis of representation* (moment 4), in which there was "uncertainty about what constitutes adequate depiction of social reality" (Richardson, 1997: 12). As Denzin and Lincoln expand; "this crisis asks the questions: Who is the "other"? Can we ever hope to speak authentically of the experiences of the Other, or an Other?" (2005: 104). This is because the post-modern or post-standpoint feminist perspective suggests that researchers do not represent a true experience but instead construct this in their writing (Humberstone, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2005).

To start to answer these questions an approach is needed that enables different ways of 'knowing' and 'telling' of the sociological. One way of doing this, Richardson (1997) suggests, is to embrace narrative. The field of narrative inquiry is complex, the term was once used to signify anything from a theory based on the discovery of human agency, to an analytic tool, through to an element of an interpretive and constructivist methodology (Stanley and Temple, 2008; Knowles, 2001; Sandelowski, 1991). Despite the variety many of these approaches have been successfully used as a means to understand both sporting and leisure experiences (e.g. Sparkes and Templin, 1992) and the stories of parents, with narratives often constructed by families and reflecting family relationships (see May, 2008; Boursnell, 2008; Brannen & Nilsen, 2006).

The narrative approach provides access to people's experience of time, a method of knowing and telling, and suggests that identities are told through stories, however, there are different perspectives or understandings of what these "narrative identities are and how they should be studied," (Smith and Sparkes, 2008: 6). In fitting with the philosophies of interpretivism, it is the social end of the narrative spectrum, or what Sparkes and Smith (2008) and Smith and Weed (2007) refer to as a narrative constructionist perspective, that this research takes; which recognises that both 'how we know' and 'what we write' is a social construction. This allows the collection of personal, cultural and collective stories but as Smith and Sparkes (2008) write also shares "a commitment to viewing self and identity not in essentialist terms, but as multidimensional and connected to social, historical, political and cultural contexts" (p 7). Therefore, the interpretations we make, or stories we tell, are formed and re-formed in connection with shared understandings and discourses (Leledaki, 2007). Through the telling of narratives people portray an understanding of self, expressing or performing multiple and fluid

identities (Reeves, 2007) and situating life stories within the broader cultural framework (Reissman, 1993; Allin, 2003).

Importantly for this research, parents' gendered and climbing identities are influenced by discourse, and through telling stories people will draw on discourses and perform multiple subjected identities so they are not free to tell any story they please. However, in recognising Foucault's later work that people also actively position themselves and create alternative stories, we can recognise that through the telling of narratives people express agency.

In staying 'true' to the post-structural constructionist approach, I do not state that the stories that are told, or the identities that are performed, are a modernist depiction of the truth or reality because cultural resources are drawn on in expressing ourselves. Furthermore, these experiences make sense because of shared cultural stories, and in the context of the research, as Wai Man (2001) came to realise, the researched (speaker) and researcher (hearer) "jointly construct narrative meaning" (p32). The values of the researcher are inherent in the research process and in the development of the relationship with those whose lives are studied. This will be referred to later as I discuss my own position in the field. Whilst I have not as yet approached the 'tools' of collecting the narratives of parents, and have instead laid out what it is I mean by narrative, and as directed by this approach it is important that I consider not only my role in the 'thinking' planning' and 'doing' research, but additionally the way in which narratives are told by the researcher. As Smith and Weed (2007) recommend, researchers must pay heed to these concepts (which I expand on below):

> ...that researchers themselves are storytellers who may write in different ways
> ...that researchers cannot be apart from the stories they generate
> ...that *showing* and *telling* stories is vital
>   (Smith and Weed, 2007:259).

The first consideration that researchers must think about how they write directs one back to the questions asked in the crisis of representation, i.e. how do we write the other? With the crisis of representation there was uncertainty, not just in terms of how to think about and conduct research but also with how to describe and write research, and the "link between text and experience has become increasingly problematic" (Sparkes, 1995: 159).

Traditional forms of writing, or 'realist tales', have dominated, and still dominate sociological writing now. Whilst I do challenge the dominance of these tales, and argue for alternative styles of writing, this does not mean that I feel that realist tales should disappear entirely, and indeed, I have used them myself (see Coates et al., 2010). Modified realist tales are still found in research

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using a life history or narrative approach (see Such, 2006) and these provide rich and insightful descriptions of the 'other.' However, post-modern theory critiques texts that draw up on the conventions of traditional scientific writing because the authors have tended to reproduce positivistic notions of authority and objectivity, where the author's voice is missing (Sparkes, 1995). The work of Foucault and Jacques Derrida (1976), for example, showed how writing is not value-free and is often used as a power tool so that the multiple meanings tend to be represented in a rather singular voice (Markula and Denison, 2005: 166).

In response to this, feminist and other researchers began to question the distant or absent author in positivist research, and instead there was a need to place the non-authoritative researcher in the text (Guba, 1990; Stanley, 1990). As the second consideration by Smith and Weed (2007) suggests researchers cannot be apart from the stories they generate. Feminist researcher Stanley (1990) argues that to make this clear researchers should make the research account visible, indicating their values and background, this reflexive approach is what Sparkes (1995; 2002a) terms confessional tales. Writing the confessional tale involves moving away from the dominant third person writing to first person narratives where the author places themselves in the research and reflects on their own position as an outsider/insider researcher/participant, women/man (see Obel, 2004; Humberstone, 2004, Wheaton, 2002). This critical reflexivity is an important consideration of any researcher throughout the whole research process.

> Researchers need to reflect on the political dimensions of their fieldwork, the webs of power that circulate in the research process, and how these shape the manner in which knowledge is constructed. Likewise, they need to consider how issues of gender, nationality, race, ethnicity, social class, age, religion, sexual identity, disability, and able-bodiedness shape knowledge construction (Sparkes, 2002a: 17).

Whilst the confessional tale highlights the importance of positioning the researcher in the process of doing research, i.e. in conducting fieldwork and analysing data, this has not always reflected on the product or presentation of this data. As well as considering one's own biases and values in relation to the research text, researchers need to question how they capture experience, make clear how they write about those that they interview or observe, and seek alternative ways of representing people's experiences.

I return to the confessional tale later in this chapter as I attempt to reflect on my position and the impact that both the research has had on me and that I have had on the research. For now, I expand on the effect of post-structuralism on the representation of the other, and consider Smith and Weed's (2007) third consideration that 'showing' and 'telling' is vital.

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As the crisis of representation has led to uncertainty in both what knowledge is and how this can be represented, Richardson suggests that we can be more creative in the way that we think, research and write the social world (1997: 14). In what is known as the fifth moment, the work of feminists, post-modernists and post-structuralists further disrupted the qualitative field, questioning the dominance of authoritative knowledge, any paradigm, theory, method or way of writing. Language itself is questioned as deficient, it does not provide the whole picture and indeed, itself is contextual, only making sense in particular contexts and relationships (Wai Man, 2001; Atkinson, 1992). However, rather than causing qualitative researchers to give up entirely because there was nothing universal to be 'known', instead, because all experience and writing was seen as storied, the door opened for new possibilities in the writing up of qualitative data (Bochner and Ellis, 1996). As Richardson (2000) suggests:

> A post-modern position allows us to know something without claiming to know everything. Having a partial, local, historical knowledge is still knowing. In some ways, knowing is easier though because post-modernism recognises the situational limits of the one who knows. Qualitative writers are off the hook (p8).

In a sense then we can still claim to know something, albeit something that is local and contextual. Thus, returning to Blackshaw's (1999: 56) use of Rorty's (1979) post-modern perspective that "there is always something more to be said" keeps open the sociological debate because it allows sociologists to use narrative to make central their own experiences and others' whose voices are not often heard. This means that rather than to try to de-contextualise experiences, writers convey them as whole people, and attempt to write in a way that is more ethical, approachable and evocative. This includes the use of creative writing or literary techniques to dramatise 'real' events or characters (Sparkes, 2002b).

Creative writing practices have been seen in sociology since the 1990s (see Ellis et al., 2008; Agger, 2002; Ellis and Bochner, 2000; Ely et al., 1997; Richardson, 1997, Ellis and Bochner, 1996). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) therefore argue that the sixth and seventh moments are now upon us in which these ways of writing are fully accepted and no longer need to be justified. However as Sparkes (2002a) argues this is not the case in sports sociology, these writing practices were given a platform in 2000 in a special-issue of the *Sociology of Sport Journal*. Whilst this issue provided the space for a number of evocative and creative pieces, alternative forms of writing are still in the minority within the sociology of sport, and in writing a PhD thesis for three exceptions see Morton, 2008 and Manson, 2006; Blackshaw, 1999), where perhaps it could be argued the PhD candidate has yet to develop their 'academic' voice. Markula and Denison (2005) try to dispel this division, or binary, writing that the academic and

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literary writing genres are the same thing, in that "both are reflexive accounts where the author's personal experiences together with the voices of others are woven into a single polyvocal text" (p166). This implies that alternative forms of writing acknowledge the power that a researcher has over others' voices and they try to absolve the separation of themselves from both those who are researched and the readers of the tales. Doing this has meant that qualitative researchers questioned and sought alternatives ways of writing to show and tell the experiences of those that they research. Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) write that showing is bringing researchers into the data, to engage them and allow them to experience the research narratives, whilst telling is a "writing strategy that works with showing, in that it provides readers some distinction from the events described so that (the reader) might think about events in a more abstract manner." (author's addition in brackets). Furthermore, it is no longer a given that researchers must write in standardised ways, instead in representing research author's should show experiences in different ways to highlight issues and complement the telling of qualitative research.

Alternative forms of writing include: fictional pieces, auto ethnography, poetic representation, drama and dialogue (see Ellis et al., 2008; Manson, 2004, Markula and Denison, 2003; Sparkes, 2000, Jackson, 1999; Bruce, 1998). Richardson (2000) classifies these as Creative Analytical Practices (CAP) indicating the ways that these forms are creative, analytical but that furthermore they are "valid and desirable representations of the social...for they open spaces for thinking about the social that elude us now" (p10). Through writing creatively authors of evocative pieces bridge the gap between academia and popular writing, the boundaries between 'fact' and 'fiction' are blurred and research is made more accessible outside academia (Bochner and Ellis, 1996). The aim then is to bring readers into the text ('showing'), to allow them into the life-world (Clayton, 2010). If we want to engage readers to sociological thinking then they should be able to feel the experiences that are portrayed and to be able to empathise[4] (Sparkes, 1995). Yet it is not that anything goes[5], these tales should also be analytical and critical ('telling'), from reading and writing one should learn something about the contextual, the historical and the social life that is represented (Bochner and Ellis, 1996). Joan Ryan's (1995) *Little girls in pretty boxes* is exemplar of this, it allows the reader to engage but also highlights the precarious and 'risky' nature of elite level sport and children. Similarly, Toni Bruce's (2004) *Never let the bastards see you cry* shows how Bruce's experience as a sports journalist was shaped and understood by her gender and sexuality.

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5.1.4. Summary of philosophical underpinning

I have up, to this point in the chapter established a critique of the 'science' of the social and I have outlined a post-modern interpretive approach that rejects the assumption of a universal truth, and instead recognises that there are multiple experiences of reality. This does not take away from a desire to understand the social world, or the experiences of people in it, and rather, in a sense, it is influenced by a feminist desire to make different voices heard. However, in seeing knowledge and tales as constructed narratives I stay true to a post-structuralist perspective and look for alternative ways to represent the voices of the parents whose lives I explore.

In the next part of this chapter, I use these philosophical underpinnings to show the reader the research process as well as how I represented the data. In doing this I present a confessional tale which positions my voice as inherent in the research process.

5.2. The research process: Confessions and methods of data collection

The method of data collection used for this thesis was interviewing, however before outlining how I collected the data and how my values influenced this I wish to put myself under the spotlight, and deconstruct myself, as a researcher. Feminist thought challenged the authoritative nature of interviews in which the researchers took the role of expert and interviewees the role of respondent (Oakley, 2004; Finch, 1984). Instead interviewing is a dynamic and shifting exchange between the multiple selves of the interviewer and the interviewee, a process by which knowledge is exchanged and mutually constructed (Rich, 2002). Therefore, the researcher cannot be seen as a neutral bystander, and the motivations and choices that a researcher makes in the interview are influenced by their own values and beliefs, the research, the interviewee and the interview situation itself (Koro-Ljunburg, 2004). This recognition means that an understanding of knowledge as partial and produced in context, additionally it means researchers must consider, and make visible their own positioning or subjectivity. In questioning my role in this research, I do not mean to justify, or validate my position of authority to research parents who climb. Nevertheless I wish to deconstruct myself, to make myself visible to the reader because it is I who have intervened, interpreted and constructed the local, partial world that I have studied (Agger, 2002).

This discussion touches on the insider/outsider debate, but highlights that although certain subject positions do impact on relationships with interviewees, that the positioning of

researchers in relation to the groups or individuals they study is rarely simple. Instead, I highlight the shifting nature of my identities as a climber, researcher and non-parent, and how I was aware of these identities in relation to the participants.

Debates of insider/outsider knowledge has been a central focus within ethnography, and many adventure sports researchers have tended to be participants in the sport themselves (Humberstone, 2007, Hardwell, 2007; Wheaton, 2002; Robinson, 2008, 2004; Dilley, 2007). This participation or immersion within the life world is reflected as enabling them access and the 'knowledge' to understand the people that they study. Similarly, Oakley (2004) and Allin (2003) both highlight how being pregnant or a mother enabled rapport and trust to be established between themselves and the interviewees who were mothers. On the other hand, outsider positions are seen as either misunderstanding the cultural form or providing enough detachment to make an objective assessment of the people under study. A post-structural perspective is somewhat critical of the notion of insider/outsider and the connotations that come with it; that the researcher is seen as having a somewhat static perspective (Mullings, 1999) and claims of insider or outsider to be more 'authentic' ways of knowing. Instead, a post-structural understanding of self-reflexivity highlights that, instead of a 'true' representation, what is offered is an interpretation that is contingent upon multiple subjectivities. These subjectivities are fragmented, they change, and they can be contingent or conflict with other subjectivities, but nevertheless these positions impact the understanding of the cultural world studied. I reflect then on my initial positioning in coming into the research area:

> At the beginning of this research process, back in May 2008, although I had started going climbing the year before, I did not see myself as a climber. This, I realised in reflection, was influenced by discourses on climbing, because I had not committed much time, had not developed 'good' technique, showed and felt fear and did not lead traditional climbs. I did not see myself as an 'authentic' climber. At the same time, this feeling of inferiority was enforced by my subjectivity as a female, because I nearly always climbed with my male partner and again because at the time I did not lead climbs and was reliant on him. A wariness of normative gendered relations meant that I was somewhat conscious of being 'known' as his 'belayer', and again not as a climber. I was in reaction somewhat reluctant and resistant to becoming a climber in those terms, and instead I sought to emphasise other subject positions, including a self as a snowboarder and traveller.

> As I became more involved in my PhD I became more interested in climbing from an intellectual as well as a personal interest, the two are not necessarily conflicting but inform and interact with each other (Agger, 2002), and so I began to dedicate more time to climbing. With time I began to learn how (felt in an embodied sense) to move like a climber, my climbing body began to understand the movement, the balance. I built up, slowly going through the apprenticeship, leading climbs, and I felt the rewards, not only in learning how to deal with, to control the fear (it never goes

through but I think that's a good thing). At the same time I began to establish climbing friends so climbed apart, as well as with (but now leading too-I felt more equal) my partner. In sum, I began to feel like a climber. I not only began to feel like a climber myself but I was recognised by some of the women and men that I came to interview as 'being' a climber, I heard it in their words and saw it in their faces when they looked at me now. I realise I am somewhat reliant on these current 'authenticity' discourses to mark myself, I am wary of myself pushing this 'criteria' onto others, but nevertheless, as Foucault suggests being 'disciplined' to act in certain ways is not always negative, and in a sense it produces pleasure, or the desire, to climb more. As Pringle (2009) suggests, "the processes of normalization...were also linked to the reciprocal production of social acceptance and associated experiences of pleasure" (p219).

The parenting side of climbing came next. Alas, I cannot claim that I was initially driven by the intention to give climbing parents a voice, in a society that seems to imply that parents (middle-class?) should sacrifice their own sport for their kids, which led me to research parents who rock climb. In fact, as a non-parent I had not really even thought about it. However it was my involvement in climbing; through climbing with parents, through reading the media' reaction to Alison Hargreaves' death and through attending a talk on women's climbing at the 2008 Kendal film festival that led me to this area of research.

Identifying my own subject positions, values and biases shows the reader not only how these impact my own investment in the research project, but how I am informed by competing, and/or interacting subjectivities that are fragile, and thus must be constantly performed (Butler, 1990). How do these positions inform my interpretations and interactions with the interviewees? Moreover, do I myself offer something to represent parents who climb?

Although initially as I suggested, as a non-parent and a researcher I was perhaps initially interested in the research for my own benefit. As I read the literature, looked at the media and talked to parents (including my own) I began to understand and empathise with the difficulty and uncertainty of parenting, especially in a society where normalising discourses position good parents, and especially mothers, as wholly responsible (and to blame) for their children's upbringing and development. Thus in an academic sense, and at a personal level, if not a literal sense, I can empathise with this position. However, I do not profess to 'know' the position, or the difficulties of parenting personally as an insider, nor does my recognised identity as a climber make me an insider-expert into the lives of the interviewees. However, in making both myself and others aware of these positions I can reflect throughout the rest of the chapter how these subjectivities came into play and were negotiated in relation to the research field and the interviewees.

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5.2.1. Ethical decisions before going into the field

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) argue that a moral approach should be taken to doing qualitative research. This approach involves understanding that ethics vary according to the cultural context and everyday life, so what may be moral or ethical in one realm may not be in another (Blackshaw, 1999). Therefore, whilst I abided by the University's ethical framework, based on the Economic & Social Research Council's (ESRC) framework for ethical research (see latest version at ESRC, 2010), and thus accounted for issues such as: informed voluntary consent, confidentiality and minimizing harm before undertaking the research, I was aware of the need to be reflexive. Ethical issues that may arise cannot be completely pre-planned, and to approach them entirely as a tick-box would indeed by un-ethical, instead, I felt it was important to be reflexive and to maintain a common sense attitude so as not to restrict the research (Simpson, 2011; Guillemin and Gilliam, 2004). The ethical situations that arose during the process of doing this research are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

Prior to conducting the research, to ensure these ethical responsibilities were met, I told participants both via email and prior to the interview about the research, and I then gained verbal informed consent from the interviewees. Participants were aware that they could withdraw their participation at any time, and that their data would only be read by me, my supervisors and possible examiners in the Viva. I was prepared to get this written as well but participants all agreed that verbal consent was enough, and in any case written consent perhaps makes participants more vulnerable to identification. I also informed the participants that any writing produced from this data would respect their privacy and make every attempt to conceal their identities, including the use of pseudonyms.

In reality complete ethical openness would prove difficult, as I discuss in further detail below, I would constantly have to question and re-assess my ethical position, as Guillemin and Gilliam (2004) recommend social researchers, and particularly ethnographers should apply an approach of 'ethics in practice' when conducting research.

5.2.2. The interview as a narrative tool

As I argued above the narrative approach that I take considers our lives as told through stories and that "identity is narratively constructed" (Smith and Sparkes, 2008: 5). Through telling stories, humans engage in meaning making. Therefore, in the case of this research a narrative

approach allows a consideration of the way in which individuals construct themselves through telling stories of their climbing and personal experiences.

Richardson (1997) suggests that there are different forms of narrative, including the biographical, the cultural and the collective. One approach to narrative research that involves all three forms of narrative is the life history or life story approach. I am interested in the experiences of parents, not necessarily in terms of their whole life history but more in terms of getting a sense of how parenting impacted their experiences of climbing, in relation to discourses of parenting, climbing and gender. Whilst some have suggested a Foucauldian approach limits looking at the subjectivity or experiences of individuals, Markula and Pringle (2006) indicate that from a Foucauldian position identity is constructed via experiences. These experiences are "the correlation, in a culture, between fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity'' (Foucault, 1992: 4–5). Thus I suggest that through telling their experiences individuals tell stories of relationships with others, the subcultures and the wider culture that they are a part of (Davidson, 2006). A social constructionist approach:

> Places experiences...(and) selves within the context of wider social groupings and cultural settings...narratives may be constructed in such a way that they appear to conform to social norms and expectations, or strategies may be employed to challenge these dominant assumptions (Miller, 2000: 60).

Personal narratives show how subjectivity is constructed, because when presenting stories or narratives of themselves participants draw on particular cultural and relational discourses, the way that gender/climbing/parenting identities are talked about are influenced by discourses about gender/climbing and parenting. Through collecting a number of life stories, it is possible to develop a local picture of the specific culture in which they are immersed (climbing) and at their changing position within this i.e. as parents. It is also possible to note similarities or differences in the discourses drawn upon to construct their identity.

Narratives are collated through a range of methods such as: diaries, letters, oral histories, autobiographies and photographs, however, the most popular method employed in the collection of narratives is the in-depth interview (Davidson, 2006; Phoenix and Sparkes, 2006; Miller, 2000). Interviewing is perhaps the most widely used methodological tool within qualitative research, because it is arguably the most plausible and precise way to access multiple realities, or lived experiences (Amis, 2005) particularly when looking at specific issues.

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There is a great deal of variance in the type of individual interview, influenced by the worldview of the researchers where, for example, researchers following the positivistic paradigm would be more likely to use a closed or structured interview. The structured approach gives very little control to the interviewees because it involves the researcher giving each participant the same pre-determined set of questions. At the other end of the scale an open-ended, informal interview requires little structure and is more conversational, and resultantly the researcher has less control and acts more as a prompt. This approach is ontologically subjective and can be particularly useful when interested in life histories. However, it can be difficult to gather enough information on specific issues (Amis, 2005). Thus semi-structured interviews are often more suited to new researchers following an interpretive approach because they allow rich data to be collected but some control to be maintained by the researcher throughout the interviews.

The method that I chose to use was somewhere in-between informal and semi-structured, which I call a topical life story interview, which enabled me to gather large amounts of often complex, rich data but at the same time ask open ended questions about particular topics and everyday experiences. This involved individually interviewing mothers and fathers in seven heterosexual, nuclear family couples. In six of the couples mothers and fathers were interviewed twice, and the seventh couple were individually interviewed once. This meant that there were 14 participants and twenty-six interviews were completed in total. I now highlight the details of the research process.

5.2.3. Selecting and accessing participants

Leledaki (2007) writes that "sampling is one of the main procedures in identifying, choosing and gaining access to people" (p102). Not only does it indicate who will be sampled but the number of participants (Cresswell, 2007). Both the practicalities and the interpretive nature of my research had certain implications for the size and selection of the interviewees. On a practical level, I had three years in which to complete my thesis, and after the initial year reading and preparing, two years to collect the data and write-up, thus longitudinal research was not possible and being a lone researcher there was a limit to how many couples I could realistically interview. From a philosophically driven point of view, interpretive research questions the idea that knowledge gained in research can be generalisable or universal (Richardson, 2000). Therefore a large representative sample (of a given population) is not necessary or even desired because a small sample allows the development of rich and personal data that gives an insight onto respondents' experiences (Crouch & Mackenzie, 2006).

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At the start of the PhD I had intended to use a purposive sampling technique to recruit participants (influenced by the sports subculture literature). Purposive sampling is an overarching term that applies to all approaches where researchers choose the members of a sample because they meet a certain criteria (Gray, 2003). Through purposive sampling I initially aimed to find parents who were experienced (who had climbed for over two years) and committed (still climbing) climbers who led, or had led traditional climbs. The technical level that they climbed was not an initial concern and I did not wish to interview, as directed by Davidson (2006), commercial/professional climbers, because if climbing was seen as employment for the participants then commitment in risk and time may be seen as necessary rather than voluntary. However, as I began to access participants, I realised that this criteria was somewhat naive, recognising that I had been influenced by the idea in the literature that traditional climbing is the dominant form (see Lewis, 2004). So in a sense I was supporting the dualism between 'authentic' and 'in-authentic' climbing in Britain and ignoring the diversity in forms of climbing. With hindsight, a variety benefitted my research, particularly because I found that some forms of climbing were easier for parents to remain involved in, and some participants did significantly reduce their climbing, and eventually give up climbing, after becoming a parent.

Thus, it is sufficient to say, the criteria I ultimately used was very loose. I interviewed heterosexual couples who had children and who had climbed regularly at some point in their life, (see Appendix two for a brief profile of these couples). In order to access couples I used opportunistic and snowball sampling strategies to obtain my interviews. Opportunity sampling involves taking "a flexible approach to meld the sample around the fieldwork context as it unfolds" (Ritchie et al., 2002: 81) and making the most of opportunities to access couples. In order to be able to involve myself more in the climbing community I moved away from flat Buckinghamshire to the Midlands, this enabled me to have access to the Peak district and I began to climb outdoors once or twice a week, as well as once a week indoors. The first couple that I contacted and interviewed were a couple that I had begun to climb with regularly. Then after a climbing trip away I was introduced to the acquaintances of a friend, which resulted in two more couples taking part in my research. These three couples acted as gatekeepers, suggesting three other couples that I could interview, whom I approached via email. This technique is known as snowball sampling (Gabo (2004). The final couple I interviewed were accessed through a contact I made early on in my research.

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A flexible and adaptable approach meant that I had couples with different climbing experiences, yet it also meant that the couples I interviewed came from similar economic, social end ethnic backgrounds. This was an unintentional part of my research, but as one of my interviewees suggested, and indeed from my own observations whilst climbing, this is not an in-accurate representation of many climbers. So in the end I interviewed seven couples, whose ages ranged from their late 20s to mid 60's were white, able-bodied, and well educated (with all having at least a undergraduate degree, and many additionally having postgraduate degrees).

Once I had made initial contact with the couples I emailed them with some information about my research (see Appendix one), informing them of the nature of my research and that I would possibly do three interviews with each participant, in the end I completed two interviews with the majority of the participants.

Prior to starting the interview stage I wished to meet and climb with each of the couples in order to build a relationship with the couples, this however only happened in three cases. Lack of uptake was because of two main reason; two of the couples no longer climbed very often and five of the mothers were either on maternity leave or working part-time so were not climbing as often.

5.2.4. Conducting interviews

Interviews were arranged primarily, as I allude to above, by email. I interviewed all of the couples in their own homes. This was somewhat necessary because most of the couples had small children and therefore one of the partners would have to look after the children whilst I interviewed the other. It was also perhaps beneficial to the interview process, because it meant that the interviewees were more relaxed and I was able to spend some time with them and their families both before and after the interviews. This time, which involved informal chats over cups of tea, talking about climbing and being shown photo albums as well as being shown around the houses of participants, was valuable because I was able to get to know the participants and their children. As I reflected in my field diary, maybe because I am not a mother that playing with the children and getting them to relax in my company helped the interviewees themselves to trust me and relax in my company:

> I turned up early, spend some time with the kids playing whilst P/B sorted a few things out, the kids had made me a gingerbread man, they made me promise I would come and see their room when I had finished talking to their parents. Later in the interview P said that I was good with kids, that hers liked me. Even though I have none of my own, I have always been around children—my mum is a reception class

> teacher and my brother is 9 years younger than me. I think taking the time to play with their children has helped me with the interviews as the parents can talk about their children and I know which one they are talking about, and can empathise (Field notes, February, 2010).

All of the interviews were one–to-one interviews lasting between one to two hours (see Appendix three for details of interviews), and in all but two cases each parent in a couple were interviewed consecutively, with one parent and then the other, at the interviewees' request. Interviewing both parents was important because, as Such (2002) recognises, there are very few research projects into parenthood that interview both partners in a heterosexual relationship. She felt, as I do that the "incorporation of the stories of men and women in the same relationship was considered crucial to an understanding of the co-dependency of behaviour in couples" (p111). Interviewing both partners allowed me to get both an understanding of mothers and fathers similar and different experiences but also of their family life.

In the first interview, I initially informed participants that the data was anonymous and that they could withdraw their participation at any time, they were also asked if they minded me recording the interviews. Each interview was then recorded with a digital recorder. Rich (2002) argues that making interviewees aware of these issues can make participants feel more in control of the narratives they are telling. Prior to the interview, I read about narrative interviews, however, this often ended up making me more apprehensive about starting the interview process. For example, Wengraf (2001) suggests interviewers using a life history approach should ask only one initial question and then let the interviewee tell their story. Although I desired for interviewees to be able to tell their stories, it was as I said above not necessary to get their whole life story, and I was somewhat unconfident in myself as a researcher to be able to do this. Instead, I did ask one initial question to elicit and invite stories, which was: "can you please tell me a bit about when you started climbing and some experiences of climbing?" Then following Atkinson's (1998, see also Scheibelhofer, 2008) advice, I used a pre-prepared list of topics, including: early upbringing, climbing, risk, work and parenthood, with possible questions that could help to encourage stories (see Appendix four). In general, the interviews remained relatively unstructured and were led by the interviewees. Some of the interviewees used photographs and guidebooks during the interview, to tell me about memorable climbs and trips. These topics were particularly important in some interviews: whilst some interviewees needed very little prompting and responded well to the primary question, the interaction I had with others was not as well established, or they had trouble grasping my intentions from the question I asked and they were not used to talking about themselves at length. These interviews often produced shorter answers, however, as I became

'better' at interviewing and prompting, I was more relaxed and was able to probe for longer and more thoughtful responses.

The second interview was more of a semi-structured interview, this was so that I could pick up on issues from the first interview and explore how the parents experience of climbing, family, leisure, work and time changed since becoming a parent. Prompted by an interview guide, which provided some consistency throughout the interviewees, I picked up on points that had not been elaborated in the individuals first interview I then asked participants to talk more about parenthood and to tell me stories about their everyday life (see Appendix five). Considering these day-to-day experiences developed my appreciation of interviewees' experiences in relation to discourses on climbing and parenting.

Interviewing is a collaboration of the interaction between the researcher and the researched (Kvale, 1996) and although Wengraf (2001) is against the researcher answering questions or talking about oneself in the interview, I felt that it was important to answer any questions that were asked of me in the hope that it would allow a dialogue to develop. Sometimes this worked well and allowed interviewees to share rich and personal experiences with me, however, at other times I feel that it may have meant that interviewees became distracted and deterred from developing their own narratives.

5.2.4.1 Immersion in the field

Whilst I do not see this research is a traditional ethnography, I have come to see it as influenced by ethnographic techniques. There seem to be many similarities between ethnographic research and life story or narrative approaches, because they both involve that the researcher becomes involved, and a part of the lives of participants. As Goodley et al. (2004) show, ethnographic methods can become an important part of doing life story research, and they can be used to assist writers in "*making the strange familiar*" (Goodley, 2004: 56, emphasis in original). I am specifically speaking of observational data. In this research whilst formal participant observation was not a systematic method of collecting data, the stories that I speak about further on in this chapter, were supported by insights gained through my own experiences and observations both out climbing and whilst in the homes of interviewees (see Rowe, 2007). Here I highlight the sources from which other data were collected, and further on in this chapter I show how these helped to inform the stories that were written.

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I made observations for two years of my research, at climbing walls and crags around the country and on trips to Scotland, France and Italy. This was particularly when I went out climbing with any parents, including those that I interviewed, where I made notes on the conversations parents had about and with children, the negotiation between mothers and fathers and on potential gendered conflicts and negotiations. I also, as I discuss, spent time with the parents in their homes, at social occasions and at climbing venues and some of these details were useful in giving a more detailed picture of the life-worlds of the interviewees.

Additionally, I met up with Sarah Stirling who wrote two articles on mothers and fathers climbing for UKClimbing magazine (see Stirling, 2009; 2010). We discussed some of her findings, and she agreed to contact the climbers that she had interviewed, and ask them if I could contact them. I contacted all of them, providing details of my research and asking whether I could use the data from their interviews with Sarah. Six 'professional' climbers and mountaineers replied and were both excited about my research and happy for their data to be used in the research stories.

5.2.4.2. Reflections and ethics in the field

After the interviews I recorded feelings and observations, this enabled me to critically reflect on the interview content and any ethical considerations that emerged, as well as to understand how I shaped and indeed influenced by the research process. I have already positioned myself in terms of the research, however, this did not include how my identities impacted and were shaped by the research process. Although I have reflected on this elsewhere (see Coates, 2010) I pick up on some of these points here. I felt that my multiple positions as a white, female, well-educated and well-travelled, non-parent climber/ researcher impacted the research process.

I felt, before starting my PhD that being a 'non parent' would mean I was an outsider when interviewing and researching parents. I thought that the meanings of non-parent produced a rather static identity, yet although I remained a non-parent, the way that I experienced this 'reality' in relation to the interviewees varied. Furthermore, I found that being a non-parent was perhaps both a detriment and an advantage for the relationships I had with interviewees.

On one hand as the next field note shows, I felt that the mothers did not share as much about their children and parenting with me as I saw and heard them doing with other mothers. This was perhaps because I had not been through the experience, and did not share the same life

concerns as them, however at times not having children was beneficial because I felt that parents saw me as in no position to advise their parenting, as these field notes highlight:

> Went to the wall with a few of the women I interviewed, one of them is pregnant so we talked about that for a while. Someone said something about her tummy looking like mine. . . I think she meant it was small so she looked like she wasn't pregnant or hadn't had children, like me. Although I took this as a compliment, I felt separate from them. They then talked about their children whilst we climbed, comparing tips, or advice. I knew their children, but what do I know about being a mother? (Field notes, November 2009).

> At Liz's today, talked quite a lot about advice, about how she felt when she gave birth, and the guilt for having a caesarean, feeling down for a long time, but not feeling like she could talk about it. She talked to me though, I felt privileged, and her husband also said that you couldn't always talk to other parents as they may judge you. Maybe as I am not a mother, they feel like I won't judge them on how they parent. (Field notes, January 2010).

At times, I played up on this identity in order to establish myself as non-judgemental. This was somewhat difficult because although I am not a parent, it is very difficult not to have judgements on an issue that is so public.

Both travelling and climbing came up a lot in people's stories, I felt that they really enjoyed talking about these memories, with some of them telling me how they had really enjoyed the interview and it made them realise how important the outdoors was for family moments. That I climbed and had done some travelling helped me to recognise and understand the places they talked about. I had a sense of the memories being collective as well as individual:

> Being recognised as a climber has helped gain rapport with the interviewees, they have shared experiences of particular climbs because I may know the climb, also when they talk about Font or Pembroke. I know that they go there in October or February half-term, or bank holidays in Pembroke. Some of their personal memories are also collective of climbers (Field notes, September 2009).

Furthermore because many of them had done some form of a research project, either at undergraduate or post-graduate level, and a few in the 'human sciences' they were all really understanding about ethics, time constraint and the type of research that I am doing. I found that they were all willing to give up their time and arranging interviews was relatively easy. The above highlights how my identity had to be negotiated and I drew upon my subjectivity as a climber and non-parent differentially (Herzfeld, 1983).

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The interviews had quite a big impact on how I felt about climbing too, as I reflected before although I climbed I did not feel like a climber for a long time. I think that this in part was because I always climbed with people with ten or more years climbing experience and perhaps that I saw being a climber as somewhat measurable by performance and years of experience. However, during the interviews I heard really good female climbers talk about when they first started, and the love they had for climbing and it made me want to climb more:

> I walk out of the interviews exhausted but all I want to do is climb. I've always climbed with people better than me, which although this pushes me it can be demoralizing but then you hear them speak, they tell you about the beginning—when they found it scary, when they were 'normal' climbers. Now look at them they are parents, they work, they have been to great places, they are still carrying on education and they climb at levels I never thought I would. I feel inspired. Rich has noticed it too, now I want to go out all the time. Doing loads of Trad too! And weirdly I'm less focused on the grades now, it's like I've taken the pressure off myself and just go out and enjoy it, and I'm better because of it! I feel like a climber (Field notes, March 2010).

As highlighted above, Guilemin and Gilliam (2004) argue ethical issues are unavoidable in qualitative research, and although I was aware of these and as outlined above I had thought about and planned for possible ethical issues, this did not necessarily prepare me for issues that emerged whilst collecting my data. It was not until I was immersed in the interview process that these issues became real. At times, I was surprised at how personal some of the stories told were, I felt privileged to hear these experiences, although this left me feeling unsure of my role and highlighted some important ethical issues to me. I highlight one occasion in my field diary:

> We touched on a significant relationship, I felt like it was a sensitive issue and she was reluctant to talk about it whilst being recorded, so I changed the subject. This made me distressed and worried that I had caused her to remember or that I might have you know overstepped a line? Afterwards, on my drive back this moment stayed in my head, I worried about it and questioned my role as what I saw as a friend and a researcher. Can you be both? How do you deal with sensitive issues? (Excerpt after a first interview, November 2009).

I sometimes felt conflict between being a researcher, and being a friend to some of the interviewees, whilst generally this was not a problem because although I was always treated with warmth and the participants shared personal and emotional memories with me, I was still treated distinctly as a researcher once the interview finished. However, with the couples that I climbed with, I already knew them reasonably well and although this benefitted my research, I was aware that at times out of the recorded interview they might be telling me things as a friend and not as a researcher. I dealt with this by being open in the beginning that the research may

involve informal conversations, and because these participants wanted to be represented, and were genuinely interested in my research (often sending me articles of interest) I felt that it was acceptable to use data gathered informally. Additionally whilst I was out at the crag and at the wall, I observed other families, or parents and it was not always possible, and perhaps could have been problematic, to reveal details about my research to obtain informed consent. I questioned how to deal with this, and in the end, as recommended by Sparkes (2002) I decided that the data did not put anyone at risk because of the way I represent the data (which I come to next) it would not be possible to identify any of the participants and thus their protection was extended. In a sense I was following Hammersley and Atkinson's (2007) advice and making 'judgements in context', Hammersley and Atkinson suggest that issues should be considered individually depending on the case at hand and that a researcher should be flexible and reflexive, to make respectful decisions for the interviewee (Christians, 2003).

Perhaps the most significant ethical issue I came across was the need to take care and be sensitive to privacy whilst interviewing couples, particularly because at times they discussed things that I am not sure their partner would have been happy to hear. Whilst couples may have discussed their individual interview amongst themselves afterwards, I maintained the confidentiality of the individuals, and although I offered individuals, the chance to read their interview transcripts none of them took me up on this. This issue, and that many of the interviewees knew each other made me somewhat worried about maintaining individuals' anonymity when representing the couples, I questioned how I could maintain the anonymity of the climbers/parents yet show the conflicts that sometimes emerged. It was this ethical dilemma, as well as some problems with showing the overall picture "whilst still retaining that conceptual detail" (Wheaton, 1997:286) when it came to analysis that led me to the use of ethnographic fiction as a way of representing my data. Whilst interviewees did not wish to read their interview data, some of them did take up the opportunity to read and give me feedback on the stories that I wrote (see appendix six for examples of feedback). This feedback made me realise that I had made the right decision ethically, as one of the interviewees commented that she had found herself wandering what some of her friends had discussed with me.

5.3. Analysis and writing

Communicating how I performed the analysis, interpretation and representation of the data was perhaps the most difficult parts of the research, I will attempt to clarify this lengthy process here. Initially I began with the lengthy process of the transcription of each interview in its entirety, which was done as soon as possible after the interviews in order for reflection and

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preparation for the second interview. After transcribing, all of the interviews I was left with over 100,000 words to make sense of I became somewhat lost, so I looked at other work using a narrative approach, finding that the analysis and representation in narrative research is as varied as its methodological scope. This varies from the chronological re-telling of individual stories (Cresswell et al., 2007) to a thematic approach that identifies connections between stories (Phoenix and Sparkes, 2006).

I initially attempted to code and cut down my texts thematically by either breaking the transcripts up into codes or using long pieces of individual narratives and organising them around time and events (Reissman, 2001). I followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) suggestion to cut and paste sections of the transcripts into themes and sections, thus I opened up word documents and segregated the interviews. However, I ended up with over 10 different documents and within these there were many sub-topics, and then I found myself isolating a theme when a 'quote' would fit into many themes. There were so many themes that I felt like I was losing touch with the experiences or stories that I had been told. How would I be able to tell these stories? How would anyone be able to read and connect with the experiences of parents through a sequence of disconnected and uncomplicated themes and quotes? As Markula and Denison (2005) suggest that using lengthy quotes and then providing a theoretical discussion does not really "capture a sense of the subject's world" (p168).

The other option of re-telling individual or couples stories seemed un-achievable for analytical and ethical reasons. Not only does Rich (2002) suggest that this approach is unpractical and unproductive when analysing discourse, with the "need to go beyond single dominant narratives" (p121) but ethically, Clayton (2005) suggests the most important consideration is the protection of interviewee's identities. This was particularly significant for me because as I suggested above I had interviewed couples separately and I wanted to respect that certain issues may not have been shared with their partner. These problems and an interest in some of the papers my supervisors had written (see Clayton, 2010; Humberstone, 2009) led me to look at creative ways of writing.

Using creative non-fiction and 'ethnographic fiction' provides options that traditional writing does not, it allows one to move away from either categorising multiple individuals or writing individual stories, which would ignore commonalities and perhaps be rather repetitive. Whilst it is somewhat difficult to separate the analysis and representation of the data, I will try and re-capture the process in which I 'created' the stories here.

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I needed a form of analysis then that would help me to write storied narratives, and so maintain a lot of the data. The process by which I did this is somewhat difficult to describe as analysis takes place throughout the research and is informed by the theoretical and philosophical background of the researcher. Furthermore, proponents of alternative writing forms often re-iterate that analysis is in the writing; description, interpretation and analysis are read through the storied accounts (Markula and Denison, 2005, 2003). Thus researchers are often not very clear on the process by which they make-sense and turn their data into 'storied' accounts. I was helped along with this process by the book *Researching life stories: Method, theory and analysis in a biographical age* (Goodley et al., 2004) in which the authors make explicit how the data and theory are used within their stories. Furthermore, Markula and Denison (2003, 2005) build upon Sparkes (1999) review of analysis techniques, suggesting that the analysis of data to create stories involves three steps: description, interpretation and explanation (p169). In using these steps, I refer to the approach I have used as a holistic thematic, discursive analysis.

Although I rejected a traditional thematic analysis it is somewhat impossible not to break the data down in some way, as Ely (1999) suggests: "we are already selecting, dropping or figuring the data from the more complex real thing that we have witnessed in order to tell a credible story," (p 19). Thus, first, in seeking description, I narrowed my research down using broad over-arching themes. To do this I read and re-read the interviews to get a sense of the individual and to pick up on stories and experiences that were common among the interviewees and related to my research questions; these included: expectations of parenting, pregnancy and climbing, fathers climbing trips, children climbing, climbing as a family activity and mothers climbing. I then re-read the data looking for differences and commonalities between the interviewees around these broad themes, particularly looking for rich detail.

The interpretation and explanation rolled into one, and in doing this, I was influenced largely by my theoretical underpinning. In the literature review I was influenced by Foucault's archaeological and genealogical methods, particularly his work on discourse and power to look at how subjects are formed. Again this influenced my reading of the data, I began to look at the discourses that were drawn upon by the interviewees (i.e. on parenting/ gender/ climbing/ risk/ childhood). However this does not mean that the individuals are determined solely through these discourses, instead I reiterate Foucault's contention that discourses are instruments of power that subject humans, but are also "a starting point for an opposing strategy" (Foucault, 1981:10). So using his latter work on technologies of self I sought to identify the ways in which individuals trouble discourses and enable new ways of being. As Goodley et al. (2004) argues

discursive analysis should include looking for resistance to dominant governing discourse and should show multiple selves and lives.

5.3.1. Writing the stories

Making the process clear of how the stories have been created is a difficult one, and often authors' in expressing their artistic and research license are typically vague on how their text is produced (see Markula and Denison, 2003). Instead, it is hoped that the stories speak for themselves, that in turning this data into storied accounts, the lives of the interviewees are made to feel real to the reader, as Rinehart (1998) writes:

> Authors attempt to replicate the sense of the experience. If something did not happen the way it was reported, recollection made it feel as if it did...Truth, in this type of writing, is not a realist narrative but rather a sensual, magical, lyrical truth. The feel of the experience-verisimilute[6]-is what the writer is after. (Rinehart, 1998: 204).

Despite this, rather than purely fiction, writing ethnographic fiction involves mixing systematic research and data with the author's own experiences and fictional and rhetorical skills akin to novelists, in order to 'show' and 'tell' experiences (Sparkes, 2002; Richardson, 2000; Watson, 2000). I must at this point reiterate that it is I, the author that has constructed these stories, and whilst they are not about me, they are represented by me and therefore it is my interpretation of what I was told.

I have created five stories, which are told in part three of the thesis. These stories were written using six sources: interview data, observations from climbing with parents, and being in their homes, personal experiences of climbing trips, the data from Sarah Stirling's interviews, previous literature and theory, and fiction to elaborate and help set the scene. Broadly the process of writing these stories was a part both of the stages of analysis that I mentioned above, through description I tore apart, pieced together and blended events and experiences together, but using the creation of characters, phrases, dialogue and monologue show the complex life-world of climbing parents. Although I do separate experiences in some way through telling stories around particular events or issues, I don't wish to de-contextualise these the culture but instead holistically "represent the categories, themes, and cultural understandings uncovered" (Krizek, 1998: 94). Through doing this I hope that the reader will see how parenting impacts the climbing experience and additionally how climbing fits into the lives of the interviewees.

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Before each of the stories, I give a more detailed account of how each individual story was written. Here, maintaining some license as the author, I cannot necessarily give a step by step account of how the stories were written, however, I do wish to shed some light on how the above six sources have been used to construct the stories.

After separating the data around the themes described above (pregnancy and expectations of parenting, fathers climbing, families and climbing, children climbing, and mothers climbing), I identified and selected from this raw data, themes that were central to my research questions, including; gender, morality, time, risk and responsibility etc to form the basis of the stories (Denison and Markula, 2003). The stories are then put together, sometimes using quotes that are relayed exactly from the interviews, from conversations that I witnessed and at other times using paraphrased dialogue. The emotions and feelings of climbing and parenting are my own attempt to represent those expressed by the participants, and witnessed by me when with the parents and their children.

Other parts of the stories; the scenes, events and places described are primarily based on the interview data, my own experiences and witnessed observations through-out the last two to three years, for example, stories about the children I either witnessed or was told about, and I wanted to get these funny stories or events across. The data from Sarah Stirling's interviews has only been used in the pregnancy story to give the perspective of the 'elite' climber mountaingoat (chapter six).

The theory informs both the story; with the multiple selves, the notions of discourse, and of technologies of self discussed in the first part of this thesis, and more specifically it informs the discussion after each story. This discussion offers a more 'traditional' or conventional approach, reflecting on the themes that come out of the stories, using the literature and using Foucault's earlier and later work. This may perhaps detract from allowing the reader to interpret the stories themselves and risks disembodying the characters I have created but I felt that it was important to show the experiences in relation to the theoretical framework (Wheaton, 1997). As Goodley et al. (2004) write, it is the task of social researchers to make the analytical content within stories clear, and that: "what audiences do with stories is often unclear, Consequently an argument may be made for analysis that points out to readers themes within stories...analysis strengthens stories" (Goodley, 2000: 57).

Therefore, I would argue that the essence of the stories are not constructed from 'pure' fiction, and there is the finalisation of my interpretation to some extent (Clayton, 2010). However,

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fiction is used to add colour, detail and provide the sense of experience, and these stories did change as I wrote, and re-wrote them. This is a process that Rowe (2003) and Clayton (2010) suggest, "exchanges 'real' data for the 'imagineered' text of the literary novel, but the exchange is between prose, rather than referring to a substitution of data for imagination." (Clayton, 2010: 373). In order to help develop my fictional writing, I attended a creative writing class, where I learnt skills including: dialogue, creating characters and creating a sense of conflict within the story. I used this opportunity to get some feedback on my stories as standalone pieces. This class, whilst it did not make me into a novelist, or turn me into an outstanding writer, vastly improved the stories I wrote.

In order to provide some form of structure, continuity and coherency to these stories, first one central 'fictional' couple were created, 'Liz and Jack'. Jack and Liz, whilst fictional, are an accumulative representation of the experiences and feelings of the couples that were interviewed. Through Jack and Liz I wanted to show how lived experiences could often be quite contradictory, and highlight the multiple and complex identities of parents. The stories represent the sometimes unresolved conflict that was common among many of the individuals and couples that I interviewed. Conflict is also used to show the contradictory experiences between different couples. Whilst Richardson (1997) suggests that the freedom of post-structural writing is that it allows writers to write something but not everything (i.e. perhaps one story and not the whole story) I wanted to show that experiences (being a climber/mother/father) were not universal, and to show that there were differences too. Interviewees talked about and compared their own circumstances to other parents and climbers and, they at times relied on 'others' to climb and support childcare. Therefore, I brought in different characters to show these differences, for example, there were parents whose climbing had been disrupted by work, and by parenting, which had meant that their climbing had almost ceased, and in one case had ceased altogether. I felt that showing these differences was important because again I do not profess to show a 'true' singular experience of parenting, of risk, responsibility or climbing because there was none. Again to provide consistency, and to allow the reader to develop a better sense of the characters, some of the characters 'appear' in a few of the stories.

The relaying of the sequence of these stories are entirely my own doing, I wrote these five stories as if they were set at different parts of Jack and Liz's lives. However, because most of the interviewees had young children I decided to keep the stories based on a period from before Sam being born, until he started school. The research stories then focus particularly on the transition to parenthood, and whilst I recognise that there are issues that could emerge when children were older, I did not have enough data to write about these conflicts. I have however,

attempted to bring in the sense of parental anxiety about children as teenagers and to show some of the experiences of parents who had older children through the characters of Pete and Lee. Whilst these stories may read like fictional short stories, they do not always have a resolution or even an ending, I felt they worked better this way, because conflicts are not always resolved, and a simple moral conclusion does not always result, and perhaps further conflicts lay ahead.

5.5. Evaluating interpretive research

The crisis of representation in moment three is joined by the *crisis of legitimation*. As the use of the interpretive paradigm became more prominent researchers questioned and rejected the use of causal and linear relationships (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 16), and with this, the use of criteria that had been used to evaluate quantitative research, such as validity, reliability and generalizability was deemed problematic (Schwandt, Lincoln and Guba, 2007). Humberstone (2004) adds that traditional feminist ethnographies have been critiques for similar reason, of trying to verify the facts. This does not mean that anything goes in interpretive research; researchers instead seek alternative forms of judgement criteria. They seek to make the reader aware of the author's positioning, and to instead think about the plausibility of what is being said, i.e. does it ring 'true'?

Evaluating interpretive research is a complex and debated process (Sparkes, 1998) and I feel that I must make it clear that even by applying some forms of rigour to my research I am not suggesting that my research can be judged as fact by a definite standard. Instead of applying a set of criteria to judging the validity or reliability of this work, I attempted to adhere to a list of alternative moral, ethical and 'quality' guidelines that have been put forward for judging post-modern narrative and writing. These include:

1) Have I been reflexive? How was the information gathered? How does the author explain themselves? (Richardson, 2000)
2) Do I address the local, historical, political and gendered context (Frow and Morris, 2000)

   Does the story:

3) Feel real or authentic: are they believable, do they tell the mundane as well as the spectacular? (Fine et al., 2000; Richardson, 2000).
4) Provide an emotional reaction. Is it interesting? Is it moving? (Markula and Denison, 2005, 2003; Pelias, 1999)
5) Does it make a contribution to debate; does this piece contribute to our understanding of social life? What can we learn from the story? Have I shown multiple identities? Have I shown both dominant and alternative discourses? (Ellis, 2000; Fine et al., 2000; Richardson, 2000).

6) Have aesthetic merit, does the author show instead of tell? Are characters developed enough? Is it expressive? (Ellis, 2000; Pelias, 1999)
7) Is it ethical: did the interviewees get a chance to comment? (Ellis, 2000)

With regards to the first two, I have considered my voice throughout this chapter, and considered the broader research context within the literature review. However, with regard to the criteria for representing these stories, on the first attempt at writing these stories, they were unlikely to meet any of the above criteria. After some re-working on my own, and with much intrepidation I gave my stories to the interviewees, to colleagues and to 'fictional' writers. Two of these stories were read as if they were stand-alone fictional pieces by two novelists, the criticism I received was largely over the introduction of characters and the characters themselves, from this I worked a lot harder on making 'Jack' and 'Liz' appear real. My supervisors and three other proofreaders read the stories alone to see what themes they felt arose, and this feedback helped to inform and improve the subsequent discussion. Finally, when I was happy with the stories they were sent to the interviewees. Giving the interviewees a chance to comment was important ethically and in order to see whether the interviewees felt that they have been represented 'authentically.' The feedback that I have received so far has been largely positive (see Appendix six for the feedback received).

5.5. Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have covered a wide scope, from outlaying my philosophical underpinnings to making clear the approach to collecting and representing the data. I maintained a reflexive approach to telling this journey, by using vignettes from the field, and showing that a consideration of how data is represented is fundamental to interpretive research. I have discussed where the data from the stories came from, and how I began to write them, and I finished by outlining some criteria for judging the stories. This seems like a good point to move onto the final part of this thesis, where I present the five ethnographic stories.

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[1]   I take interpretivism to be a broad over arching paradigm that includes feminist, constructionist, hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches

[2] Miller (2007) discussing Foucault and constructionist research suggests that whilst without doubt Foucault is a constructionist, his work offers different approaches to constructionism. His earlier work has been used to imply that through discourse particular subjects and bodies are constructed, and therefore some have critiqued him for being overly deterministic and somewhat at odds with interpretive views of constructionism which highlight the role of the social actor as readily constructing their own reality. His later work however, offers researchers the methods to analyse how actors make sense of knowledge and use alternatives to the dominant discourses. Thus whilst recognising that humans are always subjected, Foucault's work can fit with intepretivism, he argued "consistently that power struggles are struggles over interpretations of social reality" (Miller, 2007: 269). The constructionist approach taken here sees people as made subjects but they also construct themselves through positioning themselves, and struggle to create alternative meanings as they tell stories.

[3] Around the late 1980's and early 90's some feminists began to question the universal approach to researching women and a number of texts were published by feminists engaged in ethnographic or anthropological research exploring the question, 'can there be a feminist ethnography?' (see Abu-Lughod, 1990; Strathern, 1987; Stacey 1988)

[4] Stories express feeling an induce some form or emotion or empathy in the reader of the experiences that are conveyed. This was certainly the effect that some of the vignettes I read had on me, for example, in reading Carol Rambo Ronai's (1996) autoethnographic tale: *My mother is mentally retarded* I cried, recognising in it some of the issues that one of my friend's had faced, dealing with her mother's manic depression.

[5] It is not that anything goes, and writing in this way, as I discovered, was often laborious and always challenging and as shall be seen later, criteria exist, with which to evaluate creative pieces.

[6] Verisimilitude is the truthlikeness or plausibility of a text. Paul Atkinson (1990) suggests that there is a relationship between the interpretive text of the everyday and the cultural knowledge, and the text should bring a sense of the 'real', of the cultural world.

Part Three:
Storied Experience

Chapter Six: Pregnancy Forum and Expectations of Parenting

6.1. Setting the scene

This story needed to set the scene, starting at the beginning of Liz's entry to motherhood; her pregnancy. The mothers I interviewed had diverse experiences of pregnancy in relation to climbing and it was an issue, which many of the parents, although this was usually mothers, sought advice about usually from 'expert' sources such as doctors, midwives and parenting manuals, but additionally from one's own parents and friends. However, when it came to problems that were experienced, parents were somewhat reluctant to openly discuss these, perhaps for fear of being judged. This perhaps indicates why internet forums are useful and popular spaces for new parents to share and discuss problems whilst maintaining some anonymity[1]. Internet forums and blogging are also popular forms of collective communication for climbers[2], I therefore decided to present this story in the form of an internet forum.

Using a forum as a format helped convey both the seeking of advice as well as the diverse experiences of pregnancy and expectations of parenting that the mothers and fathers I interviewed had. It is the relationship between the expectations and experiences of pregnancy and motherhood, and fatherhood, in relation to climbing that I will develop further here. The data used in this story is primarily from the mothers interview data, but the data from the professional climbers that Sarah Stirling (2009) approached was also used to construct the experience of mountaingoat. Whilst one of the characters was not a parent, and in that sense did not come from any of the empirical data, his experiences of growing up in the outdoors emerged from some of the interviews, and witnessing a woman climbing pregnant was based on my own observations.

6.2. The story

Topic – Climbing whilst pregnant and expectations of motherhood

By - Liz_on_rock on - 15th June 2009

This has probably been discussed before somewhere on here, but I have just found out that I am pregnant for the first time ☺ I am very excited but a bit nervous and because I'm the first of my climbing friends to get pregnant I don't really know any mothers who climb, so any advice/information/ books to buy/experiences that anyone has that they will share, would be great.

I guess some things I'm worried about: Will I be able to climb whilst I am pregnant, is it dangerous? How does that even feel? Have people had positive/negative reactions to climbing pregnant? Are those full body harnesses safe? Will I ever even have time to climb again?

At the moment me and my partner Jack, are very much a partnership, very equal, we share jobs around the house and he says he will happily work part time when I go back to work, but I suppose I still fear, maybe because my parents were quite traditional mum stopped going out walking as much and stayed at home and cared for us, whilst dad worked and kept his hobbies going. So I'm worried about me losing out more than him losing out, that my life will change and his won't, because I have no doubt that he will be able to carry on, whilst I might have to start giving up a few more things, especially when breastfeeding. I don't want to stop climbing, it is such a massive part of my life, part of who I am. Please tell me there are mothers out there climbing and that I'm worrying over nothing

Looking forward to hearing your stories!

Liz

Reply

 In reply to – Liz_on_rock

Hi Liz,

Have no kids an dunno anyone with them so can't say alot, but did see a pregnant bird in Portland a couple of weeks ago climbing up a 6a route (on a top rope mind). She seemed pretty pissed off with how she was climbing, well was swearing a lot! LOL! To be fair I was pretty impressed though, and its not like she was leading, so its not like your gunna fall with a good belayer so why not!

My parents didn't climb but they always took me out walking. I thought it was great for me and my brother and we both do loads in the outdoors. I no I'd wanna do same for mine.

Reply

By - climbingmum on- 15th June 2010

In reply to – Liz_on_rock

Congratulations! I couldn't wait to be a mum and being a mother is the most satisfying thing I have ever done. Here's some of my experiences:

>*Will I be able to climb whilst I am pregnant, is it dangerous?*

I sought advice about risks of harming the baby when I first found out that I was pregnant and the doctor said that it was fine, he just suggested not to put the baby at risk i.e. not to take any big falls, bash yourself, and said my pulse rate shouldn't go over, I think it was 140 BPM, and to not get too out of breathe.

I admit this was pretty impossible to follow because I didn't want to stop completely and spend 9 months vegetating, losing all fitness, but I didn't feel like I wanted to risk leading, I'm not sure how I feel about women leading whilst pregnant; my baby is just so precious. I remember Catherine Destivelle saying at Kendal 2008 that that she climbed this high mountain route when she was pregnant. I know climbing is her job but for me it was common sense to stop, I just felt are my ambitions really this important? I would never have forgiven myself if something had happened. So I just decided I would stick to seconding or easy bouldering, and climb until my harness didn't fit. I thought I would feel like I was missing out, but I didn't really, it just felt great to be pregnant.

>*Have people had positive/negative reactions to climbing pregnant?*

In terms of reactions, I remember this one day being out with another pregnant friend bouldering, mainly people were really positive and supportive but there were some "should you be doing that?" People do say weird things to you when you are pregnant anyway I guess because your body is so obvious people feel they can say things they wouldn't otherwise.

Since having my daughter a year ago, and after finishing breastfeeding I have got my drive back and have led harder than I ever did before on gritstone, but at the same time I still wouldn't want to do any alpine stuff yet. I definitely have taken a step back in that respect, thought this is far more important than my ambitions because like in a few years time I will be back to me and I can decide what I want to do then. My husband climbs a lot more than me at the moment and he will still solo and do some mountain stuff. I guess in the early years the mum probably is more involved, because of carrying the baby, breastfeeding, that means you do more, and I'm more than happy to sacrifice climbing sometimes, as I don't want to miss out on such an important part of my child's life.

Reply

> **By- mountaingoat on-15th June 2010**

In reply to – climbingmum

I was given similar advice and I attempted to follow it but climbing is not just my life it is also my job, so I led a climb at altitude, I love leading but what I was doing was pretty easy really. So I skied and climbed until I was about six months into my pregnancy, I was too big for my harness then, I tried one of those workman all in body harness but didn't feel very safe falling in it, so stopped leading then really. In my view it was something that I had to do because it was my job, and I wanted to share that experience with my baby. Some of my friends, who are just weekend warriors also led rock climbs in the first couple of months of being pregnant- they just made sure that the climbs were well within their grade.

I just can't comprehend the way the media treated Alison Hargreaves, it just seem so unjustified- just because she was a mother and a climber- surely you could tar someone like Paula Radcliffe with the same brush. She ran throughout her pregnancy, is that not a risk? Yet the media didn't bat an eyelid. It is all risk isn't it? No matter if it is a different sport. No mother wants to put her child in danger, so your decision whether to climb or not has to be a personal choice.

Since I gave birth (to a beautiful boy) I have continued to climb (I had to get back to work as soon as possible after the initial couple of months recovery) and it may sound strange but I am more committed and focused on my climbing than ever. This might be because I have less time and therefore the time I do have is even more important.

For me the thing that is worse, it is not so much the risk but the being away. I do feel guilty when I shut the door behind me, leaving my son at home, but I just can't stop. I just couldn't give up climbing- it is part of me and I am just as good a mum, perhaps a better one because when I am with my son I can give him a lot more quality time than other mothers.

| Reply |

> **By – dynoking on-15th June 2010**

In reply to Liz_on_Rock

Just to give a father-to-be's perspective, I think new dads feel the same expectations of that's it, shit I'm never going to be able to do anything ever again but also wow I'm going to be a dad, uh what do I do? I've been meaning to read some stuff that my wifes pointed out but I sort of think I'll deal with it when it happens.

At the moment we both climb about 3-4 times a week, so I am expecting that I am going to have to make changes and that I may need to plan my time a bit more but I will obviously support my wife climbing-I was the one who reminded her she shouldn't really be leading anymore.

I do think that things are slightly different for women in the first year, mainly because of breastfeeding and financial reasons, my wife wants to stay at home so I'll have to work after those two weeks because it would be financial suicide . So probably mothers climbing does suffer more at first, but I think most fathers I know agree that fathers should be just as responsible and want to be involved.

Reply

By -   Julia_gower on- 16th June 2010

In reply to Liz_on_rock

Hi Liz,

I think all your questions are exactly what I wanted to know so good for you for asking, pregnancy and motherhood is seen as such a private thing it is hard to admit you have no idea what the hell you are doing (which in my experience is how everyone feels at first). Good news all round though, I am now pregnant with my second child and I am still logging onto a climbing forum so obviously the experience wasn't that bad!

Me and my husband had planned having children so before I got pregnant I wanted to climb as much as possible because everyone always tells you your life will change forever, you will never climb again etc. Also I knew someone who had children and then climbing seemed to be less important to her, I suppose I never questioned it, maybe climbing wasn't as important to her in the first place? Anyway so I went on a bit of a mission as I just thought well if that is the case then I want to climb French 7a before that happened! My husband was the same, whilst I was pregnant he wanted to get in as much climbing as he could.

> *Will I be able to climb while I'm pregnant*

When I was actually pregnant the first few months are a bit of a blur to be honest, nobody told me how tired I would feel, and all the hormones, they really affected me especially in the beginning. I remember going out one day and just not feeling like I wanted to do anything so just sitting there, which wasn't like me at all, after that I climbed mainly indoors probably because it was winter and I wouldn't winter climb.

I was a bit uncomfortable about the idea of bouldering and falling off, so mainly seconded or did some easy stuff I could climb down from. Then I got quite big and found it hard to pull myself up anything and those body ones don't seem safe at all!. So instead I did some more light aerobic activity, just to keep fit, and not make it too hard on myself to come back. People come in all shapes and sizes and I think that climbers, or maybe it just a natural being a mum thing know their bodies quite well so you will know when to stop.

> Will I climb again?

I think because I'd felt really like everything might stop I took every opportunity I could to climb, it is not easy. I think it depends on the birth/ the baby/breastfeeding/time of year/husband etc?

To be honest before having number one I fully intended to go back at six month, and my husband was going to do 6 months, I suppose I forgot to think about the emotional pull of a child, and how amazing it was to have this incredible little person that was yours, so that went out the window.   I guess things were less equal than I thought they would be, although I wanted to be with my daughter it was pretty tough I couldn't get outside much at all because I was breastfeeding, so I did feel a bit trapped I kept having to remind myself that it was my choice to do that, and that if I put my daughter on bottles I could have as much freedom as my husband. It meant that I was doing a lot more yoga and gym stuff too as it is easier to do in the hour or two I get, I think reinforcing to myself that it was a choice that I believed was best for her helped me feel less trapped. So when my husband said "I am going climbing tomorrow night" and I think "it's not fair, it's not fair." Actually it's me that's stopping me climbing, so makes it seem ok

> Reply

By -   Caroline42 on- 16th June 2010

In reply to Liz_on_rock

As Julia said above, each experience and every woman is different. I didn't climb at all whilst pregnant more because I didn't really want to, and I do not climb much since having my son Tommy However with work and doctorates time to climb has always been a bit up and down!

I thought I was prepared after reading all the books, which were a god-send, but they can never prepare you for everything. Even though I am used to coping with a very demanding job, in the first few months after giving birth I felt at times that I couldn't cope with anything. Childbirth wasn't easy for me and then I had assumed that I could just pick up baby, nappies and all and breastfeed anywhere, be really fit, have a clean house, like the supermum we all want to be!

But as it turns out, this wasn't the case at all. It was scary this little thing was so perfect. Maybe I expected too much of myself, and me and my husband would see other parents who were in really good routines, and their babies didn't cry? And ate well! So we'd try to change things but we just felt exhausted and MY body was always so floppy!

Luckily you work things out, with some help! And Eventually you get some you time again, as much as I love Tommy I actually looked forward to going back to work.

I still worry about Tommy three years on and I'm not sure whether I have any desire to lead trad ever again, but I have stopped worrying so much about trying to do everything all at once. I guess I know now that in some shape or form climbing will always be there, so I try and climb once every other week if my husband can get back from work, and I would like to get back into shape but its not my main priority.

TC, Caroline

Reply

By – JohnDW on- 17th June 2010

In reply to Liz_on_rock

My wife didn't climb pregnant, has only climbed once or twice since our children were born, but she wasn't really that into climbing before. I think most of the mothers' I know their risk boundaries do change more than the father. Then again my wife did ride horses when pregnant which is probably as risky in terms of falling. If you love it then don't stop. Kids are pretty adaptable and you shouldn't change for them, even better get them involved!

Although I think generally it is still 90% that fathers that back to work and mothers that stay home, especially because of the breastfeeding, I tried to get involved as much as I could. What helped was that, early on, she expressed milk, so she could get some time in the evenings, and was great for me, so I could feed them! I'm not very good at describing what it feels like but being a dad, but I do love it and I think it would be pretty wrong of me to be out climbing all the time.

Reply

By – Luna on- 17th June 2010

In reply to Liz_on_rock

I got pregnant slightly later in life, it was a very happy surprise to say the least. I remember I led a couple of E1's in Swanage before I knew I was pregnant, then after that I might have done a couple of V-diffs or something. I 'bouldered' and climbed pretty normally for the first four months. I do feel a bit guilty about this now, I think I may have been slightly naive, and not wanting to stop didn't really think about the falling. God I would have been mortified if I had fallen and something had happened, but all went well luckily and my daughter is a teenager-and a climber herself now.

Perhaps I wanted to prove you didn't need to stop, challenge all those people's old-fashioned views, and I was really worried about how hard it would be to get into shape again, about how much weight I would put on. Maybe because I was older I was more set in my ways and I didn't want to stop what was a part of me, I didn't tell anyone for quite awhile I was pregnant either, and I wore a bigger harness when mine didn't fit, although after about 7 months I was as big as a house, everyone knew then haha and climbing wasn't much fun moving-wise

After I had her, I felt like I had had a brain transplant, I had never been that emotional but I just adored her! So its true that climbing didn't seem quite as important but I certainly never stopped. I was lucky to have good child support, my family around me to look after her when she was young, so I could get out pretty soon after having her.

Reply

By – gecko on- 17th June 2010

In reply to Caroline42

I just don't get why it's got be one way or the other? My mum similarly was a home-mum, and as much as I love her she was too overprotective, it was stifling. Maybe as a result I have never wanted to stop or even felt like I should stop climbing and I bloody love my kids. Seriously, there's loads of mum's climbing in France and they're awesome role models. I reckon we need more!!! Yeah, at first you take a bit of a battering but it gets way easier and now I climb harder, better and try more alpine stuff than ever before.

I guess it's hard to explain to a non-climber but I never take risks, I'm always careful and its important to choose routes with loads of protection. When I climb, I'm in control! It's my responsibility to judge the risks. When I drive my car or cross the road I can't control other drivers...so does that mean I shouldn't leave the house in case?

My husband and I didn't bother to read anything on parenting and we were absolutely fine. It's the most natural thing in the world, so just get to know your baby and trust your instincts!

I'm sure it helps having a partner who climbs as we can take it in turns, support and push each other and we really understand how much it means to each other.

We have **both** sacrificed for our children because they're our responsibility and they're brilliant, equally we've dragged them out and sacrificed time with them for ourselves.

Reply

By – tailormade on- 18th June 2010

In reply to Liz_on_rock

Finding out I was pregnant and being pregnant was magical, I did climb whilst pregnant, nowhere near as much as pre-pregnancy, but it felt like I was connecting with my baby and it was important to do some exercise for his wellbeing. I didn't trust the bigger harnesses, because they weren't really designed for a bump.

> Although I'm not saying my husband doesn't help or takes silly risks, but from mine and friends experiences, mothers do re-think the risks more, or the boundaries are different! There is always a guilt thing with being a mother that I'm not sure fathers get.
>
> I think I did expect that climbing would stop, or I hoped it would not but I did worry about it, and yes it slowed down but after the second week I was out climbing again. Now I've just had my second child, and recovery has been harder, but in a way I have loved climbing more because the pressure is off, it feels more like when I first started climbing, forgetting the grades and just be happy to get out.
>
> | Reply |

6.3. Climbing and pregnancy

Critiquing the pessimistic view of power as only dominating and producing docile bodies Markula (2004, 2003), influenced by Foucault's work on technologies of self, indicates that any practice can be either oppressive or empowering, because technologies of self and discipline function at once. As the different experiences shown above highlight competing discourses on risk, fitness and gender which construct these women's experiences. Yet it is shown that the women, to varying degrees are somewhat aware of these complexities; and try to make sense of their own identities in relation to good motherhood and climbing. Thus if we follow Markula's suggestion, any act by these pregnant climbers can problematise the 'knowledge' of good parenting of the risk-adverse mother-to-be, or the construction of the climbing self, if they are "built on aesthetic self-stylization and critical self awareness" (Markula, 2003:104). The discourses of risk and fitness and emphasised femininity are discussed in relation to these women's experiences.

6.3.1 The pregnant body at risk

In a post-modern world, there is uncertainty, which is increasingly perceived as danger or risk, and in relation the pregnant body Lee (2009) argues then that the message given to mothers-to-be is 'unless we have certain evidence about safety then don't do it.' This is most specifically concerned with risks such as alcohol consumption, yet by this implication it would therefore seem that engaging in risk-taking whilst pregnant, at the risk of possibly harming the unborn child (victim), would most certainly be seen as irresponsible and selfish. This means that not

only are pregnant women subject to discourses of intensive mothering prior to even being a mother (Kukla, 2009) but they are disciplined to monitor their own body and behaviour. This is according to a number of confused and often-speculative 'scientific' guidelines, that on the one hand emphasise the benefits of physical activity, yet they also warn mothers to be cautious in the amount of exercise taken (Bell and Dooley, 2006).

Although moderate exercise is now recommended, the response to climbing whilst pregnant is still very mixed and a climbing pregnant body is not one that we expect to see, to the layperson rock climbing is an activity that has potential risks and so a pregnant woman climbing would be, by suggestion, morally questionable. Even within climbing spaces the pregnant body stands out as 'high risk' (Lupton, 1999) and so is singled out as in need of scrutiny, advice and regulation. These discourses act to govern the way pregnant women, as prospective mothers, behave, which feminist researchers suggest "not only contributes to the maintenance of gender inequality but directly impacts women's health and well-being" (Lorentzen, 2008: 52). Indeed, most of the women in the story above did imply that their actions were influenced by medical guidelines, parental manuals and that their behaviour was under surveillance by significant others, strangers and themselves. Risk-avoidance is enforced in pregnancy because of the 'public' nature of the body, as highlighted in both Climbingmum's story of strangers' reactions to her climbing, and Dynoking's reminding his wife to stop leading. These bodies are thus under scrutiny, which Lupton (1999) and Ruhl (1999) suggest encourages self-governance and individual responsibility according to these norms. Whilst mothers may not seek advice, concerning the risk of exercise, during pregnancy, from health professionals, they often seek (or receive anyway) it from others, and this advice has generally been that women should rest and limit physical activity at the risk of harming the child (Clarke and Gozz, 2003).

Although increased individualisation of responsibility can enforce more control over the subject, Foucault also suggested that these power relations work on free individuals. The mothers-to-be were not passive recipients of these messages, they interpreted them in a variety of complex ways, relating these discourses to their everyday lives (Rose, 1999) and with regard to the adoption or questioning of these discourses, mothers had different experiences. As Morley (1980) suggests:

> the subject's position in the social formation structures his or her range of access to various discourses . . . and correspondingly different readings . . . will be made by subjects 'inhabiting' these different discourses (p158).

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We see this in Gecko's questioning the expert-centred approach to parenting, in Mountaingoat's questioning the possibility of maintaining governmental guidelines on physical activity and in Climbingmum's questioning pregnant-climbers leading.

West and Allin (2010) suggest that multiple identities interact and influence climbers "understanding of risk and their own climbing practices" (p1242) they indicate gendered identities as potentially mediating risk-taking practices, this was found here, impending motherhood and responsibility for another mediates the risks that pregnant women take. In terms of adherence to discourses of risk avoidance, all of the mothers questioned or re-evaluated their climbing whilst pregnant. This was to varying degrees, for some (Caroline42 and Climbingmum) the professional and pregnant mountaineer is portrayed as 'irresponsible' and 'selfishly reckless', and the onset of pregnancy generally meant that many of the mothers stopped leading, because of the risk of falling and harming the foetus. Leading in traditional climbing, was highlighted as potentially dangerous, with big falls seen as potentially harming the foetus. This increasing responsibility additionally mediated when pregnant women gave up climbing entirely, all of the women stopped at about 6-7 months; when it was physically difficult to climb, as Mountaingoat, Tailormade and Julia_Gower suggest they climbed until their harness no longer fitted. At this time, they were most aware of their body whilst climbing because they could no longer see their toes or fit into a harness. To keep climbing on ropes would mean using full body harnesses, which were seen, by most, as unsafe, and as putting the foetus at risk. For these climbers, to some extent risk-avoidance is normalised whilst risk-taking is reinforced as abnormal (Pringle, 2009).

Yet others (Mountaingoat, Luna) continued to lead, or wear bigger harnesses to keep climbing. Whilst she may have been seen to take risks, Mountaingoat's continuing to climb, can be framed in terms of her perception of risk which is constructed by her position as a competent and occupational climber. As an occupational climber Mountaingoat's continuing to take high risks is, as she herself admits part of being a professional mountaineer, she faces different pressure to take risks that the other climbers would not (Kirkpatrick, 2007) and as Coffey (2005) suggests "caution in mountaineering is rarely celebrated" (p86). Thus on some levels it could be said that the romanticism of leading in climbing is seen to blur the risks of pregnancy (Stranger, 1999). Yet all of the climbers did question the risks in their climbing practices and minimise them. Therefore it seems more likely that Mountaingoat's justification for continuing to climb, is an ethical practice, a weighing up of the moral code in relation to her own experience. She judges her high level of experience and perceives the climbing she does, as being in her control (Olivier, 2006) and compares the risks she takes to other 'risky' pregnant-

mums such as Paula Radcliffe, but also implies she weighs up the risk she takes, in relation to her position as a mother. Gecko is also seen to do this, emphasising that she is always careful and by comparing the risk in climbing to that driving a car when others are on the road. Robinson (2008) similarly found that male climbers rationalise the risk by comparing it to other spheres, such as other sports or the risks in everyday life.

It seems then that the interplay between discourses of risk avoidance and risk-taking were somewhat complex, and contradictory. Even where mother to-be seemed more risk adverse, their climbing practices were not necessarily oppressed, or stopped. Whilst it would be expected that the emphasis on risk avoidance in pregnancy would suggest that the women should give up climbing entirely, only Caroline42 and the wife of JohnDW did stop climbing whilst pregnant. These women's subjectivities as mothers-to be are also constructed by discourses that represent climbing as privileging risk takers (Robinson, 2008; Lewis, 2000) and risk management (West and Allin, 2010) as referred to in chapter three. This considers the local and specific nature of risk in the context of climbing (Lash, 1993) and in relation to these discourses, pregnant climbers negotiated these competing messages of risk to construct a sense of themselves as a climber and soon to be mother. Thus whilst pregnant women's 'at risk' bodies are defined in relation to the limitations of motherhood, instead of stopping climbing they were able to negotiate their own risk-taking in climbing, and based on their own ethical positioning they became more efficient managers of their risk-taking whilst pregnant.

The contradictions between climbing and mothering identities are shown both between different and within individual climbers, for example Luna shows her own conflict between the desire to keep climbing and taking acceptable risks and the guilt of subjecting her baby to any harm. Similarly Climbingmum's experience of receiving both positive and negative reactions whilst out bouldering, indicates both an awareness of being the 'other' in climbing spaces and that 'risk discourses' surrounding pregnancy are understood in relation to what is known about 'risk' in climbing. Although Climbingmum was averse to taking risks, she perceived the type of climbing she was doing as low risk. Bouldering can involve the potential to fall (as Julia_Gower highlights), yet it can be done in relative safety, and it is constructed as safe by climbers in comparison to other forms of climbing (Hardwell, 2007; Crook, 2003). Thus, the negative and positive comments that Climbingmum received indicate that the 'high risk' pregnant woman is conceptualised with the 'lower-risk' activity.

Continuing to climb in some form allowed many of the women above to challenge themselves, and maintain the pleasure of climbing without taking high risks; in effect they negotiate the

dominating discourses of risk and mothering in relation to maintaining their experiences of pleasure (Foucault, 1985). Although it is somewhat difficult to say whether these different pregnant climbers' risk-taking was conclusively subversive because some amount of risk in climbing is normative, I would suggest that their actions did problematise societal conventions of motherhood and femininity. It was the importance of climbing to their self-identity that meant that some of the women were determined not to stop completely. Furthermore, for Luna the maintenance of a climbing identity whilst pregnant was not only a source of pleasure but was to actively and critically disrupt images that people have of pregnant women. Through critically challenging the necessity to stop, they disrupt the 'true' or 'natural' images we have of the pregnant body (Butler, 1990).

The pregnant women's risk-taking can only be understood by looking at the contextual nature of identity, understanding their practices as framed by their negotiation of the various risk discourses that they are subjected by. Some of these experiences do, however, suggest that mothers can put the health of their foetus first (which was important to their evolving sense of self as a mother) without losing a sense of their climbing selves. This is in order to have a "sense of gender identification (that) was distinct from (the) domesticity of their role of 'mother'" (Wheaton, 1997: 190, author's addition).

6.3.2. The fit pregnant body

Whilst pregnancy is an opportunity for social intervention (Changing Parenting Culture, 2010) the discourses that position the 'at risk' pregnant exercising body are somewhat complex. Mothers to-be receive mixed and often in-accurate advice about the risk or potential harm of exercising on the baby. As suggested above climbing is positioned as outside the boundaries of acceptability, yet on the other hand public discourse on obesity, and psychological stress as something that should be avoided mean that exercise is positioned as good, not only for baby, but for the mother too (Bell and Dooley, 2006; Hausenblaus and Downs, 2005). Furthermore, Dworkin and Wachs (2004) highlight that there are corporeal tensions between the pregnant body as celebrated femininity yet problematically un-anaesthetically pleasing in consumer culture. As shown in the forum above, there were tensions between giving the body a break, and a desire to maintain commitment to exercise, not only for the maintenance of a climbing identity but in order to not lose their fit body.

Historically women's reproductive capacities have acted to exclude them from athletics (Pederson, 2001) and whilst this has been challenged, Brake (2008) suggests that pregnancy is

still seen as relatively incompatible with an athletic identity. Implicitly pregnant mothers have been rendered non-subjects whilst their unborn foetuses are "super-subjects" (Bordo, 1993: 88) which indicates that children's rights have been seen as above and beyond the mothers own right.   It could be suggested then, that the image of the toned, taut female climber putting her own interests first could be seen as a disruption, a practice of transformation against the soft, cuddly (and caring) essentialist fixed notion of the maternal body. Indeed, in the experience of Luna and Tailormade, the maintenance of an athletic climbing like the rowers, in Chapman's (1997) research was experienced as a practice of freedom, whereby individuals can actively transform the pregnant body.   However, somewhat disconcertingly Dworkin and Wachs (2004) suggest that the liberal feminist perspective of 'access to exercise' as empowering for women has been used by pregnancy and fitness magazines, and the fitness industry to promote pregnant women exercising at a time when they are anxious about their bodies.   Thus they, like other, post-structuralists are critical of the idea that the encouragement of exercise abolishes disciplinary power relations, as Foucault himself suggests the self exists across a number of discursive practices (Lloyd, 1996).   Certainly it is not easy to identify whether maintaining physical activity is a technology of self, tensions exist because this toned, taut image is the currently appropriate ideal feminine body. As Markula (1995) suggests the desire to 'stay in shape' is an adoption and normalisation of appearance associated with fit, or emphasised femininity.   This has meant the pregnant body is further targeted as unruly and in need of discipline or control (Dworkin and Wachs, 2004; Upton and Han, 2003; Bordo, 1993). As well as being responsible for childcare and paid labour, mothers are now also required to "carry out a third shift: fitness regimens that allow for the adherence to the latest bodily requirements" (Dworkin and Wachs, 2004: 612).

This third shift was evident in the desire by Climbingmum, JuliaGower and Luna to not spend nine months doing nothing and putting on weight. Although this was to maintain climbing fitness or performance, it was also to stay in shape, and so the mothers to-be did a range of other activities; including going to the gym, horse riding, yoga, or running. The desire to keep fit, or what could be said as the self-regulation to discourses of fit femininity were reflected in a concern, not with their pregnant body, but with their post-birth fitness. Maintaining a base fitness whilst pregnant was used as a method to help mothers get back their bodies post-birth. Additionally the performance of exercise is framed in relation to discourses of 'good mothering', allowing the pregnant woman to connect or share her experiences with her child (Tailormade) or to enjoy the quality time with their child (Mountaingoat).   Surfing and snowboarding have also been conceptualised by mothers as allowing them to better appreciate, or to be better mothers (Spowart and Shaw, 2010; Spowart Hughson and Shaw, 2008).

By no means do I mean to suggest that the attempt to 'have it all' is always negative, although the constant maintenance or repetition of one's climbing identity when framed in terms of fitness, and staying in shape can be seen as maintaining or limiting the feminine subject position, and the anxiety this could produce is shown by Caroline42. Yet as feminist interpretations of Foucault suggest, any act or individual, although always situated within discourse, can be potentially transformative (Lloyd, 1996). Indeed, Butler in her (1990) re-working of Foucault's work highlights that because identities are reproduced by the repetitive performance of acts then it is individuals who are sustaining this subject position. Thus, through critically questioning this subject position and performing subversively mothers and climbers can disrupt the norms of femininity. Critical thought about one's identity, or questioning the discourses within which they sit is seen both in Tailormade's and Caroline42 rejection of the pressure of discourses of 'having it all' and the assumption that climbing was only about bodily appearances. Although Caroline42's experience shows how she recognises the cultural ideal of the 'supermum' and thus she initially experienced anxiety and a desire to meet this criteria, she later renders it impossible to adhere to. Tailormade experiences motherhood as allowing her to question the discourse of performance and fitness that prevails within the climbing media and instead enjoy climbing. Additionally Julia_Gower highlights an awareness of how she herself reinforces the cultural norms of breast as best and how this limits her maintenance of time-out to climb. Although in some ways they all adhere to notions of good motherhood in being aware of the cultural pressure and of their own reinforcement of these ideals, they are able to critique them. This does not always mean they act in subversive ways but it meant that their experiences "afford glimpses of the state of happiness and fulfilment Foucault alludes to in his discussions of technologies of self" (Spowart and Shaw: 2010: 21).

6.4. Expectations of parenting on climbing

It is important to note that Liz's expectations are written from interviews that were retrospective, they are thus somewhat more reflective than may be expected from parents who are anticipating the birth of their first child, and so I have attempted to show how some of these expectations related to their actual experiences. Liz's expectations like many mothers draw on the notion of the intensive parenting, although excited about the prospect of motherhood, she expresses worry that parenting necessarily means giving things up. Expectations of parenting are explored in relation to both developing parenting, and maintaining climbing identities. These expectations of parenting are seen as influenced by expert sources as well as their own

upbringing. Although both mothers and fathers had many different and gendered experiences and expectations there also seemed to be many expectations that were shared.

6.4.1. Shared expectations and influences

National statistics (Whitehead, 2010) have shown that fewer women are having children and those that do are having children later in life; both the average age of first-time mothers and fathers has gone up and that more mothers are having children later in life. These figures are particularly reflective of the middle-classes. That some mothers are having children later is shown in 'Luna's' experience which shows how age mediates the anticipation of parenting. Cultural reasons for delayed onset to motherhood include: changing cultural constructions of age and life expectations, improved assisted reproductive technologies, the feminist movement and changes in the equality of employment (Hadfield et al., 2007). The impact of this has been an emergence of discourses that shape new femininity which have given women greater freedom and choice in the workforce and in the home (Gillespie, 2001).

Additionally though Nomaguchi (2006) suggests that in Japan, the delay in motherhood is increasingly linked to leisure choices. Indeed, both Gillespie (2003, 2001, 2000) and Wheaton (1997) indicate that many women who choose not to have children have explained their reasoning in part through the desire to maintain their lifestyle. Whilst choosing not to have children was obviously not the case here, Julia_Gower does reveal how both her and her husband's desire to become parents meant that they wished to 'do' as much as possible, or to meet their climbing aims, before having children. As well as possibly delaying the onset of parenthood the implications of involvement in a lifestyle indicate a perception that the onset of parenthood is going to have a negative impact on one's leisure time. Importantly this was not an expectation that parenting itself would be negative, but instead it seemed to be a collective and shared expectation by both the mothers and fathers that parenting would be costly primarily on their time. Dynoking shows this was also seen by some as a worry about the economic constraints of childrearing. This expectation was influenced then by the societal representation of parenting as emotionally, financially and time consuming.

Although the expectation of parenting was that it would diminish their climbing, it is important to recognise that a developing parenting identity or the transition to parenting was experienced as rewarding. Both the fathers and mothers were excited about becoming parents and they suggested it was their love and a concern for their children's best interests that directed many of their (constrained) choices. Therefore, although ultimately their subjectivities as climbers and

parents are positioned within discourses, in the transition to parenting, parents are also seen as constructing and maintaining these subjectivities themselves through their own moral ideals of parenting.

Accounts they were told from friends, or siblings who had become parents influenced parents' expectations. Additionally Liz shows how her expectation of parenting and the curtailment of leisure were significantly impacted by her own upbringing, and her experience of the gendered nature of parenting. Family networks are important not only in proving support for new mothers (Heisler and Butler Ellis, 2008) but they also shape ideals of parenting. Both Monkeymark and Gecko discuss the influence of their own upbringing on their expectations of continuing climbing, suggesting that they felt positively that they would be able to continue. Monkeymark was brought up in the outdoors, although there seemed to be the perception that one's own leisure would have to be sacrificed to some extent, many of the parents had been very determined not to stop climbing, challenging the assumption that giving up climbing completely was necessarily beneficial for children. JohnDW also draws on this adult-centred approach to parenting, showing that this does not mean that parents place their own needs above their children, but rejecting the assumption that it is necessarily good for children to see parents as having a fixed, rather singular identity. Others like Gecko and Liz perceived that their own parents had not actively maintained their own leisure time, and had given up things like work, leisure and social lives when they had become parents. This meant that Gecko's expectations of parenting were to some extent constructed out of a desire to resist aspects of her own upbringing, and this had made her more determined not to stop climbing. In justifying her maintenance of a climbing identity, Gecko discusses the differences between the UK and France, in pointing out how many mothers in France still climb. This is interesting because both Warner (2006) and Suizzo (2004) indicate that in France a separatist rather than a child-centred intensive approach has been the dominant form of mothering in France, where giving up activities for children would not be expected.

SmithBattle (1994) finds that women attempt to make up to their children, for what they saw as shortcomings of their own upbringing. Although both mothers and fathers here do not implicitly suggest that their own upbringing was a negative one, or that adhering to a child-centred approach is a shortcoming because they did perceive their children's needs as more important that their own. However, in maintaining a focus on their sense of self they do challenge the necessity of parents giving up their own activities, or that a parenting subjectivity is all encompassing. Hays (1996) suggests that although parents are influenced, and cannot avoid their subjectivity as being defined in relation to contemporary ideals of parenting, they

can be selective over these discourses. Parents are aware of the competing demands of parenting, and in adhering to a more 'adult centred' discourse of parenting where parents can take pleasure from occupying different subject positions (Amatalluci, 2009). These parents highlight how the transition to parenthood is not a unilateral or universal process and the subjectivities of mother and father are not fixed, instead they relate to other subject positions (Lupton, 2000).

6.4.2. Gendered expectations

Despite the desire by many of the mothers and both of the fathers to maintain their commitment to climbing, it would seem that the expectations the parents had of their ongoing commitment to climbing were gendered. Lupton (2000) suggests that it is socially more acceptable for men to make time for themselves because discourses of masculinity reinforce the importance of self over others, whilst she suggests femininity is associated with a discourse of care, and so women are expected and encouraged to put others first. This gendered notion of sacrifice was something that paid climber Steph Davis had seen at the top level of climbing:

> One unavoidable limiting factor for the advance of women in alpinism is the fact that alpinists reach their prime when they are in their late thirties/early forties...climbers often put off [having a child] during their twenties in order to travel and climb. Then it's now or never by the time they reach their thirties. It seems like every male alpinist I know has a wife and kids at home. For them it's great. They get to have the benefits of a family at home, and then go out into the mountains. I have never met a female alpinist who has a husband and kids at home; it just doesn't work that way. (Davis, cited in Loomis, 2005: 107).

Although this research takes the standpoint that gender is more fluid, and dynamic with many parents both taking responsibility and making sacrifices as Gecko shows, and, as I suggested above if we look at both mothers and fathers own expectations of parenting it was that they would have less time to climb. However, some of the mother's expectations of early motherhood demonstrate that they perceived that their husband would continue to climb whilst they would have to stop. In expressing concern that she would have to stop whilst her husband continued to climb, Liz reflects an understanding that, despite previously egalitarian relationships and a desire to share caring, women are aware that they will initially lose more. Additionally Mountaingoat experiences guilt at being away from her son, something that Tailormade suggests is a part of mothering, Miller (2007) suggests mothers often draw on "conventions of selflessness." (346). In doing this they draw on dominant discourses of 'good motherhood' where self sacrifice and putting the children first is seen as 'good' mothering

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(May, 2008; Lupton, 2000). In practice expectations of shared parenting were not always met, whilst both Gecko and JohnDW illustrate that both women and men can experience parenting as shared, Julia-gower found that as Fox suggests, parenting, can lead to "a more conventional division of labour" (2001). Expectations of gender differences were related to subjective experiences dependent on economic circumstances, relations between parents, the embodied experience of pregnancy and childbirth and political, legal and expert discourses that construct parenting (Thomson et al., 2009).

Due to their occupational and educational position none of the parents highlighted any real financial concerns when reflecting on their expectations of having children, however Dynoking demonstrates how the lack of economic provision for fathers paternity leave, meant that it was financially implausible for them not to return to work after childbirth. Thus whilst in practice the 'breadwinner' father may not be how fathers perceive parenting, it was found that political and legal discourse maintained this binary between men and women. Providing economic support may not be the only way that men identify as fathers but it is still one way in which fathers subjectivity is seen and 'known' (Dermott, 2003).

Both men and women referred to the physically embodied experience that women went through in having children. Experiences and beliefs (influenced by the cultural construction of appropriate parenting) about pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding were seen as shaping the gendered expectation of parenting. Similarly, Miller (2005) shows how a mothering identity draws on differences between male and female bodies, and that the physical changes experienced by women shape and construct their experiences. The experience of physical changes constructed Julia_gower's belief that she would be unable to climb as hard as before.

As discussed in chapter two the culturally normative position on breast-feeding is that it is constructed as best for babies nutritionally and for mothers attachment to their baby and that this influences maternal identity (see Faircloth, 2009; Lee, 2007). How this can constrain and conflict with a climbing identity is touched upon in more detail in chapter ten, but it seems that if we look in particular at Julia_gower's experience, as well as a normative constraining discourse, breastfeeding is constructed by her as a moral expression of mothering identity. Through the constant repetition of the act of breastfeeding, women express their mothering identity. Thus, the construction of self is through balancing discourses and:

> practical constraints (i.e. the possible loss of climbing) in relation to breastfeeding, drawing on both expert and experiential knowledge in the process. They are not, of course, passive recipients of the public health imperative to breastfeed but rather engage

in moral work to actively construct their emerging multiple identities in relation to becoming a mother (Ryan et al., 2010: 252, own addition in brackets).

Oakley (1984) suggests that expectations of mothering are likely to be shaped by discourses of mothering as 'expert guided' or 'instinct/natural', whilst fathers instead are framed as being able to pick and choose their level of caring. This seemed to be the case when it came to preparation for parenting, whilst as Caroline42 mentions, her husband indicates that some men did seem to seek advice from friends and 'gaze' upon other parents practices in order to prepare for parenting, 'dynoking' shows that fathers are positioned as free to choose their engagement with learning about parenting (Vuouri, 2007). It was primarily the mothers that sought expert advice (from medical practitioners, parenting manuals) about parenting and they then, as Julia_gower shows, directed their husbands. Mothers are framed as morally responsible for children, although this responsibility is seen as a personal, individual one; mothers are still constructed as requiring expert guidance (Miller, 2005; Oakley, 1984) and this additionally means that they are morally inclined to make sure fathers are good parents (May, 2008). This, however, is not to say that every mother sought advice, as implied above, in fact as Gecko shows, some of the women explicitly rejected parenting manuals. They question both the advice and the often impossible methods and instead adopt a common-sense approach to mothering but also that resistance of the constraint of intensive mothering.

6.5. Chapter summary

In summary, this chapter has explored both experiences of being pregnant in relation to discourses of risk, and to the notion of the fit-female body, as well as the expectations of parenting. It is somewhat difficult to draw an over-arching conclusion from these findings because the experiences shown were often quite different. What I hope that the reader gets a sense of is that parenting can be and was experienced as very rewarding and empowering (Simon, 1994; Bordo, 1993) and sacrifices are not necessarily seen as oppressive. Nevertheless as I have shown that expectations of the gendered, and intensive nature of parenting were also experienced by some mothers as constraining, because they worried that they would only be 'known' as mothers. Therefore, whilst it was not always through climbing, many of the parents sought a middle ground to both parent and stay active (and work). A desire to maintain (not without difficulty) identities in relation to their work or leisure practices, offers potential resistance or alternatives to the maternal feminine identity (Sisjord, 2009; Wheaton, 1997). Importantly this resistance was supported by relations with partners; in order to ensure mothers are able to maintain alternative identities, fathers need to be encouraged and supported in the house (Richards, 2008). The fathers were shown to have quite similar expectations to mothers,

in that they saw themselves as having to make some sacrifices for their children. They therefore draw on discourses of shared parenting, where fathers and mothers indicated that the father would take a more active role in caring for the children and women were offered the support and time to maintain their leisure practice; a middle ground to both parent and also climb (and work). In the next chapter I tell a story about fathers who climb.

ENDNOTES ——————————

[1] See sites like mumszone, UkParentszone and pregnancyforum as just a few of the many popular parenting forums in the UK .

[2] For example UK Climbing (UKC) has neatly 60, 000 members and the forums are viewed 510, 000 times a week (http://ads.ukclimbing.com/whyukc.html).

Chapter Seven
Tales of fathers who climb

7.1 Setting the scene

In this chapter, I wanted to give a sense both of the importance of climbing in the histories of these men as well as the impact that an evolving fathering identity has on their experiences (and identities) as climbers. There were quite a few shared collective stories, such as all initially starting to climb traditional or adventure climbing, all identifying themselves as active fathers, and about their experiences (as climbers, fathers, husbands and employees). However, of course, the fathers' positions within discourses of fatherhood and climbing were sometimes quite different to one another, although most of them still identified as traditional climbers, some of them were more likely to sport climb, some boulder, and many of them did a variety of types of climbing. Not only these but their climbing identities were influenced differently by fathering, and work impacted these positions. It was therefore somewhat difficult to show these differences in one singular episode, thus instead the breaks show the central character Jack in different life spheres; at home as the active father/focussed climber, at work as the part time employee, and away with his friends climbing. Jack highlights struggles and conflicts that many of the fathers experiences. However, other characters such as Dan, Lee and Mike are brought in to show differences in these different spheres. This is in order to try and both better 'show' Jack's experience, but also to show other characters feelings or points of view and to develop salient points. The data for this story primarily came out of the interviews with the fathers, the setting was chosen because it was place some of the fathers talked about a lot, and I also went on a climbing trip there with one of the families. This story is written in the present tense, and as the author I take an omniscient voice, which means that I, the author know what all of the characters are thinking, and this enables me to flick between characters' thoughts.

7.2. The story

Jack stands over his son Sam's cot. As Sam's eyes began to droop Jack closes the Mr Men book he was reading, and stares down at his son. His heart warms at the sight of Sam's rosy cheeks and the bits of twigs obscured in Sam's chestnut curls, his fringe stuck to his dampened forehead. Jack grinns at the thought of Sam in the park that morning, newly walking, waddling round the park, rolling in leaves and shouting "wack, wack" at the ducks.

With an hour or so to go before Sam would wake, Jack picks up the baby monitor and quietly closes the door. Avoiding the creaking step he sneaks downstairs, peers into the living room, and reviews the mess Sam had created. Ah I'll tidy it later, time for a quick workout! He decides. In the kitchen he pours a glass of water, placing the monitor on the worktop by the door he takes his jumper off and flicks the radio on, The Killers provide the motivation:

"breaking my back just to know your name…"
    10 push ups to get the muscles going
"breaking my back just to know your name…"
     Rest
 "heaven ain't close in a place like this…"
    10 pull-ups
"somebody told me you had a boyfriend…"
    Rest
"I said, Bring it back down to this..."
   The song ends as Jack stretches and has a drink, his muscles expand tingling with the warmth of fresh blood flow. He moves over to the fingerboard that rests above the doorframe.
    1-minute dead hangs (hold 7 seconds, off for 3)
You'll need this for North Wales
    20 dips on the chair
Work the opposites.
     Dead hangs
"Come on, four more,"
    20 pushups
If you want the 8a this year, push harder
   1 minute Plank, rest, another minute
Bloody hell, these never get easier
   1 minute left side plank
   1minute right side plank
"And done," his face temporarily finds comfort on the pristine laminate flooring. Jack picks himself up and quickly washes his hands and face. Liz always kept the place clean, but as he remembered, he couldn't remove the image of what Sam had done on the floor only two days ago. A few long minutes later the kettle boils and armed with tea in one hand and the baby monitor in the other, he walks back to the living room.

I better tidy up before Liz gets back from work, he thinks, carefully placing the mug on a preplaced coaster. He picks his way through the path of counting bricks and the carelessly chewed books, putting them roughly into the toy basket, swearing softly as he finds the sticky eminence from an upside down, half-drained beaker under the sofa.

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   He scans the dimly lit room through Liz's eyes and decides it's good enough. Propping the baby monitor on the bookshelf on the corner, he reaches past the travel books, the DVDs and the guidebooks to his collection of climbing logbooks. Here a 17-year climbing career is recorded in routes ascended, photos, snippets of memories and both completed and fresh wish lists. Finding the correct vintage - 1993-1996 - he pulls it off the shelf, blowing the nonexistent dust into the air as he makes his way to his creaky old rocking chair, tucked away in the opposite corner of the room. His North Wales guidebooks are already piled up on the coffee table next to it. The chair was the last bit of furniture that remained from his student flat, years ago now, Liz had threatened to remove it every time he went away on a climbing weekend, but he'd always come back on the Sunday and find her curled up reading in it.
   He started flicking through the book:

  February 1993, Swanage
  A photograph captioned "Jack's squeaky bum time at Cattletroughs"
  Chockney (VDiff,) Led 'onsight'

A nervous and young looking Jack and his flatmate Chris, both in garish looking blue Ron Hills and loose fitting jumpers, stared back from the photograph. With an intermittent biro pressed so hard that the pages were creased, Jack had recorded the momentous occasion:

  Chris belayed my first traditional lead! Hungover, scared but managed not
  to show it (or throw up) so chuffed! What a feeling, it was like nothing else,
  my heart racing, but got up no problem, gear placements need work but
  Chris said they looked alright to him.

Jack laughs out as he notices Liz waving at the camera in the background; she'd been one of the few girls that had come along on trips after the first week. A few more came along for the weekly sessions at newly opened 'Undercover Rock' in Bristol, but indoor climbing hadn't really taken off then and nearly every weekend of that year was spent climbing outdoors, usually traditional mixed up with winter climbing in Scotland and summer alpine trips. Jack flips a few pages forward,

  April 1994 weekend in Peak district

  Friday-drove up early doors, warm enough for beer and BBQ

  Saturday Wet in Hathersage - so what?
  After spending £42.50!!! on a pair of shoes, (good job all the freshers
  who signed up this year dropped out, got to spend their subs) a cup of
  tea and some cake (Ben- tight as ever scrounged a bit) -onto The Edge.

  (that's Stanage)

> *Present: me, Mike (did his first E1, will be me one day?), Dangerous Dave (slab extraordinaire, all around mentalist), Ben, Simon, Liz (plucked up the courage to ask her out, she said yes! Nick (hard as nails), Tracy (not sure she'll be back)*

> 1. *Black monk traverse VD*
>   *Repeat from last year to warm up. Boy what a stretch!*
>   *Me-L*
>   *Liz-S   (then did the lead)*

> 2. *Black Hawk Hell trap S*
>   *Again, a repeat, good climb*
>   *Me-L*
>   *Liz-S*

>   *Along to paradise*

> 3. *Paradise wall VS 4C ***
>   *Tried last year-failed*
>   *This year-success! Bit nervy at first, but a good straightforward ascent in the end.*
>   *Me-L*
>   *Liz-S*

Jack smiles. Back then climbing had been all weekends of laughter, drinking and long days of climbing and heading out regardless of the threats from the weatherman. Thumbing the pages once more "ah here it is" he murmurs as he comes across the first entry of 1995.

> *1995 Aims*
> - *This year: Climb HVS, maybe E1?*
> - *By 2000 to climb Ramshaw Crack (E4 6a)*
> - *to climb Right wall, North Wales (E5 6a)*
> - *Lifetime: to climb E6l and winter grade 6*

My first climbing aims: Back then E4's had seemed a distant dream, Jack thought.

On trad routes he'd surpassed the E5 mark long ago, and had headpointed a few E6's. The only two-left standing on the list were Right Wall and the grade six winter route, the winter route was something he had no desire to push for anymore, but Right Wall was still one that he hadn't done yet. He flicked open the *North Wales Rock* guide book to page 54, to find the description. Jack's friends often joked that he knew every guidebook in the country inside out, there it was, a classic of the area, a route that had defined hard climbing in the 70s and hadn't got any easier over the decades that have passed since the first ascent. Jack had first wanted to climb it after seeing the picture in

Extreme Rock and he'd been saving it for a dry day when he felt good enough to 'onsight' it. This Saturday could be the day, he thought.

Delivering him from the foot of Dinas Cromlech with a bump to the living room, was Sam's voice ringing out from the monitor. Jack listens to him pressing buttons on the musical box attached to his cot for a few minutes, and then adds to the height of guide book tower before going up to Sam's room to get him.

Jack peeks his head round the door, "Hello son, have you had a good sleep?"

Sam is standing, holding onto the bars of the cot and looking towards the door in anticipation, his eyes light up and he smiles widely as he sees Jack.

"Dada," Sam points at Jack

"Yes, aren't you a clever boy, its daddy," Jack laughs and walks over to the cot, he bends down to pick-up Sam. Sam gives him a cuddle in return, something he has just started to do.

"Poowee!", Jack gets a whiff of Sam's nappy and exaggerates a grimace, Sam giggles at Jack's face.

"I think we are going to have to change that don't you?" Jack puts Sam down on the changing mat, Sam starts wriggling about.

"Come on Sam, lie still, I just need to change your smelly nappy. Mummy will be home soon and we don't want her coming home to that do we? Remember the kitchen floor on Sunday? Yes that's right, Daddy forgot and just put his face there. Isn't it funny Sam, isn't it? Yes it is!" Jack manages to control a wriggling, giggling Sam and get him cleaned and in a fresh nappy.

"Juuuce?" Sam asks.

"Let's go and get you some juice then." Jack lifts Sam once again and walks downstairs.

***

3:30pm Friday afternoon. Jack looks at the clock from behind his desk, did I miss lunch again? He never seemed to have enough time to get all the work done these days. Six years ago in his old 9-5 and he'd have been clock *watching*, checking UK Climbing *every* hour, scanning the weather report on the BBC, which, of course, would usually be ignored. Now here he was, only two hours to go and he was nowhere near getting through the pile of case files that had steadily grown since he'd left his desk empty on Wednesday morning. They breed, he thought. It's the only explanation.

But Jack had played the game and it had paid off. He was now one of the team managers for Nottingham's communities department and with Liz's encouragement (and her hefty part-time salary), he had taken full advantage of public sector work and was now officially part-time team manager/part-time dad. On paper, the split looked easy, and he wouldn't miss the time with Sam for any money in the world, but it was harder work than he'd anticipated. It seems that working two days less a week, still entitled you to having a go at doing 6 days worth. He also had to admit that the childcare was harder than he had anticipated realised, he thought back sheepishly to a conversation with Sarah, a friend of Liz's a few months ago:

Chapter Seven: Tales of fathers who climb

"So Liz says you're going part-time when she goes back to work, it's great that you'll be doing you're bit, think you can handle it?" Sarah had asked, tongue in cheek.

"Of course, can't wait for the time with Sam and loads of time to catch up on some reading, go on the finger board, and work around the house when he's asleep," Jack replied confidently.

"Ah is that what you'll be doing." Sarah had laughed in response.

At the time Jack had been somewhat pissed off at the implication that he was only doing his bit, doing half he'd thought indignantly, he realised now he had stepped rather naively right into that one. Loads of free time? No chance! When Sam was awake he needed constant supervision...NOW!

Jack flicks through his work emails, highlighting the important ones that he'd have to deal with on Monday. Feeling the urge for a delicious fresh brewed filter coffee with all the invigorating promise of a beautiful sunrise in Italy, he stretches, stands up and walked over to the coffee machine "Shit". Milk is splashed around the table and dirty mugs and spoons left everywhere. "Urgghh" Jack frowns, and takes the filth into the kitchen. His phone buzzes twice consecutively in his pocket, a text from Mike and one from Liz.

Mike Richardson: see you in a couple of hours mate- next stop Wales!

Liz: Got to M&D's alright, S just eaten some of Bella's dog food-ha-ha! Have gd weekend, be careful ;) say hello to north Wales for me, wish I was coming xxxxx

Jack laughs, there really was no point even sterilising the bottles with the stuff Sam put in his mouth!

"Ah there you are, stranger, what are you laughing at?" A brush of distinctive red hair appeared round the kitchen door. It is Dan. Dan and Jack had trained as community care officers together a few years ago, but Jack had risen in the council and Dan had instead set up his own business and now did consultancy work around the country.

"Hi Dan" Jack sighs, he knows full well what's coming.

"Not like you to be in the office at this hour on a Friday, thought you'd be at home with Sam," Dan smirked.

"Ha, ha, original as ever..." Jack knew Dan didn't mean anything by it, Jack was good at his job and worked hard but the idea of him working part-time just wasn't comprehensible to some. If it wasn't teasing from the guys at work, it was the mothers at the playgroup.

"Ah I'm just messing with you, you know I'm just jealous, which brings me to why I was looking for you." Dan pauses, "I've been asked to look over a couple of cases before I go tonight, and we-e-l-l I thought could you could maybe do it? Meghan's been ill all week and Elen needs a break, I promised I'd be back for 7ish so she could get out to the wall." Dan spent weekdays wherever the work was, so every weekend he went back to Gloucester to be with his wife and new born daughter.

Jack looked Dan in the eyes "Ah Dan, I'm really sorry mate, I can't tonight, I'm..."

Dan interrupts his apology "Aye, thought as much, probably too taxing for you anyway," he winks at Jack, "and I shouldn't really turn down the overtime. Ah well, Elen will understand, she knows what it's like." A feeling of guilt hit Dan's stomach, he

wondered what he had missed and what Meghan had learned to do this week, maybe he should just say no, but when you're self-employed work can dry up like that, and if you don't work, you don't get paid.

"I really am sorry, ordinarily I would've" Jack pauses. He felt bad for Dan, he would have hated being away from Sam, "But Mike, who you met that day bouldering at Froggatt? He's picking me up to go climbing in North Wales for the weekend. I would have asked you too, but it's a mate from uni, Lee's, 35th and will be on the trad, which I know is not your kind of thing anymore." Dan had climbed with Jack when they were training, but work had taken him away for it for a few years. Since Dan had been in the area again, he and Jack had started going down the wall every Tuesday night, but he was more interested in sport climbing or bouldering these days.

"You lucky bastard. Be nice to have a sesh on the cromlech boulders though... anyway no point thinking about it! You know how it is, got to get back to the family!" He couldn't wait to see Elen and Meghan but he was feeling a bit green; it wasn't until he'd started climbing again that he realised how much he'd missed it.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Mike swings his van into the council car park, crunching to a halt on the gravel. The evening sun adds an orange glaze to everything as it filters through the trees in the car park firing shards through the windscreen. Five nights of teething-induced insomnia plays heavily on his eyelids and he wondered whether he was going to ask Jack if he could drive. Screaming child? Metallica – the next best thing to keep one awake. He stuffs the classic 'Ride the Lightening' in the CD player makes the devils horns with his right hand at the first cords of 'Creeping Death' remembering the frenzy at Donnington Park when that song was played on the 'Monsters of Rock' tour in '91. He pauses momentarily and opens his eyes to see a number of Jack's colleagues observing his guitar-less impression of the great Kirk Hammett and then pours a coffee from his flask and takes a sip...Rock and Roll.

I need this weekend, Mike tells himself, a whole weekend with the lads climbing; no matter how much I pay for it on Monday. This was Mike's third trip since the twins had been born six months ago; his wife Becky had yet to have a weekend without the little ones. It wasn't like he hadn't offered her some time, but it was early days she was still breastfeeding, and that was probably why she was scared about leading again, luckily, she didn't mind him going. He'd make up for it when the twins were a bit older, and it wasn't like he did it all the time, he was always around in the week, not one of those fathers always at the crag, but he would never want to stop either, not like Jim had, whose wife never let him out.

A tap on the window makes him jump, looking out he smiles at Jack and turns down the music.

"Daydreaming about rock?" Jack laughs.

"Just thinking about all those routes you're going to watch me rack up." Mike reaches across the seats to unlock the side-door then he steps down from the van. "Come on then let's get a move on, are you always this reluctant to get away from work?" He shakes Jack's hand, and excited at seeing his friend again, forgets about asking Jack to be the cabbie.

Jack puts his over-sized packs of ropes, gear and camping equipment in the van and then they both climb up into the cab. Mike turns the keys and the engine roars to life.

Jack and Mike had first met at University. Mike was the club president when Jack joined in his first year and had recognised in Jack a similar thirst for adventure, beer and a cool head to match his own. Subsequently Mike had done his best to rush Jack through the grades, but despite a few epics, Jack had largely ignored Mike and progressed at his own pace, and the two of them had become good friends and long-term climbing partners despite separate travelling trips, work and fatherhood.

"So Liz let you come away with me?" Mike grins.

"Ha-ha" Jack rolls his eyes. "Only because I didn't tell her about any of the routes we are going to do!"

"Well you have to keep the four grade difference up between you"

"Too right, she's already pulling down the bouldering wall again and last weekend was leading HVS routes, and Sam's only just gone one." Jack says proudly.

Mike changes the subject: "So, this Alps trip in a few months, sure you don't want to come?" Mike knew the answer, he understood and accepted it, but the way he saw it was that neither him nor Jack were reckless and selfish thrill seekers. He wouldn't do anything if he thought there was a high risk, if he knew he wasn't capable off climbing it, but part of what he loved about climbing, was the element of unpredictability, that slight fear and the feeling of using, not just his brain but his whole body to make a decision and overcome the danger. It just felt like more of an achievement. Yes, there were things that could go wrong, but he had more control when he was climbing a route than he did when driving a car, where he had other drivers to worry about, at least in climbing he knew what he was doing. Mike knew that Jack loved that element too, he had always been more cautious than Mike, but he had never been one to back down unnecessarily, but then the boundaries had changed.

Jack drifts off, thinking about the same thing, he wouldn't say it was a drastic change, and certainly not one to stop him climbing, but he can't deny that his attitude had changed. Initially he'd not wanted to injure himself for work, but what had really changed things was just over a year ago. It was a Valentine's Day up in Scotland, the first clear day all week so him and Mike had both been desperate to get out and ignored the immanent weather warning. In his bag had been a card from Liz, who was at home pregnant with Sam, which he had been saving to read later. They had walked in and were about half way up the climb when the sky had clouded over and it had started to snow. Mike had wanted to carry on but Jack had suggested they back down. He couldn't really explain it at the time, but all he could think about was the message from Liz, and that if something happened he would never get to read it. Worse than that, he might never get to see, to hold, and to watch his unborn son grow. From then on, Jack had reassessed the risks he took, winter climbing only where the conditions were more consistent and on traditional he would stick to routes that were technically hard, strenuous but safe.

<center>✳✳✳</center>

After a bit of a lie-in, well anything after 5 was a lie-in these days, Jack and Mike head straight up to the Cromliech to meet the rest of the crew, the hour walk in meant you don't have much time to do anything else, but you want to and make sure you bag the route before anyone else gets there. It would be a bit of a faff today, but since both Mike and Jack had wanted to do *Right Wall*, they had managed to scam one of the other lads, Lee into seconding Mike who had won the toss and was going to have the first lead. Jack was then going to lead once they had returned, it meant, of course, that *technically*

he couldn't claim a true on-sight, because he'd watched someone climb it first and so 'had the beta', but to be honest, he didn't mind. It was still brown trousers time.

With Mike well and truly installed on the climb, Jack sighs contently from his position as belayer, on days like this who needs the miles of steep limestone of Ceuse, the big walls of Yosemite or the cavernous gorges of the Verdon when you could have this? Jack thinks. The summer sun was rising slowly in the sky, as it neared midday and burnt off the morning haze, the light accentuating the shadows of the rugged Welsh mountain side, the rising hulk of Snowdonia just visible. When it wasn't raining the clear blue sky contrasted the brilliant green of then fields, tempered only by the soothing grey of the rocks. There is nowhere more beautiful on earth.

Mike is climbing well so far, easing past the first crux his shirt is off, and the muscles on his back ripple as he moves up the rock. Although never the most graceful climber, Mike has always been strong and tenacious, even now at 38 his body looked like it had done a fair few hard routes. He has more difficulty on the upper section and Jack watches carefully as Mike spends a bit of time to-ing and fro-ing as he looked for positive holds up to the porthole.

Relaxing a little as Mike finally gets past the crux, Jack rubs at the crick in his neck, glancing around to see what the other lads - a mixed bunch - are doing. Lee and his dad Pete having got a very early start to climb *Cemetery Gates* (E15b), before Lee was on seconding duty, are sitting drinking tea. After meeting Pete it was easy to see who Lee had inherited his wide smile and love for climbing from. That's where they differed though; Pete, an old school climber in his 60's, was also a professor of physiology at Cardiff University. He was stubborn and gregarious, entertaining for hours with his tales of weeks away climbing and researching in the Himalayas. Lee, though just as strong- minded was more thoughtful, he had a young son too, and as a doctor worked four days a week, he and Jack often took their children out to the park or to the crag bouldering together. Leaning against a rock was Tom, an English teacher from Derby, his long legs stretched out in front of him as he belayed Paul, his messy, long tawny hair was tied up loosely. Tom towered above the others, this and his often dishevelled appearance often meant he was perceived as awkward, but when he climbed it was incredible to watch, it was like his body and mind were in tune with the rock, moving fluidly in time. Finally there was Paul, who Jack had met about five years ago at the wall, when he'd moved up to that area from London, back then he was enthusiastic as anything but just about climbing HVS. Paul had no children and as a policeman worked shifts. Consequently, he was a flexible climbing partner and since Sam had come along, Jack had climbed more regularly with him.

Paul was just finishing off climbing *Precious* (E56b). Paul hadn't lost any of his early enthusiasm, in fact once he'd realised his potential he seemed more obsessed, always eager to get out, his enthusiasm was now supported by years of climbing experience and a thick pair of shoulders. Jack couldn't help be envious sometimes, all that time to climb. It was all he could do to try and keep up with Paul on trad now, and he couldn't get anywhere near him in sport and bouldering.

Jack's thoughts are broken by a tug on the ropes and Mike calling down to him that he was at the top.

Jack turns to Lee, "You want to start getting ready, Lee?"

"Yep, two secs." Lee takes a quick drink of tea, and grabs his rock shoes. Jack waits until Mike had set up the belay and was safe before going over to sit with Pete to grab some lunch and kill the time whilst waiting for Lee and Mike to come down.

Pete is watching Lee with pride, "I remember his first lead. You hope they remember everything they have learnt, that you have taught them and just pray for the best."

"Yeah, I'm a dad myself now, I can imagine how that feels, the thought of anything happening to Sam, it's just not worth thinking about. Does it worry you still?" Jack asks.

"I think whatever age you are, whatever age your kids are you always find something to worry about. The teenage years were the worst, he thought he was invincible, but no not so much now he knows what he's doing and he takes less risks now he's a dad, probably than I did." Pete replies. "He's the one always looking back to check on me now."

An hour and a half later and both Lee and Mike come down,

"So how was it?" Pete asked.

"Earth shattering, ah brilliant, ah what a route, Jack you're going to love it," Mike was buzzing when he got to the ground.

"Yeah it's pretty spectacular, not sure I'd want to lead it, but phenomenal," Lee added.

Jack couldn't resist a bit of a dig, "What were you fannying about at up at the top Mike?"

"Well it is quite exciting up there," Mike admitted.

"Thought it might be the aftermath of all those pies you're lugging up there, or are the old chunky legs weighing you down?" Jack asked.

"Better than your chicken legs" Mike replied.

Jack laughs. "Seriously though, well done mate, pressure's on me now," Jack loved this side to being away, the banter and undercurrent of competition between Mike and Jack was friendly, but it gave Jack an extra incentive to do it clean.

Lee and Pete head off to see if they can fit in a route round the corner, and Mike sits down to have something to eat and drink whilst Jack sorts the ropes out and begins to attach gear to his harness, to the point where he has a 3 inch think hula skirt of aluminium cams, nuts and carabineer clanking about.

"'Have you got enough gear?" Mike goads.

Jack looks up at the route, "well its 40m...not sure what's there," he replies missing the jibe.

"Well if you get all that in, it'll be a wonder the crag doesn't fall down,"

Jack gestures rudely at Mike the penny having finally dropped. He ties himself in, and puts his shoes on and looks up at the soaring face again and gets a strange unsettled feeling that seems to focus in his stomach but radiate to the extremes of his limbs. Here it is. It isn't going anywhere and I've got the ropes on. Bollocks. Why am I doing this? Jack looked over longingly at *Cenotaph Corner* (E1) and though he could do that instead, but a couple of bastards had just geared up ready to have a go. He looked back at *Right Wall*. Come on, you stupid fucker, you can do this. You WANT to do this...and then he knew it to be true. He found himself stood at the foot of the line one hand on a hold cleaning his boots while he waited for his second to tie on. Already the sounds about him had evaporated and he had given up any notion of taking the 40 foot whipper should he fluff the crux. He was ready.

Mike slowly picks up the ropes and attaches them to his belay plate. He gives Jack some encouragement, "You'll walk it Jack, its solid E4 climbing up to the first break, the crux is near the top but there is probably enough gear, and nothing you haven't done before."

Jack doesn't really hear the words as he looks upward. Taking a few deep breaths, he turns to Mike and says, "ready!",

"Yeah,"

"Climbing."

A couple of hours go past, and by the time Mike and Jack are back at their packs, Tom and Paul have left; back to the campsite to shower before getting a table at the busy pub.

"Ah, mate it was, ah, wow!" Jack is still shaking with excitement and has been repeating himself for the whole 40 minutes on the way back down from the top to the bottom of the route where their rucksacks were stashed.

"I know, I know" Mike replies.

"I thought I was going to take THE fall, I think it could have been a big one if I had, but then it was like I just clicked in, just knew how to do it" Jack says

"I know what you're saying; those number three friends could have come in handy there."

After packing their gear away, they pat each other on the back a few times, and work their way down the long path to the roadside, aside from quick glances and grins at each other, each are lost in their own thoughts. I can't wait to tell Liz about the route, that I've finally done it, Jack thinks with a hint of nostalgia. He imagines her expression when he tells her, her eyes shining with pride, but also sadness that she didn't get to share it with him. Until last year Liz and Jack had spent most weekends, and holidays climbing together, but now unless a friend or grandparent stepped in they rarely got to climb together.

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The night sky is beginning to get dusky, and the cool dampness of the evening begins to settle comfortably down in the pass as Jack and Mike walk across the road from the campsite to the Vaynol pub. Mike opens the door, the smell of hops and cooking food engulfs them. The pub, a gateway to Snowdonia and central hub for climbers in the Llanberris pass area is already heaving with the local climbing club and visitors to the area. Spotting the others in the corner nearest the toilets they wander over.

"Did you do it?" Lee asks Jack

"Yes, it was excellent, what a route!" Jack grins wildly.

"Well done mate, let me get you both a pint for that,"

"Of course not, it's your birthday so the drinks are on me. What are you drinking?

"Robinsons, cheers Jack" Lee says.

"Any good?"

"Not bad for Welsh beer." Lee laughs

"Can I get anyone else one?" Jack asks. He receives three nods in response. "Right then, beer's all round." He turns to Mike, "I'll get yours too. Oh yeah, what have you all done about food?"

"We've ordered some, they said it could be half an hour to an hour's wait, so I'd order yours now" Pete answers, handing Mike the menu. Mike places his order with Jack, and Jack walks over to the bar. Avoiding the splashes of beer, as he lean his elbows on the worn wooden surface waiting to be served. Eventually he catches the bar-lady's attention: "6 pints of Robinsons and two steak and ale pies with chips, please," he shouts his order across the bar.

"Where are you sitting?" she asks in a soft welsh lilt after pouring the pints.

Chapter Seven: Tales of fathers who climb

Jack points to their table, pays on his card, picks up the tray of drinks, and walks back to their table. At the table he pulls out a seat, which scrapes along the stone floor. He sits next to Pete. The lads are discussing what to do tomorrow.

"It depends on the weather," Lee declares. "if it's like today we stay here, but rain is predicted so I think we should head over to Dinbren, it's on the way back, mainly sport there is some trad for you Dad." He says as an afterthought.

"That might be good, Ben did say he would come up if we get on the bolts," Jack added. After some varied responses, the decision dissolves into a debate between Lee and Pete about sport and traditional climbing.

"I don't know all this modern bolted stuff, 35 years ago and the bolts would be pulled out of the rock, and now people don't even climb outside." Pete scowls, half joking.

Although all of the others had had their groundings in the British tradition of adventure climbing, many of them now mixed it up with other forms of climbing.

"Dad, come off it, we're in our 30's and 40's, hardly the indoor generation" Lee paused. "*You* know I love trad as much as you, all I'm saying is it's easier sometimes, when you manage to negotiate one evening a week and one day at the weekend to climb it's difficult to get the time to get better." Plus, he thought, when you get to a certain level in trad, the routes are serious, and I personally would need to get a shit load stronger to climb them. "Whilst with sport, or bouldering yes you want the 'onsight' but you can get stronger by working a route. It's just less of a hassle sometimes."

"A hassle?" Pete clears his throat and puts on a thich Yorkshire accent "Well tha' what it's all about youth, not all y' pullin on one finger, big arm, basking in the sun malarkeh, it's about the adventure, being out there, 20ft above Llanberris pass, slightleh greaseh hold in front of y', possibility of rain."

Jack raises his eyebrows in amusement.

"I can see your dad's point, Lee. From what I have seen a lot of the kids at the wall, with all their focus on training, indoor climbing and bouldering seem to be losing both the social and the adventurous side of climbing," Tom added.

"I'm not sure, I've seen loads of young lads 'onsighting' some really hard trad routes, and we all boulder as much as anyone else," Lee argued.

"Yeah but only in the winter to get stronger for trad, and yes I sport climb, but well at the same time there are some routes that I would be really disappointed if they stuck an extra bolt in, rather than you using a wire, or whatever. Unnecessary bolting just takes away that extra dimension, it is still totally safe but there is a bit of exposure." Tom said

"Wait till you have kids, Tom," Lee said. "No disrespect to you Dad, I loved being at the crag, and all those summers near here, but mum didn't really climb and one of you has to watch the kids if you're both climbing." Whilst his dad had always been around, he'd often been off for weeks on end at work, or climbing and it had been his mum who did most of the care work, things were different for Lee, and his wife Caroline.

Jack stepped in to change the subject, "By the way, did anyone warn the Vaynol landlord you were coming Lee?" On a Uni trip to North Wales, Lee had famously climbed onto the roof of the established climbers' pub at the end of one night, and consequently the Bristol University club had been banned for five years. The story was now folklore among Bristol Uni climbers.

"I'm far too old and responsible for that now," Lee, laughed, grinning widely. Lee explained the story to the others, and they were all laughing when the waitress arrived with their food.

A couple of pints later and Jack is yawning, "I think I'm going to have to leave, I can't hack these nights anymore, anyone else?" Jack drains the dregs of his pint.

"Yeah me too, I've hardly slept all week with the twins' teething, do you mind mate?" Mike asks Lee.

"Course not, I don't think I'll be far behind you!" Lee replies, "Tomorrow-shall we pack up and head to Pete's Eats for a fry-up and then we can see what the weather's doing and make a decision?"

"Sounds great. Night all." Jack pats Lee on the back and him and Mike head back to the campsite.

7.3. Locating the story academically

In this story we see the experience of Jack, and some of his male climbing friends, played out in a week that culminates in a weekend climbing trip, away from the responsibilities of partners, children and work. There is the sense of risk, of the social side of climbing, of a community, of different forms of climbing identities. Yet, even in this context, there is not total separation from other life spheres, and as Robinson (2008) highlights a masculine climbing identity is transitional throughout the life cycle. In this discussion I will draw out how some of the discourses on climbing and parenting appeared to structure and govern Jack and the other men's climbing and fathering identities, but also show how alternatives were drawn upon by the men. The men themselves, as free subjects, created and transformed their own identities within power relations (Rail and Harvey, 1995). In doing this Jack, as I have explained, as the central character of the story, is not in any sense the portrayal of any one of the fathers I interviewed. In some ways he highlights some of the collective, but in the post-modern sense multiple identities that each of these fathers had: embodying both the notion of-the involved caring father, the dedicated, but part-time worker, and also the committed and 'good' climber. The other characters are brought in to show the quite different experiences of climbing, of work and of fathering.

These other life spheres are touched on throughout, indicating a fluid, fragmented and unstable masculine identity not defined solely by a sporting activity, but instead even in a climbing situation, discourses "intersect, and produce competing ways of giving meaning to and constructing subjectivity" (Youngblood Jackson, 2004: 674). Thus masculine identities are constructed by experiences, or the consequences of the discursive elements of climbing, age, working and parenting (Foucault, 1978). Climbing experiences in part help the men make sense of other lived-out identities (Robinson, 2008) yet additionally constructions of fathering identities shape climbing identities, which can produce tensions (Pringle, 2001).

7.4. On being a father who climbs

As discussed in chapters two and four despite large social changes in the labour market a masculine identity is still closely tied to work (Kay, 2008). Similarly research has suggested that fathers have been able to access increased free time in order to maintain their own leisure practices (Such, 2002; Thompson, 2001). Yet at the same time fathers have been subject to alternative discourses that position fathers as involved carers (Draper, 2000). It is clear from the story that fathers like Jack, Lee, Dan and Mike find themselves subject to multiple and competing discourses that shape their experiences and meant that they sometimes experienced conflict, and changes to their climbing experience. Conflicts were primarily over discourses of risk and responsibility and the desire to maintain a commitment to climbing. Whilst risk-taking and participation in climbing has been conceptualised as an escape from the ordinary (family/work), the rationalised society (Lyng, 2005; Lewis, 2004) and indeed for some, like Mike there was this indication. We see through Jack's experience that for some men climbing, whilst special, has become a part of his ordinary life, and his family life is not mundane or something that he needs to escape from. This supports Robinson's (2008) argument that, what is mundane or extraordinary not only depends on men's discursive positioning, but also that for some men and some climbers this can shift so that "climbers' conceptions of the ordinary and the extraordinary in relation to their own masculine identities changed" (p 39).

7.4.1. Risk and responsibility

When it came to risk, Jack, Mike and Dan do not perceive themselves as being risk-takers, yet their actual practices showed that there was some ambivalence and contradiction towards the understanding of their own risk-taking (Lash, 1992). Understandings of risk-taking relate not only to cultural, and sub-cultural notions of risk-taking, but also to responsibility in relation to age, work, and fathering. The differences between these men also suggest that a plethora of identities are produced in relation to discourses of risk and responsibility.

First if we look at Mike's experience, it is implied that Mike has a more gung-ho attitude towards risk-taking. Yet from his perspective we see that he both suggests that he is not a risk-taker, and therefore his perception that his attitude towards taking risks had not changed since becoming a father, but also he highlights that what he likes about climbing is the unpredictability and adventure. Mike shows how for some men risk-taking is positioned as a positive, and fundamental part of his rock climbing experience, it is accepted and sought after,

and he does not see parenting as having changed that, but at the same time this is always seen as a controlled risk. What Mike does then is challenge the assumptions that people's responses to risk are universal, but his desire to take risk can be explained to some extent through his subjectivity as a climber. As has been discussed, the climbing community and particularly the climbing media do value risk takers, and men that take risks achieve some form of status; they are recognised as being a 'good' or 'hard' climber. Thus as Pete also shows in a sense it was experienced as normal to take controlled risks (Robinson, 2008). However, it is important to recognise also that, as Mike shows, risk-taking was experienced as pleasurable. Foucault (1978a) argued that the effect of techniques of discipline does not always repress but can be productive, in a sense climbing discourses produce pleasure, and the desiring subjects. This is shown both in Mike's embodied sense of pleasure; the feelings of control, the skill at being able to deal with the risk and to make decisions, but also though the indirect pleasure in gaining status, of social acceptance, amongst other climbers from taking risks (Donnelly and Young, 1988). In marked contrast to this, as Pete shows, is the distinct lack of pleasure when the chance of risk was removed in what he saw as the certainty of sport climbing and bouldering.

The normalisation and acceptance of pleasure from taking risks within climbing can explain why some fathers did not question the risks that they took. As both Summers (2007) and Palmer (2004) imply there is a lack of debate amongst the climbing media, and by men themselves over the responsibility of climbing-fathers, in comparison to the reaction of mothers who take risks. However, I suggest that it would be unfair to say that this was 'true' of Mike. Whilst he did not feel that he changed his risk-taking on becoming a father, he did draw upon discourses of risk management (West and Allin, 2010). Emphasising that he always minimised or controlled risks, i.e. he only continued to take risks after calculating the costs of the risk and the benefit of the pleasure (Pringle, 2009). As discussed in the previous chapter, this is seen in the comparison Mike is shown making between risks involved in climbing compared to other risks such as driving a car, Robinson (2008) similarly found that many of the men she interviewed used notions of 'risk management' to draw a distinction between rock-climbing and other activities. Thus whilst Mike is situated by discourses on risk-taking, the pleasure of taking risks does not blur the reality of the danger as Stranger (1999) suggests. Instead he negotiates the risks that he takes in relation to the field of knowledge that surrounds climbing and therefore his continuing to take risks could be seen as an act of embodied act of resistance to the risk-adverse parent (Pringle, 2009). Lyng (2005) uses Foucault's work on limit experiences or self-creation in his re-conceptualisation of the theory of Edgework. From this he suggests that taking risks allows individuals to master challenges but to also transgress momentarily the

boundaries of normality, of a society that is increasingly risk adverse but also from responsibilities at work and at home.

I would agree with Robinson (2008) that this desire to take risks or to transgress boundaries is not necessarily a gendered one, but this can be related to notions of masculinity and risk-taking. As I've exemplified in Mike's narrative once becoming a parent gendered differences in risk-taking become more apparent between him and his wife. As Summers (2007) explains gender inequalities in climbing are more apparent when climbers are parents, this, she argues can be attributed to women's position as primary caregivers by which they are disciplined by discourses of responsibility. Whilst, as I will discuss in a moment, fathers were by no means exempt from these discourses, discourses of responsibility shape fathers and mothers behaviours in quite different ways. For some, like Mike, the performance of risk- taking can be seen as 'doing' masculinity (West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Mike perceives that becoming a father did not change his experience of risk-taking, this was certainly not the case of all of the men. Jack, Dan and Lee show how different men's experiences were created from similar discursive positions. Changing attitude towards risk-taking can be associated with discourses of responsibility, highlighting, as Robinson (2008) suggests, "men's relationship to risk-taking and their decision making in this context, can be placed in the wider framework of their everyday lives and identities as sons, or as fathers." (p154). This shows that responsibility is not only associated with intimate or involved fathering but also related to other social identities, and I would add to this list identities as a husband or partner as well as one's working and ageing identity.

Firstly, in relation to discourses of age and masculinity. In his younger days, Jack was positioned by himself, and others as having a sensible approach towards risk, but nevertheless he showed how particularly younger lads could be encouraged to take risks. I also showed through Jack's reflections on his first lead, his pride that he had not shown fear. The avoidance of displaying fear, and the taking of risks in voluntary sports, is associated with normative masculine behaviour in the subculture and men who align themselves to these discourses are portrayed as brave and heroic (Laurendeau, 2007, Lois, 2005; Palmer, 2004). That 'heroism' was to some extent valued, especially when the men were younger, is shown in the story through the nicknames given to the men in Jack's climbing log book, and in the folk-lore status that Lee climbing on the roof of the pub achieves. Whilst when they get older and work or fathering becomes perhaps more important, Jack, Lee and Dan are used to show that some men saw themselves as becoming more responsible. Although climbing remained an important part of their masculine identity, as 'responsible' adults a "variety of other ways of performing

masculinity gained in status" (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 117) and as men age, performance of masculinity through risk-taking can lose their impetus.

Despite changes in society, that have meant traditional working identities have become more uncertain, there is the suggestion that there is "evidence of modernity's regulated life course" (Robinson, 2008: 124) and middle-class male adults remain constructed through notions of employment (Eräranta and Moisander, 2011). As Eräranta and Moisander (2011) highlight that to earn their place at work male professional identities are constructed through demonstrating commitment and dedication, and this remains a dominant discourse that constructs fatherhood. Whilst some research has found that lifestyle enthusiasts resist this 'traditional' working masculinity, instead constructing their lives around their activity, or finding jobs to fund it (Borden, 2001) this was not the case for these fathers, who all had professional jobs. This difference is related to their positions as middle-class men in their 30s and 40s, for some fathers like Dan climbing became less important as he became more involved at work, Dan no longer had to prove or perform his masculinity through climbing because he achieved success through his working identity (Robinson, 2008). This was also related to 'traditional' discourses of fathering, because Dan is shown to feel that he needs to put in the hours at work to provide for his family. Jack also indicates that the necessity of employment could impinge on climbers' risk-taking.

How discourses of responsible fathering could impact some men's experience of risk 'is shown through Jack's 'epiphany' moment. In my description of this 'moment Jack is shown to indicate how he reflected afterwards that his backing down, something he says he has never done before, is justified because of his responsibility as a father-to-be and husband to Liz. This indicates that Jack is regulated by the 'involved' father discourse, but also that he actively negotiates his climbing and fathering identity in relation to discourses on risk and responsibility. Jack began to adhere to notions of the morally involved father before Sam was actually born, indicating that fathers, like mothers are increasingly expected to regulate their behaviour and minimise risks before their children are born (Lupton, 1999a). Taking responsibility for child care and for the avoidance of risks has increasingly been seen as a key indicator of father's involvement with his children (Furedi, 2009; Lamb, 2004). Responsible fatherhood has been largely pushed by political discourse to promote responsible moral citizens who provide emotionally and financially for their children (Gillies, 2009). Yet it can also be seen as a discourse that disciplines fathers to control their risk taking practices, so that they 'are there' for their family. Robinson (2008) suggests that this indicates a potential alternative to the dominant climbing masculinity, and I would agree that an increasing sense of responsibility allows

climbers to question their risk-taking and challenges the notion of the selfish and risk-taking father. Climbing fathers are expected to negotiate their identity as a risk-taker, with an identity as a responsible parent. This negotiation implies some form of agency because identities are unstable then they are always open to disjunction (Butler, 1990).

7.4.2. Maintaining commitment to climbing and fathering

As Jack shows, the activity of climbing is seen not just as a passing phase, but as a long-term and significant part of these men's lives, and identities. Certain discourses that were discussed as depicting a masculine climbing identity are seen in the narrative above; climbing harder, commitment in time, the climbing body, and the differentiation in types of climbing. Furthermore it was shown that it is not only the climbing, i.e. the actual activity that is important to participants but it is the collective community, or the relationships and camaraderie with other climbers, and the social lifestyle that comes with it; the weekends away, the social pint, the cafe breakfast. In many ways then, as raised in chapter four, climbing shares similarities with other lifestyle (Wheaton, 2004) or adventure sports (Ormrod and Wheaton, 2009) in that climbing is a significant part of their lives, and is seen as somewhat distinct and meaningful for these men. That said, this was not in an overtly resistant or automatic community bringing climbers together, and as I recognised in chapter three, many of the discourses that construct individual climbers and the sense of the climbing 'community' can be somewhat divisive (Bauman, 1995) in a way that excludes. Furthermore the climbing identities expressed in the above story were not fixed and static entities because collectivity is in relation "to the various and diverse climbing practices that make up the sport" (Robinson, 2008: 65) as well as their positioning within discourses. Whilst this does hint at the notion of 'tribes'[1] that is associated with the work of Maffesoli (1996) this term does not necessarily account for the long-term commitment of participants. What I suggest then is that the fathers in the story above seek to maintain their climbing identities in individually reflexive ways, but there is the implication by them, drawn upon from their positions as climbers that demonstrating commitment to climbing remains an important part of subjecting oneself, or performing as a climber. Yet, nevertheless, this notion comes under conflict from working and fathering subjectivities.

Before having children demonstrating commitment was primarily through time, generally in the linear sense of putting in hours on a number of days climbing. However, once becoming a father as Jack, Dan, Lee and Mike show they could not longer climb as much as they did before (O'Brien, 2005) shown most significantly in the way that their experiences are compared to that

of Tom and Paul's. This was sometimes expressed as frustrating because it was important to these men to maintain the performance of their climbing identity, yet in a sense their time use was regulated by discourses on 'new fathering', where middle-class fathers are expected to be involved and 'give time' to their children, thus some sacrifice of their own time as necessary, and satisfying. There was some diversity as to how the fathers in the story negotiated their fathering and climbing identities in relation to this time conflict. Showing the creative ways fathers used to maintain their climbing identities but at the same time perform what they saw as appropriate fathering. These included taking part in different forms of climbing, scheduling climbing in or going climbing with any available time, and taking a more focussed, or more scientific approach to make the most of less 'free-time'. Importantly this negotiation was also connected to men's working lives, and notions of masculinity and employment, but also the maintenance of men's climbing identity was supported by their female partner.

7.4.2.1. Forms of climbing and fathering

Throughout the story, as seen, when Jack looks back on his earlier climbing career and aims, and in the later discussion between 'Lee' and 'Pete' it is a 'traditional' climbing identity that dominates the stories. This is particularly the case for when these men started climbing, as mentioned both before, and during the story, all of the men's climbing identities were formed through participation in 'traditional' climbing, which was seen as a pathway to climbing in the mountains. These experiences are not surprising, when taking into account, as discussed in chapter three, the dominance of traditional climbing, and the lack of alternative forms in Britain, in the 1980's and early 1990's when most of these men started climbing. The acceptance of traditional climbing normalised certain approaches to climbing style, such as privileging the 'onsight' climb, outdoor climbing, adventure, and the acceptance of risk. These discourses have acted to discipline climbers, for example Jack, influenced by the knowledge of 'good' climbing technique and 'hard' climbing, observes the way that Paul, Tom and Mike moved, and Mike shows a certain acceptance of risk, when exercising power to try and guide Jack's risk-taking behaviour. This 'then' of climbing is somewhat romanticised as a pre-fatherhood stage of Jack, Mike and Lee's lives, where they had ample free-time to climb as much as they wanted. However it is by no means the only form of climbing that was shown in the story, whilst 'others' like sport and bouldering have been put into the background as a representation of how these forms were recognised as positioned by the climbing community, they were increasingly

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important for some of the climbers. As Markula and Pringle (2006) suggest using a Foucauldian approach allows one to see that sport produces a variety of masculine identities and that this is transitional. This is shown in the above story, for example, we see that in 1994 Jack only had aims in relation to traditional or winter climbing, whilst his aims are now extended to sport climbing, as highlighted when he is training in the first part of the story. Furthermore for some, like Dan, and Scott alternative forms were their primary form of identification.

In order to explore different forms of climbing in relationship to men and fathering, the experiences of Lee and Pete can be looked at. In the story Pete now in his 60's embodies both traditional and generational notions of fathering and climbing; with a successful career, and spending weeks away from his family in the mountains Pete is both somewhat resistant to changes in climbing, and reinforces the assumption that in his experience fathers are the 'breadwinners.' Although the experience of fathering was obviously important to him, and he loved his son, unlike Jack and Lee he spoke about fathering in terms of being with, and not necessarily being there, participating in everyday caring for children. Brannen and Nielson (2008) argue that older generations expressed more normative viewpoints about fathering, as seen Pete performs culturally and historically normative performances of masculinity (Helstein, 2007). In a sense Pete shows that the normative 'traditional' distant climber is somewhat uncomplicated from the notion of the 'breadwinner' father.

However Lee shows that what is known as masculine can vary historically, so what we know as a father, or as a climber, and additionally because masculine identities are contextual, an individual may perform differently in climbing spaces compared to home spaces. Lee highlights concerns about being there for his children, as well as changes in views of the culturally acceptable forms of climbing. Furthermore being a father effects the form of climbing that he does, because other forms of climbing, like bouldering and sport climbing are shown to fit in with his identification as a father. Adopting other forms of climbing can be problematic to Lee's climbing identity, because of the ethical debates around forms of climbing (Robinson, 2008) which have differentiated climbing and climbers (Hardwell, 2008). As discussed in chapter three, these notions have been used to privilege, which Pete and Tom draw upon and reinforce, trad climbing as the 'authentic' form of climbing embodying resistance, whilst forms of climbing sport and bouldering have been de-valued and labelled as rationalised (Donnelly, 2004; Lewis, 2004; Heywood,1994). I would, however, instead argue that it is problematic to reinforce a particular form of climbing, because 'other' forms of climbing offer climbers, and particularly those that can no longer maintain the commitment that trad climbing may involve, an alternative way of maintaining their climbing identity. Alternative forms may

fit in better with the involved father who cares and spends time with his children (Such, 2008; Kay, 2008; Brannen and Nilsen, 2006). Lee shows how his position within discourses of fathering can influence how he questions and negotiates his climbing. Similarly Verieide and Pederson Gurholt's (2009) study of Norwegian fathers who are active and work in the outdoors found that fathers who worked in the outdoors actively compromised their working lives so that they could maintain their working identity without it becoming too consuming.

7.4.2.2. Fitting climbing in

Some fathers maintained some time commitment to climbing through scheduling climbing trips in, or specifically assigning time in the week to climb. This is epitomised by Dan, who is portrayed as a work-away-from-home dad, he works away during the week and then is at home at the weekends with his family, because he is a self-employed consultant this is described as somewhat necessary for him to be able to financially provide for his family. As Randon (2001) highlights many fathers find that social and economical pressures limit their ability to challenge the 'father as provider' discourse. This is especially the case in Britain where legally self-employed fathers like Dan are given relatively little financial support and so it is not economically viable for him to turn down work (Plantin et al., 2003). At the same time in the story, the notion of father as provider, being away from his family facilitated Dan's ability to maintain a work to non-work balance that his wife was unable to do during the week. He is in a sense able to assign an evening or two in the week to go to the local climbing wall and this would not be possible without the support of his wife who is at home looking after his daughter. As Such (2002) argues it is because fatherhood is constructed in a way that maintains the heterosexual gender binary that men are able to maintain a distinction between paid work and family life.

This was not experienced without conflict, Dan is represented as experiencing some difficulty between needing to provide for his family, which he saw as an important part of not only being a father but his performance of masculinity, and having time with his family. Dan also drew on discourses of the ethic of care, not only did he experience guilt at leaving his wife to care for their daughter and see employment as impinging on his family time, he also experienced a sense of emotional responsibility for wanting to spend time with his family, and to give his wife time to herself. D'Enbeau et al. (2010) highlights that middle class fathers can sometimes experience conflict when they are unable to financially provide and nurture their children. Thus in order to try and deal with these conflicts and maintain his performance of fathering, working and climbing, Dan has actively timetabled his time so that he managed to fit in climbing, work and

at the weekends sacrificed his own time to be with, and to care for his family. Even so this does not actually challenge gendered notions of parenting, Dan draws on the notion of quality time over quantity time in performing his fathering involvement; whereby he suggests he is there for the important times at the weekend but not necessarily the mundane routine of caring. As Dermott (2008) suggests for some fathers 'caring about' is more important than 'caring for' (p62) and the gender binary is not disrupted, because his partner is essentially a single parent in the week.

In Mike's reflections in the car he is also seen to schedule climbing trips in. The weekends away climbing are no longer spontaneous and regular occurrences, the trip was planned and made time for. This was supported by his partner, and this brought up gendered differences between mothers and fathers. Mike points out how he had offered his wife the option of time away but she hadn't taken them, but that he felt that he needed them. Robinson (2008) argues that the reliance of men on their partners to watch over the children implies that "any mobility of masculine identity between sporting and other sites is, at least partially dependent on traditional, gendered power relations" (p129). It is not necessarily that his partner is putting Mike's time ahead of her own, as he argues she is encouraging of him getting out, but whilst mothers are suggested to be subject to discourses of intensive parenting, they are likely to express feelings of guilt, or be represented as selfish for leaving children, particularly when they are young. The situation seemed less problematic for Mike, although fathers are subject to discourses of involvement this does not seem to be as intensive as those that subject mothers. Whilst fathers may share parenting they are not disciplined by the same scrutiny and self-surveillance that mothers are (Vuori, 2009) and they can sacrifice family time without being blamed. Furthermore maintaining some time for climbing and continuing weekends with climbing partners is seen as essential for the performance of a masculine climbing identity. This is most specifically drawn out in Mike's rejection of father's like Jim, whom is mentioned as stopping climbing upon becoming a father. Although Mike indicates that fathers need to be there for their children and thus reducing time climbing was seen as acceptable, and necessary, stopping completely was not. Although on one sense this was a mode of resistance, or refusal of an identity that is constructed by time-intensive, self-sacrificial parenting; where parents are disciplined to give up everything for their children (Hays, 1996; Furedi, 2009) it also indicated that intensive fathering (and not mothering) is positioned as more of a choice than a social responsibility (Vuouri, 2009). However, as will be discussed more in chapter nine and eleven, when mothers act to maintain their commitment to climbing too, they help to disrupt, or trouble the gendered notion of intensive parenting.

7.4.2.3. Active father, part-time worker, hard climber

In the story Jack is positioned as an involved and intimate father, choosing to work part-time so that both he and Liz can maintain careers and both be active parents. He is also portrayed as being a committed and 'good' climber, thus he disrupts the gendered nature of parenting yet this does not necessarily trouble his commitment to a climbing identity.

Jack demonstrates how fathers can actively disrupt normative gendered binaries, as Nentwich (2008) argues when fathers are aware of and critique the discourse of father as sole provider they can potentially trouble the heterosexual gender binary (Butler, 2004; 1990) in a way that allows him to administer his power on others ethically, or to care for others (Foucault, 2000c). Jack meets, what is not necessarily resistance, but a lack of acceptance to his balancing work with caring, both within caring spaces (e.g. toddler groups) that are normatively occupied by mothers, as well as within the workforce because the representation of the providing father is so ingrained (Eräranta and Moisander, 2011). Indeed, Sunderland (2006, 2002) argues fathers are often portrayed as the bumbling assistant secondary in childcare to mothers, and they risk disapproval if they leave work for sick children or do not maintain a commitment to work (Ranson, 2001). Nevertheless this is challenged by some of the fathers here, troubling the assumption that it is only a mother's responsibility to balance work. Changing working lives, in order to take on family responsibilities and being fully involved in caring for children, Nentwich (2008) suggests, allows fathers to construct an identity around fatherhood, in this sense time that Jack gave to Sam was not only associated with being with, but being there and hands on with his son (Such, 2006). At the same time Jack does experience conflict between his work and fathering identities, indeed like Hays' (1996) research has shown mothers have, Jack finds it challenging being able to do his job well and care. As Eräranta and Moisander (2011) note: "the discourse of involved fathering, with its ideals of caring and family-oriented fathers, does not readily match with the conceptions of what a good and 'committed' employee is and how he is supposed to organise his life" (p523). However working part-time does allow fathers to maintain climbing, working and fathering identities.

Additionally there is conflict between Jack's position as a climber and a father, however, this is not necessarily experienced as constraining. In maintaining his identity as a climber, Jack' is shown to have become more focussed on improvement. This was discussed in chapter three, as an increasingly dominant discourse that constructs the representation of the climber. Although the social side of climbing remains important, Jack is portrayed within the story as valuing hard climbing, seen in his training regime, in his yearly aims, and in the scrutiny of himself in

comparison to others (Foucault, 1991). This is, however, perhaps more important to Jack's climbing identity once he becomes a father, at this point it becomes problematic to demonstrate his commitment to climbing through the same amount of time, that he would have previously, but he can maintain a sense of himself as a climber by improving, by meeting his climbing goals. Heywood (1994) suggests that 'hard' climbing usually entails the element of risk or a high degree of difficulty, but as well the often unspoken, dismissed, but nevertheless important aspect of training. In relation to these two discourses, Jack's desire to improve is disciplined not only by his position within climbing, but also by the discourses of responsibility, which produce a father who no longer wishes to take what he perceives as high risks for glory. Therefore in order to improve it is the latter; the training that Jack adheres to. In doing this he is more spontaneous; making the most of any spare time he has but not sacrificing time with Sam, and also taking a more scientific approach to his climbing, focussing his efforts on training in order to improve. Although disciplining the body to an ideal, this also demonstrates the productive notion of power, as improving the climbing body allows the climber to produce a more fluid climb and to challenge oneself further on the rock, which gave the climbers pleasure. These techniques were used by men like Jack to enable them to climb as well as before children, when they are unable to put the extra time in. Although self-improvement was the ultimate aim, this also involved some competition between friends like Mike, particularly over climbing certain routes in the same style.

Climbing does without doubt value 'other' masculine bodies such as the balanced, graceful, male body and the skinny male body, shown in Jack's observations of Paul, and in the view on skinny legs (Robinson, 2008; Dorian, 2003). However it is the 'fit', 'strong', 'competitive' masculine body represented in the climbing media that Jack primarily draws on. In a sense drawing on these discourses, demonstrates both that climbing, like other modern sports produces athletic bodies that are normalised to compete and improve through the desire for "training, sweat and muscular pain" (Heikkala, 1993: 400) and also the production of a 'strong' masculine body (Dilley, 2007; Erickson, 2006). Peberty (2010) identifies a binary representation of masculinity; what she refers to as hard and soft masculinity or hyper-masculine and hypo-masculine bodies. She refers to the wild, adventurous, aggressive, emotionally distant, and strong as exemplar of the hard masculinity represented in popular culture in the 1990s, whilst soft masculinity is represented as the sensitive, loving and self-sacrificing. The representations of 'soft' masculinity are characteristic of the discourse of the involved father, who fully involves himself in the physical and emotional care of his children. Taking a post-structural approach she argues that although these two masculinities are represented as binary opposites, normalised through distinction with the other, that more

common representations of masculinity indicate a male identity that displays both 'soft' and 'hard' masculinity, or draws upon these discourse to perform their identities. This is therefore a contextual and fluid masculinity, which 'Jack' does embody, showing in certain spaces and contexts that he performs the caring father and in the others the 'hard' masculine climber. The differences between the two are reflected on by Drummond's (2010) experience of becoming a father:

> I would argue that the single most determining factor in reaffirming the changing construction of self and subsequent, masculine identity was that of becoming a father. It was now quite obvious to me that in my time as a triathlete, I was selfish, narcisstic, and somatically driven...As a father, I became more responsible to others. (p387)

Drummond thus is conceptualising a fathering identity that re-constructs his masculine sporting identity, and whilst Jack's experience of fathering certainly was that he became more responsible for others, or more reflective over his responsibility as a father to care, I would not suggest it was simply a process of changing oneself for another. As Foucault suggests subjects are positioned and negotiate their own identities in relation to a number of competing discursive positions (Helstein, 2007). Thus, whilst discourses of fathering could result in the transformation of gendered relations, it could also produce men who sought to reaffirm his masculine climbing identity. In a sense then drawing both on discourses of soft and hard masculinity meant that Jack could maintain multiple identities, his 'balancing of these multiple identities is perhaps why Jack is seen as less frustrated than some of the other fathers in the story.

7.5. Chapter summary

In summary this chapter has shown that notions of a stable and coherent universal masculinity are indeed problematic, discourses of climbing, fathering, age, and work were drawn up and negotiated by the fathers in the story to construct a number of different, complex and often contradictory masculine identities. Whilst it is far too simplistic to generalise some broad conclusions from the diversity of experiences that were shown, nevertheless some positive implications do arise from this story, including the suggestion that in maintaining a climbing identity the fathers here present an alternative to intensive parenting, or the notion of the monolithic self-sacrificing parent. This did not, however, mean that the fathers did not see themselves as responsible, and indeed wanting to have an active 'role' in caring for, or being with children. Indeed, some of the fathers critiqued and troubled the traditional notion of the 'selfish', 'distant', 'provider' father, by sacrificing or re-creating their climbing identities in different ways, so that it could fit in with their fathering identities. However, at the same time,

many of the fathers in the story were allowed to maintain their climbing identities, and did not challenge traditional working identities, because of their reliance on the support of their partners.

In the next chapter I move on to look at a family weekend, exploring issues around family leisure, as well as showing some of the ways that time and space were negotiated between mothers and fathers.

ENDNOTES —————————

[1] Maffesoli suggested that class status was less important, and instead he suggested that with the decline of modernism 'tribes' or groups of people who share common interests in an urban environment are central features in our community. He suggested that membership to these groups was not fixed, and has been criticised for assuming that individuals pick and choose identities and ignoring broader social identities (Wheaton, 2007)

Chapter Eight
Just an Ordinary weekend

8.1. Setting the scene

In this story we have Jack and Liz together for the first time; it is set around what was a typical weekend for some of the interviewees. I wanted to show in a sense that climbing whilst it was a significant part of Jack and Liz's life's and had to be 'fitted in', it did become somewhat 'ordinary' and a routine, and in taking young children out trad climbing parents were reliant on the support of others. This story is primarily about morality, ethics and family time, picking up on some of the discourses about family time that were discussed in chapter four, indicating that the moral code of parenting is that parents should sacrifice their time for their children, and provide children a number of activities for their short and long term development. However, this story shows how different couples, and fathers and mothers negotiated their individual, children's and family time differently. In order to construct the story I set it around different times in the weekend at different settings, including the home, the crag and the swimming pool. Whilst there is an absence of some families in the story, the crag is a place where both Jack and Liz's individual and family leisure happens. Events at the crag is based on interviewee discussions of taking children out climbing, as well as my own observations taken throughout the last two years whilst out climbing with families. The scene in the swimming was set there, because many of the interviewees talked about the importance and benefits of activities and particularly swimming for their children. What happens at the pool is, however, fiction, and based on my own recollection of my own childhood swimming lessons, as well as some of the research on parents at the playground (Blackford, 2004), and parental involvement in youth sport (Coakley, 2009; Thompson, 2001). Many of the anecdotes about Sam are based on my experiences at the family homes of the parents I interviewed, as well as the interviewees' accounts of their children. This story like the last is written in the present tense, and whilst I, the author do maintain some presence, I am mainly in the background and the story takes a third person omniscient view again, but thoughts are limited to Jack and Liz.

8.2. The story

Friday evening

Darkness is beginning to descend over the Nottingham suburb as Jack pulls off the road into his drive, he pushes his bike through the garden and into the back shed, locking up before he strolls into the house. In the house Jack's mouth waters at the smell of tomato, garlic and onion that is escaping from the pan on the stove.

"Liz? Sam?"

"Up here." A distant voice replies

"Be up in a minute," Jack walks over to the calendar on the wall and scans through the pencilled in appointments, holidays, work events, Sam's nursery and activities, until he gets to the 28-29th February, Sam's Sunday swimming class has started up again so Saturday out climbing it is. Walking out the kitchen, Jack takes off his shoes before ascending the stairs stealthily, until hitting that squeaking step again, every time, he thinks to himself. Quietly he stands behind the door, he listens in. Sam is splashing in the bath chattering to Liz about his day at nursery.

"And then I coloured in a wabbit, and um mummy, in playtime I have been going ROAR at the girls like this" Sam says, he raises his hands, ready to swipe his prey, his nose crinkles, and his mouth widens to bare his teeth as he express a growl.

"Boo" Jack jumps in, Sam and Liz both jump.

"DAdddddyyy," Sam shouts, when he's recovered from the shock.

"Just at the girls, hey?" Jack asks Sam, he winks at Liz knowingly, before kissing her and reaching over, avoiding the splashing water to tickle Sam. "How was your

day Liz? Did you sort things out with that student?"

Liz sighs, "Not much was resolved but I'll tell you about it over dinner."

Look at me, look at me, I've got um m-m-mustard just like gran-pops." Sam calls out, Jack and Liz turn to see a layer of foam over his top lip, they both laugh,

"It's moustache, Sam, you try and sound it out after me, m-u- s-t o-sh" Liz instructs.

Sam repeats it slowly, getting it right the second time.

"Right, I think you must be very clean now, so how about you put the toys in the basket and we get you ready for bed," Jack's voice was soft but firm. Sam reluctantly put his toys away, he had learnt the hard way that Jack wouldn't step down and it would be him that would be sitting cold in the bath if the toys weren't in the basket.

"All done," Sam grins, standing up he puts his arms out.

"Well done Spam, aren't you a good boy," Jack wraps a towel around Sam and lifts him out the bath, to rub him dry, he turns to Liz, "So are we climbing tomorrow?"

"Yes we definitely *have* to get out, I've already spoken to Emma," Liz replies emphatically.

"Great," Jack grinned, he knew that if Liz wasn't keen there was no way they would be out climbing as a family. "I did text Mike and Lee but I couldn't remember which day we were out. Mike did suggest Millstone; he wants a re-match on *London wall*. What do you think?"

"Hmm, I would like to do *Great North Road,* but it might be better for later in the year, the forecast looks like it might be quite windy and cold. So maybe we should go somewhere more sheltered, bouldering that we can all do?" Liz replied, Sam could do a bit of climbing then too.

"Ok, fair enough, I'm sure Lee and Caroline would prefer it if we're bouldering anyway, although I think they can only get out for a bit in the afternoon,"

"Let's just see what it's like tomorrow," Liz replied, she helped Jack get a wriggling Sam into his bed-time nappy and pyjamas. "Right, I think its sleepybabies time for you, who is reading to you first tonight?" Liz asked Sam.

"Um, um mummy," Sam jumped up in the air.

Two rounds of stories, kisses and searching for monsters later and Jack and Liz finally sit down for dinner with a glass of wine.

Saturday morning
6:30am

The human alarm calls out, piercing Liz's dreams. She rolls towards the door as the light pitter patter of feet in the hallway gets louder and two blue eyes peer through the crack in the door. Jack groans next to her.

"I'll go, go back to sleep" she whispers, sitting up and sliding her feet into her slippers.

7:30am

Jack showers and back in the room he peeks through the curtains to look out the window, welcomed by a dull grey he opts for thermals under his khaki trousers and fleece.

"What do you think, shall we go somewhere with bouldering options?" He calls down the stairs. "Um what about Stanage plantation? Car park at ten?"

A short delay passes before Liz shouts back:

"Yes, I think that is a better idea, it is a bit too cold for Sam to be sitting around all day, but it doesn't look too windy this morning so we could do some routes first? I'll text Emma."

Jack agrees and picks up his phone and texts his friends. He feels slightly guilty at the change of venue but quickly pushes it from his mind, Mike would understand, he had kids himself so knew that sometimes plans had to change. Closing his phone he begins packing the bags for the day; gear, ropes, harnesses, climbing shoes, chalk bags, finger-tape, first aid kit, baby wipes, a couple of spare nappies, toy cars and a couple of books for Sam. He takes the bags and a bouldering mat downstairs, Sam is playing with his train set, whilst Liz makes lunch for the day.

10am, Stanage Plantation

Turning off the road from Hathersage, the iconic landscape on their right, they drive past the already full car park at the popular end of Stanage. At the plantation, Liz wraps Sam up warmly as Emma and Bill's mud streaked Fiesta pulls in. Liz had met Emma and Bill at the local climbing club, which she'd joined when she'd wanted to find more people to climb with after Sam was born. Emma was as bubbly as Bill was quiet, both originally kayakers, they had turned to climbing when they moved away from Devon, whilst neither of them climbed particularly hard routes, they loved gritstone and were always keen to get out. Liz had enjoyed some lovely long evenings climbing with them both at the end of last summer, and she appreciated how flexible they were, luckily they loved Sam, so didn't mind watching over him occasionally.

"Hello you three, how nice it is to be getting out at last, I haven't been out on the end of a rope in months," Emma says as she sweeps her brown hair into a ponytail.

"I know" Liz agrees, giving Emma a big hug, the rain and snow over the winter had led to many long hours and money spent at indoor bouldering walls around the Peak.

They start to walk up the path to the crag, Sam half runs to keep up, he stumbles and falls over, he begins to cry,

"It's alright Sam, you're alright, just watch where you are going," Jack helps him to his feet, sometimes you have to let them fall over, he thinks. "Right, shall we walk a bit slower then." Jack engulfs his son's small hand in his. As they near the crag they see Mike warming up at the Goliath area,

"Are you sleeping at the crag now?" Jack shouts out as they walk over to join him.

"I've only got this morning before I'm on double trouble duty, so no wasting time for me," Mike replied.

"Hi Mike" Liz hugs him "Didn't fancy bringing the twins out today then?"

"Wishful thinking, they're a nightmare at the crag, not like your young man here" Mike ruffled Sam's hair, "Not good for us, or them; they get bored and start wandering around and neither of us get any climbing done. Becky had to take them to a birthday party this morning, but she might come out for a couple of hours later."

"Oh Sam has his moments, although they never seem to stop Jack climbing" Liz raises her eyebrows at Jack, good naturedly. Liz knew what Mike meant; she found it hard to ignore Sam's needs, or to let Jack just deal with it, when she was climbing, but days out like this with Sam, in the outdoors were some of her favourite family days, Sam gained so much from it too.

"I don't know what you mean," Jack raises his arms in mock protest "But in that case Liz you better climb first with Emma and Bill can climb with Mike. If that's okay with everyone?" They all agree "Oh and Mike we could get a top rope on *Indian Summer* after?" Jack finishes.

"Ahhh I like your thinking sir, Right Bill, shall we go and have a look at a couple of the E1's and 2's up here?" Mike is on edge, wanting to get back to climbing. They gather their bags and move along the rock face.

"Right then Liz, you get first lead," Emma pulls out the area's guidebook and flicks to the right area, "Ohhh how about *Goliath's grove, HVS 5a*, or do you want to warm up first?"

Liz smiled "I knew you were going to say that, I should do it shouldn't I?" she says more to herself. "Yes I probably should before I talk myself out of it, and I might not get enough time to do another so I better just jump on it now."

As Sam and Jack set out the toy cars on the rug ready for a race, Liz prepares her gear and herself for the route, she looks it up and down, talking to herself; loads of friends in the first crack, you can do E1 5a Liz, how hard can it be?

"Have fun," Jack tells her,

"I will, make sure Sam stays warm,"

"Of course I will love, he'll be fine." Jack re-assures her.

Liz walks over to the bottom of the route, where Emma is standing waiting. Liz double checks her harness, ties onto the rope, puts her helmet and rock-shoes on.

"You're on belay, so whenever you're ready Liz," Emma says

"Ready? right here we go, I'm climbing." Liz dips her hands in her chalk bag, chalk dust mixes with the cold air and she starts to climb, the crux is early on, starting

gingerly she tries laybacking, ramming a bit of gear in and working her feet up to some good footholds.

"Well, this is pretty desperate" Liz mutters under her breath, as she manages to wedge a foot in the crack.

"Mummy, hello" Sam interrupts her thoughts, Liz tries to block him out and focus on the climb, Sam has been quite clingy to Liz recently.

"I need a wee-wee," Sam shouts again.

"I can't really help right now darling, Jack can you sort him out," she calls down, the pitch in her voice rising.

"Come on Sam, I'll take you, let's leave mummy to climb." Jack takes Sam off to the toilet, and to find a small boulder for him to clamber on.

"Right, back to climbing, Emma, watch me here." Liz calls down, she takes a deep breath, and using a variety of hand, foot and knee jams she awkwardly pushes and thrutches her way up the crack to a midway break, where she stops and shakes her arms out before laybacking the upper groove. When she gets to the top, Liz sets up a belay to secure herself to the rock at the top of the craggy cliff.

"I'm safe," Liz calls down to Emma on the ground, and begins to pull the ropes up as Emma takes her off belay.

"Is that you?" Liz says when she feels Emma's weight on the end of the ropes.

"Yes," Emma replies.

"Ok, you're on belay, climb when ready. Don't let my messing about on the bottom fool you, the finish is excellent" Liz signals to Emma that she is safe to start climbing.

When Emma gets to the top she sighs in relieve, "Phew that was sketchy down there, need mastery of the thrutch for that." They laugh and Emma walks past Liz to a safe point to untie herself from the ropes. When Liz has stripped off her belay she joins Emma on the flat above the crag, they chat as they coil the ropes. Taking a rope each they find the clamber down an easy section of the crag. Back at their bags, Jack is back with Sam who runs at Liz's legs when he sees her.

"Aw that's a nice welcome, hello," Liz picks Sam up and he clings to her, "Is he alright Jack? Sorry for shouting at you," Liz had always said she would never do that in front of other people. "Do you think I have time to do one more with Emma?" Liz mouths quietly to Jack.

"Well Mike and I wanted to get on this route soon, as he's got to get off for Becky, but I guess you can probably get a quick route in." Jack says

"Sam, can mummy go and climb another route?" Liz asks her son.

"No Mummy play with me, don't climb." Sam starts to cry, he was going through a bit of a clingy stage.

"Hey, don't cry, I'm not going anywhere." Liz comforted Sam, "Sorry Emma, would have been good to do another route."

"Not a problem, I understand, I'll go and find Bill and do a few routes with him." Emma looked at her watch, "it's about 11:30 now, where are you likely to be later?"

"At the boulders, I think Lee and Caroline are going to meet us there at about 12:30," Liz tells her.

Emma and Jack gather their bags and wander off to find Bill and Mike. Liz pulls on her duvet jacket, seeing Sam getting slightly restless she gives him a sandwich and some fruit, and sits down with him. Sam throws the wrapper on the ground,

"Sam, don't do that, we pick up our rubbish and take it home, would it be as beautiful here if there was rubbish everywhere?" Liz scolds him. Liz hoped that whether

Sam was interested in the outdoors or not, that all this time they spent would at least mean he had respect for nature.

2 pm

As the wind picks up, Mike collects the gear and the rope from the top on *Indian Head,* he follows a path back down, to where Jack is waiting with their bags.

"Do you think it will go?" he asks Jack

Jack hesitates, "I think so, I'm feeling pretty strong and all the moves are nearly there, a few more goes maybe?"

"Yeah, something that's not likely to happen anytime soon. Speaking of which, what time is it?" Mike said, he started to worry, he had a feeling it was much later than he'd thought.

Jack looked at his phone "Just gone Two,"

"You're kidding? Shit, I told Becky I'd be back for two to take the kids for a walk, and let her get out. She'll never make it out now. I'm an idiot. Right Jack, good seeing you, say goodbye to everyone from me I better run."

"Yeah you better mate, sorry, tell Becky it was my fault. I'll ring you about climbing in the week." Jack looked on in concern as Mike ran off. Jack walks down the path, and turns off at the boulders. He hears Sam and Connor before he sees them, with cries of "Be careful" following them, they run towards him, chasing each other wildly, Sam not looking at where he is going bangs into Jack's legs and tumbles over, he lands softly on a pile of leafs and begins to giggle.

"You are clumsy today Sam, Hi there Connor," Jack ruffles the boys' hair.

"Hi" Conner smiles shyly back at him.

Jack adjusts his stride to that of the boys, and they walk over to where Liz and Caroline are sitting watching Lee have another go at a problem on one of the boulders. That looks nails, Jack thinks, Lee is holding onto a disgusting looking pebble with one hand and going for an equally terrible sloper at the top. He falls onto his back on the mat, and curses quietly in frustration.

"Hi Caroline, how are things? And how's the little one? Getting her in the outdoors early I see" Jack exchanges greetings with Caroline and nods at the bouldering mat next to her where four months old Izzy, Caroline and Lee's youngest is wrapped up like a Michelin man sleeping.

"She's doing really well thanks," Caroline smiled proudly.

"Are you climbing again?"

"A bit in the week, but I think this is only our second family day out climbing."

"You two can go off and get some climbing together, and I'll entertain these two rugrats," Jack looks in horror as Sam and Conner emptied an entire bag of toys onto the rocks. Sam starts to try and take a ball off Conner,

"No don't snatch Sam, you know that you shouldn't do that" Jack scolds.

"Great, Let me just get Lee to come and watch Izzy," Caroline said

Jack senses Lee's desire to keep climbing, "I don't mind..."

"She'll probably wake up soon, and the three of them might be bit much, anyway we need the mat," Caroline calls out to Lee "Lee, can you come and watch Izzy?"

"It's only been half an hour or so," Lee pauses and sighs, "I'll just have one more go." Lee has another go, and another, but falls again. He picks up his mat and wanders over; he gives the mat to Caroline, grinning at her sheepishly.

"Hi mate, sorry didn't stop earlier and say hello," Lee says to Jack.

"Looks hard," Jack, pats Lee on the back.

"Yeah, I've been working it for awhile, don't feel like I'll get it anytime soon though, you know how it is." Lee sighs.

Jack couldn't help feeling how lucky he was, things could change, but right now life was balanced, he was no frustrated climbing dad by any means, he got plenty of time to climb, and it meant he could relax a bit more and just enjoy being with his family, doing things together, on these days out.

"Right Caroline, let's leave these two to catch up" Liz suggests, the two women start to walk away when Izzy begins to cry, Caroline turns.

"Keep going she'll be fine," Lee says, sensing Caroline's hesitation.

Caroline reluctantly leaves Izzy and she and Liz walk away so that the children are out of their view, they find a boulder, and make up some problems, offering each other encouragement as they take it in turns to have a go.

"So was it Chatsworth you went to this morning? I've never taken Sam there, is it any good?" Liz asks Caroline,

"Wow this feels hard," Caroline tries to pull herself off the floor, but fails and sits back down on the mat "What was that, um yeah Chatsworth, Conner absolutely loves it."

"Is it expensive? I'm not sure how we can keep affording all these activities." Liz says,

"It's not cheap, and actually we've just become members because we've been so many times. That is something I never thought would happen: 'me a member of Chatsworth?" Caroline laughed, and Liz joined in.

"I do know what you mean though," Liz empathises "last year I used to run a toddler group, there is no way I thought I would have ever even have gone to a toddler group, but, actually Sam loved it, and it was really nice meeting other mums."

"The things you do for your kids hey."

Sunday 8am

Sam is watching a cartoon, whilst Jack and Liz are sitting at the kitchen table eating breakfast.

"What time's his swimming class?" Jack asks, biting into his bacon sandwich.

"11-12" Liz replies,

"Want me to take him this week? Jack says

"Are you sure?" Liz looks up,

"We---ll up to you, if you take him I could get that skirting stuck on in the hallway, but I think it's my turn, and I haven't seen him swim in awhile so I should take him."

"Its fine Jack, I don't mind, I can take him, and anyway I told Melissa that I would pick up Jamie, she had to nip into work this morning." Liz replies,

"No, hang on; I said I'll do it," Jack looked up, she did look tired, "why don't you go for a run?"

"I just thought, I probably should do all that washing, and get the house tidied, but maybe I should come too?" she said, thinking that really she would love to get out for a run, Jack had worked some over-time this week, which had meant she hadn't been able to do anything.

"Leave the house work; we'll both do it later. Get out and clear your head, I'll go for a run this evening."

"Brilliant, I'll go get changed, so can you pick up Jamie?" Liz double-checked
"Sure,"
"Right, well I can come and meet you at the pool, and we can go to the coffee shop opposite? I'll tell Mellissa to meet us there?"

11am The swimming class

The kids are lined up at one end of the pool, the parents mill around the pool, some taking younger ones for a swim themselves, others go and grab a coffee, most though sit at the poolside, reading newspapers or proudly watching, one mother accompanies her crying daughter into the pool.

Jack waves back at Sam who is sitting on the side splashing Jamie as he waits for the teacher to get to him. I can't believe how much he's come on, Jack thinks, you don't notice all the day-to-day developments as much, but moments like this and you realise how quickly it goes, Sam could now float on his back, and kick with a float, all by himself.

Jack listens to the parents around him; a balding man that he vaguely recognises is talking to a younger woman, whose long dark hair is pulled away from her heavily made-up face.

"It is really great isn't it, my son loves it, and swimming is such an important thing I think, because water is everywhere and I would hate for him to be afraid of it," the woman was saying,

"Yes, I agree its good preparation for when they are older, I want my children, to have as many opportunities and experiences as possible now, because you learn so much from these activities. Just a shame I don't get to do them anymore," the man added.

"I suppose it is just a natural part of what being a mother, um and a father is about, plus the exercise is for our benefit too, how else would you get them to sleep?" She asks

"Especially boys."

"Oh yes, all that testosterone, it's like my Zach has had an injection of glucose every 2 minutes."

Jack loses the conversation as the kid's voices pick up; he turns back to his magazine. Wow, he thinks, Jenny Woodward has done Predator at Malham. Bloody hell, hadn't she just had a kid?

8.3. The experience and management of leisure time: Getting the balance

In the discussion of this story I wish to focus on how Jack and Liz, and some of the other characters that have been brought in, show how climbers and parents negotiate individual, family and children centred time.

Jack and Liz are both working (albeit both part time) parents, and therefore whilst Carriro et al. (2009) highlights that when both parents work, family leisure is greatly restricted (also see Innstarnd et al., 2010) because both Jack and Liz work part- time and also make use of paid child care, they arguably have more negotiable time than most parents. Fullagar (2002) implies

the normative position of parents within the "time discipline of work practices and the gendered responsibilities of family life," means that active leisure, and particularly individual active leisure is least valued, or comes last. Yet at the same time not only is active leisure (as combating obesity and improving the bodily self) culturally valued in the UK, but in performing their climbing identities, Jack and Liz are both shaped by assumptions that value and encourage physically active practices. For Jack and Liz then their discursive position as both working parents and climbers direct and discipline their experience and management of multiple competing life spheres outside work. Time is not seen as a relatively objective quantitative period but is subjectively experienced and contextual, as both:

> A socially constructed reality that shapes activity and the action in the world...and a socially constraining reality that involves reckoning a series of organisational demands and social timetables that one lives by (Daly, 2001: 284).

Harvey (1989) adds that in a post-modern society the spatial environment has shrunk and that this is accompanied by a "growing scarcity of time (i.e. an acceleration in the 'pace of life)'" (Rosa, 2003:10). This acceleration of time was shown in the story, in that 'Jack' and 'Liz' try to fit in as much as possible in the available time that they had. This meant that weekends were often organised and planned, to make time for family, self, 'Sam' and friends. The experience and value of this time was shaped by the construction of parenting and climbing. I will first discuss then how time was negotiated, and experienced, bringing in how other characters in the story had different experiences of this time. I will then discuss how leisure and caring time are balanced in relation to gendered identities; this is not in an essentialist natural way but in relation to the performance and subversion of 'known' ways of mothering and fathering.

8.4. Family leisure and the morality of time

Shaw and Dawson (2001) suggest that whilst family time has traditionally been conceptualised by social psychologists as enjoyable and freely selected by individuals, they argue that this is not necessarily the case. In particular, feminist research demonstrates that organising and providing family leisure can be hard work and stressful, and women's work in providing this often goes un-noticed (Thompson,2001) but that middle-class parents are morally regulated to offer it for the future development of their children (Harrington, 2005). It is in recognition of the constraining nature of providing family leisure, but also because children-focussed leisure is considered as 'good' parenting, which explains why parents give up involvement in serious leisure activities like climbing (Shaw and Dawson, 2001).

However counter to this are discourses of individualism, the *Good Childhood Survey* produced by the Church of England has argued that a culture of excessive individualism has led to parents being too selfish to raise happy children, and that this has been detrimental to children's well being (2008). Bristow (2009) and Guldberg (2009) are critical of this survey highlighting how it contributes to the view of children as 'at risk', innocent and vulnerable, and consequently how it has been used to contribute to parental determinism, whereby parents are blamed for the problems of children, and consequently normalising an adult identity that is centred around children. It would therefore be expected that in the stories that parents tell they would draw on discourses of emotional and moral responsibility when considering their free time, and would perform an appropriate parent identity giving up their own activities in order to give children time (Arrendell, 2000). This was certainly 'true' of the individuals that Jack overhears at the swimming pool, who prioritise their children's activities above maintaining their own, and I have indeed shown that in terms of 'Jack' and 'Liz's' experience the performance of parenting, and the giving of time did undoubtedly involve the construction of self as a moral parent. Yet, there were differences in the way that parents constructed this time, and parents as individuals did not think of time in simple monolithic ways. Instead, although positioned by competing discourses, and thus in some ways normalising 'known' ways of being parents or climbers (Foucault, 1991) the agency of Liz and Jack was nevertheless implicit in the way that they made sense and negotiated their leisure time to allow time for individual, family and children's activities.

The discussion of parents negotiation of time below is assisted by Foucault's differentiation of ethics and morality. Although Foucault recognises that the two are related, morality is seen as a normative behaviour, or appropriate behaviour determined by discourses, whilst ethics are "an explicit attempt to shape oneself into a moral subject" (Keleman and Peltonan, 2001: 154) thus it was through critically engaging in ethical work that Foucault saw humans as able to transform themselves.

First looking at the notion of the moral code, Ribbens McCarthy et al. (2000) highlight the overall moral imperative of parenting is that: "Adults must take responsibility for children in their care and therefore must seek to put the needs of children first," (p789). In the story we can see that the couples with children, sought to provide time for their children in activities such as swimming and toddler groups, these activities were positioned as beneficial for their children's short and long term development and well being. Providing them was seen as important for the performance of a parental identity, and when the children were young we can see that they refer to the moral code of parenting; that parents should provide time to children.

Dermott (2008) determines this time as 'being there' for children, i.e. time that is informed by discourses of responsibility and is more mundane, for providing care. However, as suggested in chapter four Such (2009, 2006) differentiates 'being there' from 'being with' children, and it is the latter which she suggests is time that is fun and leisure based. I argue that in terms of the story above, both can be adequate terms for describing the experience and meaning of time that is spent providing child-based and family leisure time. This is shown in that the two main couples in the story perceived children's structured activities as both mundane and necessary and yet as enjoyable in terms of watching their children develop. These two issues were related, because the performance, or duty, of 'good' middle-class parenting involves making decisions, and involving children in child-centred leisure and a number of structured activities (Coakley, 2009; Harrington, 2002; Arrendell, 2000) for the holistic psychological, social, educational, emotional and physical development of their child.

Thus it is not surprising that parents would have spoken about seeing the development of their child as enjoyable (Harrington, 2009, 2006a) and necessary. The implication of discourses of child-centred leisure is that it produces parents who care about their children's well-being and happiness (Foucault, 1978) giving time to Sam was desired and provided Jack and Liz with a sense of pleasure. As Jack shows at the pool, because childhood went so quickly he did not want to miss out on key stages and signs of developments. Yet at the same time the prescribed duty of responsibility meant that Jack and Liz could feel guilt and regret if they did not spend time with Sam. Again I reiterate that the provision of children's leisure time can be seen as a moral code, because to not provide these opportunities would mean that parents like Jack and Liz risk being seen as 'bad' parents. However, this does not really explain how the moral provision of time for children, interacts with couples like Jack and Liz, and Caroline and Lee's and even Mike and Becky's desire to maintain their own individual leisure?

Ribbens McCarthy et al. (2000) found in their research that there was conflict between the moral obligation to be responsible and the desire to maintain individual goals, but they suggest that in their interviewees' case, moral responsibility was exercised through withdrawing from, or giving up their individual activity. Individual freedom was seen as somewhat selfish. This can be explained both in part by the construction of childhood as an innocent and morally un-responsible age, and in reference to a post-modern society where previously defined identities have been increasingly uncertain, with fluid and short-lived relations within communities, which Furedi (2008) suggests explains why parents endow so much meaning to their parental identities.

Ribbens McCarthy et al. (2000) go on to argue that this discourse is not open to negotiation, moral codes discipline and thus prevents alternative ways of understanding responsibility towards children, in a sense then they are re-iterating that morality is a universal. As I have shown in the above discussion, all of the parents in the story above did present themselves as responsible and the provision of some time to their children as morally important, however, the findings interpreted in the story above suggest that how parents gave their time was not universal.

In terms of difference, the gendered differences between mothers and fathers are discussed later in this chapter. Differences between parents' moral construction of leisure time are shown by looking at the varying degrees to which provision of this time was experienced, and by the degree with which parents saw providing time to their children as more important than maintaining time to themselves. For example the parents that Jack overhears at the swimming class are shown to perceive that all their free time outside work is, and should be dedicated to their children. At what could being an alternative end of the moral spectrum Mike and Lee do still sacrifice their own time to spend time with family, but show that time to themselves was still a high priority and thus they can feel frustration when they do not get that time. The construction of a climbing identity was shown in chapter three to be seen as privileging discourses of individualism, or privileging those who demonstrate commitment of time and single-minded dedication, and therefore when this time could not always be maintained, or climbing could not be put first there were feelings of frustration. Like some of the windsurfers in Wheaton (1997) some of the climbers here were aware that climbing could be selfish.

Jack and Liz could also experience frustration, and desire to maintain the performance of a climbing identity. Despite changes in the worlds of these adults, the crag remained a space "for the making and the articulation of a spurious sense of belonging" (Blackshaw, 1999: 15). Jack and Liz are constituted in the local culture of climbing, and they draw on discourses of individualism in their desire to maintain this sense of self. However, I do not suggest that this was the immoral the excessive individualism that the *Good Childhood Survey* refers to. Instead if we look at Foucault's work on ethics and the technologies of self, Jack and Liz can be seen to act to self-form, or self-govern themselves, resisting the juxtaposition that they are universal beings (Luna, 2009; Kelemen et al., 2001; During, 1992). As I will now explore some of the parents can be seen to actively individualise the moral code, i.e. they do not completely sacrifice their own time for their children, but instead they create alternative ways of parenting (Markula and Pringle, 2006).

Parents like Jack and Liz are shown to represent themselves as ethical beings through critical thinking, or the questioning of the moral codes and the creation of new ways of being in relation to these codes (Foucault, 1980). In this way they do not reject the implications of intensive parenting; indeed they loved Sam and saw themselves as responsible parents. Yet they did challenge the notion that that their identities were defined solely in relation to parenting, and they troubled the assumption that this child-centred, all encompassing way of parenting was the only way to parent ethically. As Foucault argues the ethical subject comes to realise that "his or her truths are not the only way to interpret the world," (Kelemen et al., 20001: 160). Although making time for 'Sam' was important this was not at the expense of their own activities; instead Jack and Liz had a more reflexive view of their moral behaviour towards giving time to Sam and themselves.

The story shows how days out were adapted to consider Sam's needs, i.e. by going somewhere that is sheltered, and by bouldering there were more areas for Sam to run around, and by meeting other families so that Sam had friends to play with. In a sense then Jack and Liz are shown to construct days out, or family time climbing, as good for Sam. Other parents were also shown to reflexively and morally manage their time to consider their children's needs and their own desire to climb in different ways. For example, Lee and Caroline split up their day, taking the children to a big park first, so that they could go and climb afterwards, and Mike and his wife get round this issue by taking it in turns to go out climbing. Cooper and Blair (2002) suggest that writers like Foucault (1984) and Bauman (1993) see this reflective approach to ethics as indicative of post-modernity, this approach is taken up in Smart and Neale's (1998) work on parents, which they use to suggest that parents negotiate morals in context. This to some extent resonated with the couples presented in this story, whilst the moral code of parenting (in its morally pertinent form) may threaten to rupture the individualistic identity as a climber, or time to self. Jack and Liz's position, as both parent and climber allowed them to re-constitute the contested nature of time and space for children and for self. The re-creation of climbing space and time as accessible for the moral performances that constitute family meant both family and self could benefit. Foucault suggests that individuals are "both responsive and responsible to the practical contingencies and moralities of choice and action" (Gubrium and Holstein, 1992: 699). One such way in which both Jack and Liz, and 'Caroline' and 'Lee' dealt with, or balanced "individual choice with responsibility" (Ribbens McCarthy et al., 2000: 799)) was to re-constitute time climbing, or the crag as a space for family activity. In this space climbing remains a personal 'serious' activity but is also considered as a purposeful and moral activity.

In, perhaps, what is an attempt to morally justify continuing climbing, Jack and Liz emphasised the benefits for children and for family of taking children into the outdoors as a family leisure activity. In doing this they draw on dominant views about family leisure, Shaw and Dawson (2001) argue that family leisure is purposive leisure. Purposive leisure reinforces some of the social psychological or functional literature that emphasises the benefits of family leisure and outdoor activities for the development of family relationships, functioning and satisfaction (see Hornberger, Zabriskie and Freeman, 2010; Aslan, 2009; Freeman and Zabriskie, 2002**).**

Whilst its has been shown that time in the outdoors was generally perceived as positive because it was seen as time and space together outside the house, this is not attributed to the normative natural function of families in society. This is because it ignores differences, and furthermore the provision of family leisure has a moral element indicating the way that parents are disciplined to provide family leisure (Daly, 2001) as Harrington (2001) **s**uggests:

> The main purpose, from the parents' point of view, was not simply spending time together and enjoying each other's company. Rather, it was about using that time together to develop a sense of family and to teach children about values and healthy lifestyles (2001: 228).

For some, like Jack and Liz; making 'quality' time and promoting family unity is a cultural norm that shapes parents, and as Featherstone (2008) suggests the weekend is viewed by parents as important for the reaffirming of family life. Family leisure was, although enjoyable, still time that was spent caring. Becoming another space used to reinforce and pass down normative family values such as sharing and being polite. This again could perhaps indicate that certain moral codes are normalised and positioned so that they appear universal and parents are disciplined as responsible for the moral regulation of children. However, the way that parents interpreted these moralities was not universal, and indeed individual's experiences were often contradictory, on one level, as Lee shows for some parents taking children out climbing was more about maintaining their own personal leisure time, or involving them in their activity. Others such as Mike and his absent wife, Becky, show that some parents questioned the appropriateness of taking their children out climbing and instead they climb individually without children. Whilst Jack and Liz highlight that for many parents, climbing, as well as other formal and informal activities, enabled them to balance desires, both for self and family. It also provided time to teach children values for adventure and nature, it can be suggested, then, that the values that parents wish to pass down to children are informed both by normative family standards, but also dependent on the parents like Jack and Liz's own subjectivities, in this case, as climbers.

The time at the crag itself was negotiated between Liz and Jack, with one climbing whilst the other engaged in family time. The practicalities of taking the children out, and thus the maintenance of climbing as a family-leisure-practice, were supported by their friends and other climbing families. For example Jack and Liz were reliant on friends like Mike, Emma and Bill to go to places that were suitable for Sam, which entailed changing plans at the last minute when the weather could be an issue. Going out with others was important for Jack and Liz because they wished to keep climbing traditional routes, which meant that one of them needed to look after Sam whilst the other climbed with someone else.

8.5. Gendered leisure and caring

Whilst above I have represented and discussed some of the ways in which both mothers and fathers experience and manage time for family, personal and children leisure, this was not without gendered differences in both the provision and experience of family leisure. As suggested in chapters two and four, there are differences in the way mothers and fathers have been subjectified by discourses of parenting, and Harrington (2001) argues that through leisure "mothers and fathers create their subjective identities as parents," (p3). In doing this mothers and fathers can challenge or reinforce gendered parenting. I show how the story highlighted that in relation to the gendered nature of family leisure there were both differences between the couples as well as ambiguities within couples.

As highlighted in chapter four, feminist inspired research into family leisure suggests that mothers, constrained by the ethic of care have been the parent who predominantly give up their own leisure in order to structure and provide family leisure, whilst fathers have been 'freed' from this care-work to maintain their own leisure (Such, 2002; Shaw, 1997; Wimbush, 1988). That this was the case for some parents is shown to some extent by Becky, Caroline and even Liz. Intensive parenting is thus at times gendered, and this moral mothering could be constraining. As Becky, Caroline and the mother at the pool in the extreme case, show whilst they did not always give up their own time they would expect and be expected to sacrifice their time first, and to engage in practices that they didn't anticipate that they would pre-motherhood, whilst fathers could to some extent could choose their engagement. Parenting and sport are thus gendering practices which normalise the 'known' subject positions of mother and father, and through which parents can regulate their own behaviour so that appropriate gendered performances are maintained, such as the father who focuses on his own leisure, whilst the mother focuses on the children. However at the same time very few of the women gave up climbing or other leisure activities entirely and they are unlikely to be determined as 'traditional' mothers.

Furthermore sacrificing leisure, as Such (2002) highlights was not limited to women, and as Jack, Lee and Mike all show fathers, while not completely sacrificing their personal leisure, did give up some of their time in order to both enable their partners to climb and to spend time with their children. Again there were different ways in which this time was negotiated and experienced. Lee indicates the contradictory nature of the post-modern identity, whilst on the one hand he had to be asked by his wife to come and look after the children and he experienced frustration at not having enough time in the days out with the family to achieve his climbing aims. Yet, as shown in the previous story, when Lee talked about changing the form of climbing he took part in, enjoying and wanting to be an involved father, and in this story, in the act of going to the gardens with the family in the morning, he did show that he felt a responsibility to sacrifice some individual time.

Mike, is also reflexive over his fathering identity, and sees it as his responsibility, both to be with his children and to give his partner time to climb. In seeking to provide this balance Mike constructs himself as what Such (2009) sees as moral and flexible fathering, by drawing on "discourses of compromise, mutuality and balance" (Such, 2009:8). In their everyday lives Mike and his partner aim for a balance, and maintain their time climbing and time for children by climbing and caring for children separately. Perhaps these scenario's reinforce Nentwich's (2008) findings of some couples who have the potential for equality but the gender binary of mother as female and father as male "is at the same time re-established," (219).

Even within couples that actively negotiated and challenged traditional ways of parenting like Jack and Liz there were gendered differences in accessing personal leisure time when out climbing with young children. As Liz shows, unlike their partners many of the mothers, found it hard to switch off, or ignore the physical presence of their children, indicating tensions between the performances of motherhood and focussing on climbing (Stirling, 2009). Liz then experiences guilt at ignoring Sam, as Shaw (1994) highlights mothers are more likely to feel guilt than fathers for sacrificing time with children. Again later in the story when Liz is climbing with Caroline, despite being away from their children their identities as mothers are performed through the way they talk about their children. Both Liz and Caroline highlight how becoming a mother has involved doing activities that they never thought that they would have done before, demonstrating to some extent that the internalisation and reinforcement of the belief that care is "expected and universal" (Featherstone 2009: 92). Jack further shows, that although he sees himself as an involved father he recognises that he is often directed by Liz's decisions (Featherstone, 2008), and that it is unlikely they would be going out climbing as a family if Liz did not climb, or wish to be in the outdoors. Research into mothers and fathers has

argued that mothers act as gatekeepers, enabling and supporting father's involvement in child-care (Lupton and Barclay, 1997). This seemed to be the case with regards to family leisure, although fathers like the character of Jack were involved in decision making, child care and domestic work his wife Liz appears to act as a gatekeeper in directing final decisions about family leisure.

Although there were still gendered differences in the way that Jack and 'Liz' parent and how this impacted their experience of family and individual leisure, their working, climbing, and parenting lives can be seen as potentially disrupting the gender binary (Butler, 1990). Foucault argues that the ethical being tries to not use their position within relations of power to dominate others, he suggests that humans should create new ways of being which do not "tie the individual to himself [*sic*] and submits him to others" (1983: 212). Foucault suggests that space is fundamental for the exercise of power, but that alternative spaces can be used to question and trouble normative identities. Using this approach Wearing (1998) highlights that leisure can act as a space in which women can struggle for different feminine subjectivities, thus at the same time, the home could be a space in which men struggle for different masculine identities. The experience of many of these couples shows that when both mothers and fathers continue to climb they had to negotiate and manage their relations more equitably. Yet as Jack and Liz show this cannot be attributed to climbing spaces alone but their troubling of normative mothering and fathering was additionally in the spaces of work and home. I would suggest that it is the relational, everyday negotiation of these (climbing, home), and work-spaces that can contribute to more equitable gender relations, and shared parenting (Bjornburg, 2004).

In their everyday lives the characters of Jack and Liz show, how although there were conflicts between them at times, they did actively negotiate and manage their work, home and climbing time and spaces in order to provide a balance between the performance of their gendered parenting and climbing identities. This is then both a personal but also a relational negotiation. As picked up in chapter ten, Liz may have continued to make time for herself to climb, and thus use leisure as a space to resist the ethic of care and deconstruct the association of women with motherhood (Spowart et al., 2008; 2006; Wearing, 1998). Similarly, Jack may wish to work part-time in order to challenge the normative position of father-breadwinner. In order to challenge gendered relations between parents this requires negotiation and support of both parents (Such, 2002), as Nentwich (2008) suggests, in equal parenthood:

> Balancing work and family (and climbing) is no longer seen as the sole responsibility of mothers, but something that fathers should also achieve. In this endeavour, both parents take child-care services for granted....This basic shift in the argument also

> makes the topos of the 'importance of the child' available to fathers as well as mothers (p221, own addition in brackets).

8.6. Chapter summary

In summary this chapter first looked at how time has both relational and having a moral aspect to it. Importantly there were many differences between the couples, between the fathers, and between the mothers in the story in the way that they managed and experienced family time. Additionally individuals' themselves often had quite contradictory experiences. Some broad findings suggest that there was a moral code that entailed parents to act responsibly and to some extent sacrifice their own time, and this impacted their management of 'leisure time'. However, at the same time this moral code would imply that parents sacrificed all their time for their children, which did not happen. I do not suggest that this is 'excessive individualism' but instead that parents acted as ethical beings, which entailed reflection and creations of new ways of being 'moral'. This meant that maintaining their own leisure as part of family time was compatible with involved parenting.

In terms of gendered differences, there were differences in the way that mothers and fathers approached time for family, themselves and their children, and mothers did seem the more likely to sacrifice their own time for their children and family. However, the line between mothers and fathers was distinctly blurred, and I suggest that when both parents seek to maintain their climbing and sporting identities then they are more likely to negotiate and support each other's time to do this. Yet as Jack and Liz show this cannot be separated from their working and home lives.

In the next chapter I explore some of the issues that have come up in this chapter in relation to involving children in leisure, by looking at how parents experienced and negotiated their children climbing.

Chapter Nine: Sam's birthday

9.1. Setting the scene

In some sense this story follows on from the last chapter, touching on the provision and the values of providing leisure for children. In the interviews children climbing both now and in the future came up, with parents reflecting about notions of risk and responsibility but also how they could sow the seed, in a sense, now so that when their children were older they would be interested in the outdoors. In order to get a sense of the parents' feelings about their children climbing, and to create a scenario where there would be lots of children climbing together I set the story around a child's (Sam's) birthday party. This idea was based on a birthday party that did actually happen, which one of the interviewees told me about briefly, as well as witnessing some children's parties at climbing walls, however, for some of the actual events I have created many of the details in order to convey the feelings that the parents expressed in their interviews. This story is again written from the third person, and whilst it is I the narrator that describes the events, and we see bits of other parents including Rob and Jack, the character we see most through is Liz. I wanted Liz to capture both the sometimes overwhelming anxiety about children at 'risk' but also that she felt the exposure to some risk was not a negative experience, and so she tried to control this anxiety.

9.2. The story

It is Sam's third birthday, Liz is in the kitchen, she methodically pours the water into each of the tea cups lined along the unit. Through the billowing cloud of steam she looks over the surfaces she has cleaned to sparkle just hours earlier, which were now covered by crumbs of sandwiches and the scattered remnants of crisps. She turns to the fridge for milk and pauses to straighten the photos and scribbled drawings that adorn the fridge door. Her heart melted at the images; one of Sam as a gorgeous baby, and next to that Sam gone one, Jack holding him as he did his first move on a rock, below was one taken that same summer Sam had a helmet on and was sitting on her shoulders, his wide grin matching hers. Liz came to the last photo, she felt a flush of pride at the image in the photo at Sam at about two and a half, leaning on a slab in Fontainebleau last October half term, they'd got a gite with Caroline, Lee and the kids. Sam and Conner had loved it, running around following each other in the sand, popping endless bubbles anytime an adult was willing to blow them.

"mummy".

Liz twisted towards Sam, who had run in from outside, his face freshly painted as a monkey. Liz hid a smile. He had been looking forward to his birthday party all week, asking questions daily about what would happen and double checking who was coming, at three years old it was the first time he had realised what a birthday meant. The enthusiasm was catching, Liz and Jack had spend last night rushing around excitedly like school children as they put up balloons, iced Sam's cake and awkwardly used old newspapers to wrap up Sam's new balance bike.

"Mummy can I show Connor me riding my bike?" Sam eventually gasped.

"Another time Sam, we need to get you a helmet first," in any case Liz didn't want any squabbling over using the bike. "Let me give these teas out and then, how about we cut the cake?"

"Yay, cake," Sam sneaked a glance over at the table where the cake was hidden in a tin, Liz had caught him looking all morning, but then again that might have been at the pile of presents. Liz and Jack tried not to encourage him to ask for much, knowing full well that friends and family would always over do it.

People had been coming and going all morning, but now only three other families remained, as usual Lee and Caroline were there with their children Connor and Izzy. Then there was Dan, Jack's work colleague, and his bubbly but slightly anxious wife Elen, with their daughter Meghan. Finally Rob and Rachel, a climbing couple that Liz and Jack had got to know through Sam's music group, with their son four year old George.

Liz walks outside with a tray and places it on the garden table, "I haven't put sugar in any yet, so just help yourself." She turned to Jack, "I think we better cut the cake now."

"Right," Jack answered, "Cake time, everyone."

The children rushed in, and Liz got them to sit down on the wooden benches that aligned the table, their silly chatter filling the kitchen, eclipsed only by the relative loftiness of their watchful parents who engaged in more serious conversation behind them. The dimmed room, heavy with anticipation for the cake, lit up with the flash from Jack's camera.

"The Gruuffallo" the children shouted when they saw the cake, Sam looked at his parents in amazement, "My favourite, thank you mummy and daddy,"

Liz stepped in to carefully cut the cake into equal measures.

"daddy can I tell my joke now?" Sam asked.

"I think now would be a good time," Jack smiled wryly; Sam loved to perform, and had been repeating this joke to anyone that would listen.

"um excuse me everyone, why do giraffes have long necks?" Sam said

"I don't know, why do they?" Jack asked.

"because they have smelly feet," Sam started to crack up, and whether they understood it or not the other children followed like a chorus.

"Smelly," one child then muttered and even louder guffaws' followed.

"Alright that's enough now," Jack called out, he stepped in to try and calm them down, and help the children to eat their cake. Elen passed her daughter over to Dan and walked over to Liz and Caroline who were standing by the cooker.

"The cake was lovely Liz, I must get the recipe off you," Elen smiled brightly, as she swept her carefully groomed hair out of her face.

"Um, it is delicious," Caroline added through mouthfuls, "what a lovely day,"

"I know," Liz mused, thinking that it was perfect weather for climbing, "a good day to get outside,"

"Is there a plan for this afternoon?" Elen asked.

"Well I thought the Burbage valley, there are some big boulders that are good for them to play around on," Liz answered.

"Um Is it safe for Meghan there? Elen's brow furrowed.

Liz frowned slightly; she wouldn't take Sam anywhere that wasn't safe, but part of the experience is taking the children out and exposing them, teaching them to make sensible choices.

"I didn't mean anything by it, I'm sure it is fine, I only asked because Meghan just doesn't sit still at the moment, and I haven't been up to the Peak in years," Elen said hesitantly.

Liz cursed inwardly, she was far too sensitive "Sorry, I do know how that feels, Sam is going through a bit of a running off stage, and it's terrifying," Liz did empathise, her own mother had always been a worrier and Liz had always tried to fight against it, certainly hadn't understood it, until she had become a mother herself. She didn't want to do the same to Sam and every time she stood with his hand in hers at traffic lights and closed her eyes she could feel the tightness of her own mother's hand, the anxiety like a glove in spring spreading an uncomfortable heat. It served as a reminder to loosen her grip on Sam. She turned back to Elen, "but don't worry, we always think carefully about where we take Sam. The peak has some pretty good spots for families, it's gritstone, so generally there is less rock fall, and the boulders are away from the main crag anyway,"

That's great then" Elen smiled, relieved "I can't wait till she's a bit older and we can get out a bit more, we don't really have anyone around us who we'd trust to look after her."

Liz nodded, she knew they were lucky having a brilliant nursery, and Jack's parents nearby. Looking up she saw that the children had finished their cake, they must have liked it she thought, there was hardly a crumb or speck of butter-cream left on their plates.

"Right does anyone need the toilet before we head out?" Jack announced,

A chorus of "I do's" and "me too" rang out.

Might have known if one needed it then they all would," he split them up between the upstairs and downstairs bathroom and the parents helped their respective children go to the toilet. Half an hour later, parents with their children, drinks and emergency changes of clothes in hand, piled into three of the cars.

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The lower car park has only one spot left, Rachel takes it, and Jack and Lee, rather than have the children walking down the often dangerous road drop everyone else off there, and they drive to the top car park.

The older children, led by George, go off ahead shouting and chasing each other along the rocky pathway to the boulders, Rob, Rachel and Dan walk quickly to keep an eye on them, whilst the remaining parents walk behind, carrying or pushing the younger ones leisurely.

It's a busy day and young lads with their shirts off surround some of the crops of boulders, some Scout trips, couples and small groups can be seen on the routes, and there are lots of families out walking or climbing with their kids.

"I have never seen this many young kids at a crag in Britain, is it always like this here at weekends?" Dan asked

"Um, no not really, a lot of parents seem to take it in turns, but Rob and I talked about it and decided that whilst George was young we would just take him out with us." Rachel replied, "although having said that we have been doing less now he is getting a bit older, as he likes having a day at home to do other things too."

"Yeah do you remember when we took him, uh well a lot of people probably would disapprove, but we attached him on a ledge at *chairs ladder,* it was perfectly safe though, he couldn't move anywhere." Rob said with emphasis.

"It does make me cringe thinking about that now, although not as much as that time when you carried him on your shoulders down that path by that sea cliff," Rachel visibly shivered. "I was fuming,"

A red flush swept Rob's face "it was fine, it's not like I would put him at risk, I knew what I was doing and I'm like a goat on those paths, he was safer with me then walking on his own." Rob retorted defensively.

They reach two large boulders, marked not only by their size but by the moat of erosion that separates them from the grassy field. Jack and Lee catch up with them; they spread out a couple of bouldering mats under the slabby side of the rocks. Jack, Dan and Rob stand by to spot the kids climbing, whilst the other parents sit on some rugs a bit further away chatting and entertaining the younger children.

George, steps up to have a go. Climbing is already part of his identity and at nearly four he introduces himself as Allez George, a nickname picked up on a family-climbing holiday in font. Rob helps George on, and he nimbly works his way up the problem.

"He's pretty good," Dan says,

"As long as he enjoys it, that's the main thing." Rob says

"Has he ever fallen, I just think I'd worry about it all the time, like, are they able to make decisions about what they can and can't do, like?"

"Well kids do fall, but that's how they learn I guess, and George is pretty able, he's always seemed to know his limits, but you know Rachel or I are always here to catch him," Rob replies,

It did piss him off a bit; he'd had the same judgemental comments, from other climbers as well, when he wrote to a climbing forum asking for advice about children's helmets. He knew he was less restrictive than a lot of parents but he wasn't stupid and he certainly didn't want his son being hurt, of course he'd get him out of the way of someone bouldering or belaying but he'd make those decisions, based on his knowledge of his son's capabilities. Things had changed, when he was a kid and in the Scouts you'd be dropped off with three other ten year olds and have to find your way back, they'd never do that now. However, both he and Rach wanted George to have the same

brilliant experiences, to build up their self reliance, so that when he was an adult he could weigh things up and hopefully remember what they'd taught them.

"Have you had the wee ones on any routes?" Dan asks.

"Well mainly we put a top-rope up on some bigger boulders, so that he can't fall. And sometimes one of us will go up with him." Rob put his hand up above his eyes, blocking out the sun so he could keep an eye on George. "Do you want to get Meghan into it?"

"Aye certainly, no rush though, and I think she's too diddy now, I'm not sure what age you have to be for the full harnesses, I think most manufacturers say about three?" Dan says.

"Yeah, I think Sam's ready to have a go, but Liz is a bit more anxious about it," Jack adds, he steps into the space Rob had just vacated. "Sam wait a second, stop, you know you don't climb without a spotter." For just a split-of a second, Jack's heart beat raises a notch; a succession of thumps against his chest like the wings of a bird, his palms begin to sweat, and his mouth goes dry. As quickly as the panic comes it is dispelled as he rationalises the situation, Sam is perfectly fine..

"Look at me I am climbing, I am very strong," Sam's calls down.

"Don't look down at George, concentrate on what you're doing." Jack says keeping his eyes glued to his son. Sam, usually one to stop when he was scared becomes slightly more gung-ho when his friends are around, it did make you worry about what he'd be like as a teenager, at least at the moment he or Liz were there in control. When Sam is down again, Jack takes him to one-side.

"Sam, do you want a go at the other problem?"

Sam nods his head slowly, he looks down at his feet.

"Right then, what are you going to do this time?" Jack asks.

"Wait for you to be ready?" Sam looks unsure

"Yes, and?"

"Not be silly and think?"

"Yes, good, come on then give this one a go, it might be a bit harder." Jack was careful not to talk about grades with Sam, he wanted him to enjoy it and not worry about how hard he was climbing. He'd seen too many kids at the wall whose dad's were always going on at them to climb like this or like that, a year on and they would be sulking in the corner if they couldn't climb something.

Sam starts climbing, but he quickly finds it more difficult, "Daddy, I don't know if I can do it. Can you help me?"

"Just have a try, I'm here if you want to come down, or jump off." Jack would always help him if he was really scared, but he didn't want him to be afraid to have a go.

Over on the mat, Liz looks up and sees Sam being encouraged by Jack, she smiles with pride, forcefully swallowing the bitter taste of worry, Jack was so good with him. Liz had agreed to try a full body harness on Sam last week, but she was still not convinced that, three or not, they were safe, and anyway she wasn't sure he should be doing any routes until he was old enough to wear a regulation climbing helmet. It wasn't like she was stopping him try things but this way she could still catch him.

"Meghan, Meghan, stop you'll get stuck,"

Liz's thoughts were halted by a panicked Elen calling out for her daughter, who was rapidly trying to make her way through a gap between two boulders. Paul ran over to help her.

"You can't leave them for a second," Lee comments.

"I know, but you can't watch them all the time either," Liz says, "Your dad climbed didn't he Lee, how did your parents know you were old enough to know what you were doing?"

"I'm not sure it was really that calculated," Lee pauses as he thinks back. "I guess the same as we all do now, teach them, show them what to do and then eventually trust them, and then when they get to the dreaded teenage years and ignore everything you say, get them to listen to someone they think is cool" Lee laughs.

Liz smiles, "Is that what they did with you?"

"Well when I was fifteen and wanting to go off without dad, he got me enrolled in one of the youth courses at Plas y Brenin," Lee tells her.

9.3. Discussion of the story

I wish to further discuss here both some of the ambiguities around discourses of risk in relation to children being 'in risky spaces,' as well as how parent's perception and evaluation of children at risk was gendered. I finish this discussion by exploring parental involvement in children's sport.

9.4. Risk and childhood

At a theoretical level it is implied that parenting has become more 'paranoid' (Furedi, 2008) Not only are parents themselves seen as avoiding risks but it is also implied that they must take measures to protect their children from potential risks, or to monitor children's wellbeing and whereabouts. This is influenced both by discourses that construct good parenting and discourses that construct and represent childhood.

The pre-occupation with the safety and well-being of children, has its origins in the eighteenth century, a time when Foucault (2002b) argues, "it was no longer just a matter of producing the optimum number of children but one of the correct management of this stage of life" (p96). This meant that the family became seen as an institution charged, and directed, with specific techniques for the maintenance of children's (healthy) bodies for the future of the country. Additionally childhood in post-modernity has increasingly been conceived as a period of innocence, as seen in the media representation of children and enforced by child protection policies (Murray, 2009). This has created a moral panic, which instils fear into parents (Sachs and Mellor, 2005) and sees children as vulnerable to harm. Thus parents are governed to protect their children's innocence, and these discourses have been used by social, political and communal agencies and authorities to restrict and regulate both individual parents and populations behaviours (Sachs and Miller, 2005). Characteristic of this parents have recently been threatened with social services when they let their children cycle alone to school (Wilkes,

2010) and childhood games such as playing with conkers and playground areas being banned or assessed for risk, or what has been popularly seen as 'wrapping children in cotton wool' (Jenkins, 2006). It has been theorised that parents internalise and normalise these messages facing blame if they put their children at risk and thus parents have to be restrictive of children's physical activity outside the home (Carver et al., 2010; Jenkins, 2006). At the same time though there is a rising backlash by organisations such as *Generation Youth* Issues (Generation Youth Issues website, 2008) who campaign and encourage parents to challenge the assumption that children are necessarily victims of risk, pointing to both implications on children's development and health when the experience of play and the outdoors is reduced. Parents are also seen as responsible for raising healthy children, and thus organised sports are conceived as 'safe' spaces where children can learn values (Backett-Milburn and Harden, 2004).

Influenced by these discourses of risk and childhood, the characters in the stories above are also subject to localised discourses on risk (Lash, 1992). Whilst as discussed previously, they may see themselves as risk-managers rather than risk-takers, as climbers these parents, are, or have been, exposed to an activity in which there is an element of risk (Donnelly, 2004). Thus although 'expert' discourses influence and construct parents understanding of risk, this is fluid and dependent on their other experiences (Lash, 2000; Tulloch, 2000). Through discussing the characters in the story I will discuss how parents perceive and negotiate their children's risk-taking in relation to these discourses, showing that parents are exposed to discourses of risk avoidance and child protection. I will also show how some parents are somewhat ambivalent of these discourses, and although not wishing to expose their children to unnecessarily dangerous situations still wished to expose them or to teach them about risk.

9.4.1 Taking children into the outdoors

In terms of taking the children into the outdoors, all of the parents demonstrated a reflexive approach because where it might be expected that parents would not take their children into potentially 'risky' spaces, none of them were opposed to taking their children to the crag. However, there were big differences with regard to how these risks were perceived. Elen and Dan are used as quite an extreme example to show that some parents were quite anxious about taking their children into what could potentially be risky spaces, and this was generally more so of couples who did not take their children out climbing regularly. Whilst they were willing to take their daughter out climbing and they show a desire to get their daughter into climbing, they were quite anxious, both at the crag and in trusting other people to look after their daughter, aligning themselves to discourses of child safety and risk avoidance. Elen and Dan's anxiety when Meghan was at the crag could perhaps be explained in relation to her age, as well as their

normative family life. As Rob also highlights, toddlers were often hard to take to crags because they needed constant surveillance (Foucault, 1977). Dan's comments to Rob indicate that parents are under pressure and supervision from other parents (Jenkins, 2006; Valentine, 2004). Additionally Elen and Dan had, for various reasons, climbed less in recent years and therefore they were less likely to take their daughter into 'climbing spaces' anyway. Perhaps because they did not take their daughter into these spaces that often, they perceived the risks as quite high, as Murray (2009) and Beckett-Milburn and Harden (2004) highlight, risk-taking is negotiated within the family's local context.

This did not mean that the other parents did not perceive that there were not risks involved in taking their children out climbing, indeed as Liz and Jack show parents could be anxious, and did of course feel a responsibility to protect their children. However, taking their children into potentially risky spaces was framed in relation to their interpretation of risk, which was from their subject position as climbers as well as parents, and suggestively the perception of risk was somewhat different to non-climbing parents (Maynard, 2007). Instead of avoiding taking their children climbing the parents negotiated or managed the environments that they took their children into. Although again there were differences between parents in the management of the risk, for example Liz and Jack show a negotiation of the discourses of climbing and of parenting because they did minimise the risks that children were exposed to. They did this by carefully selecting which crags they went to, choosing 'family friendly' locations such as gritstone crags, and choosing crags that have a lot of space, away from cliffs, so their children can run around away from the rock face. Therefore, they did not perceive the environments that they took their children to be dangerous. Others, like Rachel and Rob, perceived that they had taken their son into what would be seen, even by other climbers, as perhaps quite 'risky' areas, like taking him down steep ascents to sea cliffs, or to sea cliffs where they were attached to the top of a cliff. In terms of societal discourses on child safety, and risk prevention, this would be seen as inexcusable, and this is in some ways is embodied by Rachel, shown in her slight disbelief and guilt at where her and Rob have taken their son in the past. However as Rob argues, their son was firmly attached so could not come to any harm. This perception and behaviour can only be explained within relation to their position as climbers, as experienced climbers they saw themselves as aware of and in control of the risks, and any potential dangers. As Maynard (2007) highlights one's position within discourses can lead to multiple interpretations of risk-taking.

In all of these cases, the exposure to risk was related to the parents' perception of control, or management of the risk and this can perhaps explain why the perception of risk in relation to children was contextual. Whilst many of the parents were shown to feel in control of their

children at the crag, they could feel anxious, or more aware of the risks in other situations, like by busy roads, when the parents may have less control over the situation, or outcome.

9.4.2. Children climbing and risk

As suggested earlier in this chapter, the literature on contemporary parenting culture implies that parenthood is constructed in a way that positions parents who expose children to risk as irresponsible, risk is generally perceived as negative, and children as in need of protection. However on the other hand alterative discourse, particularly within the discursive fields of outdoor education (Maynard, 2007, additionally see the Institute for Outdoor Learning, 2011), and climbing suggest that being in the outdoors and giving children the opportunity for different experiences and adventure is beneficial for children's development. In effect risk can be positive, as Brieivik (2007) summarises:

> Children should be given more opportunities to play outdoors, be active, explore the world, develop skills and strong bodies. We should let the children freeze a bit, get wet, starve bit, get hurt, face problems, in order to develop resistance to stress and pain (p20).

Within the story above we see that Jack and Liz and Rob and Rachel negotiate both discourses of 'child as innocent and in need of regulation' and 'children as agents, in need of independence'. On the one hand, these parents viewed their children as somewhat aware of their own ability and of their limitations, in relation to risk, yet on the other hand the parents saw their children as innocent, unable to make decisions about risk and in need of teaching or controlling, as future adults (Foucault, 2002b). However the differences amongst the parents in the story show how the negotiation of these competing constructions of childhood differed, and decisions about when to let children climb were related to normative guidelines of the chronological age of the child as well as parental understanding of their own child.

Liz and Jack in particular show conflict between allowing Sam to climb and to learn to make his own decisions and at the same time are anxious that he is not yet able to make decisions himself and consequently may put himself at risk. In practise this meant that they let Sam boulder, where they are able to catch him and they would not yet let him climb on the end of the rope. In terms of how Liz has made this decision, we see that she positions Sam as 'at risk' or in need of surveillance, so for a responsible adult needing to be there to watch him (Lupton and Tulloch, 1998) by drawing on expert notions of childhood development. For example Liz's perception of when to let Sam climb on a rope is related to his chronological age or equipment guidelines that dictate when he is 'old enough' to wear a helmet. Dan also shows that other parents

similarly constructed children as 'at risk' in relation to their chronological age. This demonstrates, as Jackson and Scott (1999) highlight, that at some levels a developmental perceptive still dominates discourses on childhood and risk. The assumption is that there is a pre-determined 'natural' chronological age at which children should be competent and thus given more responsibility (p92).

However at the same time Liz is quite conscious off her anxiety, and seeks to control it in order to allow Sam to try different experiences, being safety conscious but knowing when to let go (Smith, 1998; Valentine, 1997). Both she and Jack also construct Sam as having some, albeit perhaps a limited awareness of his own limitations and the risks involved. This seems to support Beckett-Milburn and Harden (2004)'s suggestion that:

> The negotiation of risk, safety and danger in families is bounded by perceptions of children's age...However, in each of these families, it was evident that the concept of 'age' was fluid, socially defined (p438).

Although Liz shows that parents were aware of, and followed external advice to some extent, they based the responsibility that they awarded their children on their own assessments of both the safety of equipment and the capability of their children (Valentine, 1997).

In the story Rob and Rachel whilst having a much more relaxed approach to their children's risk taking than Liz, additionally show how decisions are made in relation to their understanding of their children's abilities, and decision making. Whilst non-climbing parents would perhaps see Rob and Rachel's attitude towards risk and their children as irresponsible or 'bad' parenting, Rob and Rachel highlighted that their perceptions were different, they did not think they put their children 'at risk', justifying this through indicating that their son George was never climbing without adult supervision. Thus although they were awarding their son more 'freedom' than many other parents would allow, they still positioned themselves as responsible, emphasising that George was still under parental control and needed to 'learn' and be taught guidelines in making decisions about risk. Their son is "invested with moral responsibility, guided by experts (parents) to make rational choices over lifestyle" (Sharland, 2006:255, own addition in brackets). The supervisory and regulatory power that parents exercise in seeking the compliance of their son can be seen as what Foucault (2000g) calls 'pastoral power' or governmentality. Pastoral power is the use of techniques to govern individuals and population's behaviour in not necessarily the best but in the most efficient way, because it means individuals regulate themselves. In this case "parents exercise power over children by teaching children to behave for their own best interests." (Foley, 2006).

Parents saw teaching children how to make decisions about risk as being particularly important for their children in the future, when they reached adolescence. As shown in the story looking ahead to teenage years was recognised as a time when parents would have less control over their children's lives, and therefore adolescents were positioned as *potentially* 'at risk'. Parents wished to guide and govern their offspring as children and as adolescents in order to produce, if not the risk adverse, the risk-aware adolescent and adult. This was reflected in both Jack talking to Sam when he messed around and in Lee's discussion of his parents own approach. Whilst it could be said that these parents are displaying some agency in resisting societal discourses of bringing children up away from risk, it is not necessarily that parents are actually critiquing dominant norms. Parents are positioned through neo-liberal discourses, and they also position themselves as individually responsible for instilling appropriate risk-taking behaviour within their children and producing responsible adults (Giulianotti, 2009; Sharlan, 2006). As Bell and Bell (1993) suggest when young people who fail to achieve control or management their behaviour are labelled as 'at risk' the individually responsible risk-taker, that is in control, is socially acceptable. What can be said though is that the use of pastoral power does not necessarily have a negative effect, firstly parents exercising disciplinary power over their children does have the obvious benefits that children learn. Secondly it only works on the assumption that subjects are 'free' and therefore as was suggested in chapter one there is the possibility of resistance, if as said individuals engage in critique and the creation of alternatives that are not necessarily rooted in expert opinion.

Following this I suggest that in the story, some of these parents reflexively made these decisions. This is particularly evident in Rob's critique of the health and safety culture that we live in, which shows, that some of the parents specifically challenged 'expert knowledge' on risk-taking, resisting the idea that children should not be exposed to risk and highlighting that decisions are made in relation to parents experiences and their understanding of their children. In a sense then both Liz and Jack, and Rob and Rachel highlight that in practice, parents balance protecting children with encouraging them to experience the outdoors by allowing them to play and be taught, or placed in situations where they are exposed to risk. This allows children to learn to make decisions about, and manage risk (Guldberg, 2009; Smith, 1998; Valentine, 1997).

9.4.3. Risk, responsibility and gender

Although discourses of risk anxiety and avoidance are directed at both parents, mothers are more specifically implicated. Valentine (2004) suggests that:

> the process of managing children's safety...is highly gendered in terms of how mothers and fathers negotiate the parental responsibilities of setting children's spatial boundaries and discipline any infringements (p31).

This research similarly found that although fathers did experience concern, that both fathers and mothers perceived mothers as more anxious about risks and their children, and more likely to perceive risks as negative. This is shown both in the comparison of Liz and Jack's anxieties, and in the differences between Rachel and Rob's recollections of where they have taken their sons in the past.

Gendered differences in the perception of risk can be explained both related to the gendering of emotion, and emotional relations, and in relation to the ethic of care. Discourses allow an understanding of the "resources available to individuals as they make sense of the world and themselves in the world," (Wright, 2003: 37). In this way mother's experience and perceptions of risk can in part be understood through discourses of femininity and risk (Lois, 2005). In talking about gendered perceptions of risk it is difficult to escape from a reduction to essentialist binary conceptions of 'man' and 'woman'. As Lois (2005) has suggested 'men' and women' perceive and respond to risk differently. In trying to explain this she indicates that the normative construction of masculinity has been associated to emotional stoicism, whilst in performing femininity women are encouraged to be in touch with emotions, and express anxieties and fear. However a post-structural approach requires moving past these boundaries to show that the world is not that simple, and indeed men can be feminine and women masculine (Frohlick, 2005). This was shown to some extent, as I discuss below multiple understandings of mothering and risk emerged, and that the emotional response to risk is 'naturally' gendered as male or female is challenged by Jack's sudden anxiety when Sam is potentially at risk. Laurendeau (1008b) therefore suggests that instead of saying that men and women do risk differently that, instead we should look at the engagement with risk as a process by which masculinities and femininities are constructed. He also suggests that whilst men and women do actively construct these identities, this is always in relation to cultural and subcultural understandings, and this has implications both for emotional gendered responses to risk, and is linked to responsibility. Therefore the increased anxiety and emotional awareness that the 'mothers' showed, highlights that mothers were taking up, and self managing their particular understandings of risk in relation to normative ways of performing femininity and responsibility (Butler, 1990). The normative assumption being that the responsibility of mothers is that they should meet the needs of their child (Murphey, 2007)

In relation to mothering Gustafson (1998) argues that the emotional concern for the well-being of others is reinforced when women become mothers. The ethic of care produces mothers who

are constructed as morally responsible for their children. As Laurendeau (2008; 2008) and Lupton (1999b) highlight mothers have been subject to medical, social and moral discourses that not only constrain their behaviour but means that they are subject to surveillance and intervention by others (Foucault, 1979). Therefore, mothers who act inappropriately are singled out for blame. Yet it is not only how mothers own risk taking is managed but how they perceive others' risk taking that is gendered. Children are singled out for surveillance by their parents, and particularly it seems by their mothers, and in public spaces. 'Liz' spoke of her anxiety and 'Elen' showed her restrictive response to her daughter running off, which Murray (2009), Blackford (2004) and Valentine (1997) suggests indicates that mothers place more restrictions on their children in certain spaces. The mothers in the story above are shown to "engage in surveillance of those we care about to reduce the risks to which they are exposed" (Nelson, 2008:517).

However, there were different ways in which mothers understood their children at risk, 'Liz' also shows an awareness of this anxiety, and the need to control it, this is perhaps related to her identity as a climber. Whilst mothers may be positioned as risk-avoidant and hyper-vigilant, climbers 'learn' to suppress emotion (at least whilst actually climbing) and controlling fear is desired (Dilley, 2007; Lois, 2005). Therefore, there were differences between the mothers who climbed regularly, and thus who were situated within the risk discourses of climbing, and those that climbed less, shown in the comparison of Elen and Liz. Whilst Elen, who had climbed less in recent years, did appear to some extent to hover around her daughter, like the mothers in Blackford's (2004) research, who were unwilling to leave their children unsupervised in 'dangerous' public space. The mothers who still climbed regularly as a family and on their own like Liz were aware that they were sometimes anxious and they tried to some extent to suppress or manage this, in order to allow their children to test boundaries in potentially risky spaces (Murray, 2009, Tulloch, 2000).

9.5. I don't want to push them to climb: Children, sport and parental status

I will now discuss the desire for parents to involve their children in climbing in relation to parental identities, and notions of the successful parent. Despite the recognition that intensive involvement in sport can potentially be harmful for children; physically, emotionally and socially (see Coakley and Pike, 2009) youth sport is generally portrayed, and seen by parents as beneficial for children's development and in a safe environment. Initial research looking at parents' involvement in youth and children's sporting activity tended to focus on parental role in the socialisation of children into organised sporting activities (see Rowley, 1986). However recent research (see Kay, 2009) has recognised the lack of empirical research that looks

critically at parents' experiences of their children's involvement in sporting activities. LaRossa (2009) for example implies that sport is an avenue through which fathers can bond with children, and specifically show their sons how to be men. Furthermore, wider discussions on parental involvement can be influential in this discussion. As I implied in chapter two, media, scientific and academic representation of middle-class parenting has reinforced an identity that is contingent on children (Furedi, 2008; Hay, 1996) in other words implying that parents are living vicariously through their children. Sport is an avenue through which children can achieve status, and can offer children future fruitful career prospects, an idea that is pervasive, and thus so called 'pushy parents' invest heavily in finance, emotion and time in fostering their children into sporting stars.

From this perspective it might be expected that parents would wish their children to carry on in their footsteps or to invest in potential talent, and that "today when sons or daughters excel in sports, their success is directly attributed to parents" (Coakley, 2009: 40). In the same way that parents are expected to direct their children's education, parents today are morally implied to propagate their children's sporting success. In practice involved parenting, in terms of parental desire to involve their children in climbing is not that simple, in fact as Rob shows above, parents could contradict themselves, wanting their children to climb but not forcing it upon them. Grenfell and Rinehart (2003) similarly argue that parental involvement has complex meanings; they position parental involvement in their children's sporting activity on a continuum between supportive to conspicuous parenting. They suggest that where supportive parenting is somewhat positive, conspicuous parenting is when the:

> parent pushes the child as in the role of the stage mom but also pushes his/her own image as the idealised, self-sacrificing parent – i.e. the 'conspicuous display' of ideal parenting...the intent of the parent, whether conscious or unconscious, is to display one's own prowess (Grenfell and Rinehart, 2003: 87).

I suggest that the parents in the story above show that the performance of parenting involvement is fluid, and multiple. Whilst parents are influenced by discourses of the 'invested and involved parent' most of them questioned this through performing the 'supportive parent'. This is primarily shown in the way that parents talked about their children climbing, many of them did want their children to be involved in climbing, and thus as shown in the previous chapter felt it important to give their children the opportunities to try it. As Coakley (2009) highlights not investing in their children's future would mean that parents faced being seen as failing morally. Yet at the same time, as Liz and Jack also show they would not want to push their children to climb. Furthermore, as Rob highlights and Jack later emphasises they wanted their children to have fun, not be directed by 'rules' or 'grades.' It seemed, then, that in principle parents

rejected both the idea of pushing their children into climbing, and instead they wished to support but not pressure their children.

In relation to parental identities, the parents' in Siegnethaler and Leiticia Gonzales, (1997), Grenfell and Rinehart, (2004) research had children involved in high level or organised and competitive youth sport. These parents therefore were in a position where they felt they had to sacrifice for their children's success and their parenting identity became an important sense of self, and thus their children's success was framed as exemplar of their own parenting skills (Coakley, 2009). However the parents in this story had young children, who were not involved in high level sport. Additionally the parents in this research were themselves climbers, and saw their maintenance of their involvement in other life spheres, like climbing and work as important to their sense of self, as their parenting identity was. Therefore although proud of their children's achievements these parents did not necessarily see their sense of self as invested in them, and these achievements were perhaps of equal important as parents' perception of their own involvement in climbing. This shows, I suggest, that perhaps because of their positions in other spheres that parents "prowess, status, symbolic capital and power" (Grenfell and Rinehart, 2003: 90) is not necessarily drawn from their children's achievements but their own.

9.4. Chapter summary

In this chapter I have first shown some of experiences and feelings that parents had about their children climbing. The discussion has primarily focussed on risk and responsibility in relation to childhood, and how these discourses impact the experiences parents have. Again this story has shown diversities and complexities between parents, as well as contradictory experiences by individuals. In a risk adverse society, children have been known as 'at risk' and this has meant that 'good' parents are expected to manage and remove their 'vulnerable' children from risk. Whilst these notions are shown to have impacted most of the parents (and some more than others) experiences to some extent, instead of completely avoiding exposing children to risky spaces, the parents' were shown, in different ways, to take a more reflexive, and sometimes critically resistant approach to these discourses. This indicates that in practice, these parents negotiated, and made choices about exposing their children to risk, not only in relation to 'expert' guidance but also to their understanding of their own children, and of risk in general. Additionally experiences of children in potentially risky spaces was gendered, with mothers showing both a heightened awareness and increased anxiety towards their children taking risk, this can be explained in relation to gendered constructions of risk, and parenting.

Experiences of parental risk cannot ignore parents other subjectivities and there was some influence of parent's subjectivities as climbers in this perception of risk, because whilst they by

no means saw themselves or would be willing to put their children in danger, risk was not seen as always dangerous or negative. What could perhaps be implied from this is that most parents are aware of and take precautions because they love their children, but rather than universal and aversive guidelines, parents need some freedom to make their own decisions.

Finally, this chapter looked at the provision of climbing in relation to the research on parents and children in organised and elite sport, suggesting that whilst parents wanted their children to become involved in climbing they did not want to impose or push them into it. It is difficult to compare the parents portrayed in other research to those in this story because the children were all young, and not elite athletes, so parents did not have to commit as much time to time to their children's activity. Nevertheless because climbing was important for parent's sense of self, then they are perhaps less likely to live 'vicariously' through their children.

In the next chapter, in the final story I move on to look at mother's experiences of parenting and climbing, looking at how mothering disrupts climbing identities, but influenced by post-structural feminists implying that climbing spaces can potentially be empowering places for mothers.

Chapter Ten
Women at the wall

10.1. Setting the scene

In a way I found this story the most difficult to write, and this was particularly when I tried to write it in the third person, on reflection I think this was because many of the women's narratives in the interviewees were highly evocative, sometimes emotional, and very reflexive. Although often quite different stories were told, showing different constructions of mothering and climbing identities, there was a definite sense of the love that these mothers felt for their children, as well as the conflict between work, parenting and maintaining their leisure. Whilst there was conflict, this was not necessarily experienced by the mothers as constraining (although it certainly could be). No matter how differently mothers approached this, there was the sense that they wanted to maintain a balance, and they did not want to be seen, or see themselves as a singular identity, i.e. as 'only' a mother. It is also important to add, that whilst their climbing and working identities allowed them to in some ways resist and reinforce normative mothering, the women were all middle-class and had external support for childcare and therefore faced few economic barriers to the maintenance of their leisure participation. The data that has been used to construct this story is primarily from the interviews with the mothers, but additionally is from my many trips, both in indoor walls and outside climbing with mothers.

In writing the story, to start with, I decided to, like in the father's story set it across a week, however, this time I wanted to show the different experiences that women had across that week. In order to convey the emotional, and bring the reader in to the stories I decided that they were best written primarily in the first person. I also wanted to bring these women's lives together, or to connect the story in a sense, so I have played around with using a variety of ways of doing this to make the story appear 'real.'

The personal reflective narratives, written in the past, although almost like a personal diary, are more like a blog because of the way the mothers clarify their experiences. After reading a few blogs when thinking of how to write this story, I found that blogs are a popular media form used by people in many different ways, people write about the world around them, about work, weddings, flowers and their everyday lives. What struck me is how deeply personal some of them were, with 'bloggers' often naming and talking about others in their lives, sometimes these are descriptive, sometimes these are rants and often these are reflexive and thoughtful. After

reading this quote: "There is no longer any such thing as fiction or nonfiction; there is only narrative" by the author Edgar Doctorow on the home page of one blog *miscellaneous mum* (see Karen, 2011) I thought it seemed a fitting way to present this story.   Therefore, these are written in the past, sometimes short, sometimes long reflections on the day.

In order to fit these together, three of the mothers lives are linked through planning on meeting to go climbing that week, whilst Elen's narrative shows a mother who has more difficulty fitting climbing in, because of her husband's work. However the conversation between Liz and Becky is written, from Liz's perspective as if it is happening in the present, and finally I go back to the third person in the scene at the climbing wall.

10.2. The story[1]

Liz: Monday. Time, less really is more

This morning had that September feeling, summer's last gasp before the dark evenings set in, and with it Thursdays out in the peak coming to an end with the onset of the bouldering season and climbing indoors again. The time to start getting in a good winter's training for the E2 next year. I never thought I would climb that hard, especially after having Sam, but in a way having Sam helped, it took the pressure off, I became more relaxed and then after seeing Rachel's improvement before she became pregnant with Joshua I was inspired. It doesn't really make sense: I climb much less than I used to. Gone from three or four times a week to one or occasionally two planned nights in the week, and with the family at the weekends. The only way I would explain it is because, now when I'm at the crag/the wall I'm climbing, less messing around, drinking tea all evening, yes you still chat but you chat whilst you climb, I think I push myself more too. "You don't leave until you're pumped!" is what we say to each other! So really less time is more!

I'm ranting again, back to today, it was an eventful one!

I dropped Sam off for his first full day at school, on my way back to full-time teaching again.   I still can't believe he is at school already, seeing him standing in his uniform, his packed lunch in his hands, a look of nervous excitement as I kissed him goodbye. I worried about him all the way to work, he was the youngest in his class, having only turned four in July, I hoped that his school would be a good one. Ridiculous, parents out there, when do you ever stop worrying?

In the lunch hour I was off duty so I text Rachel and Becky: "Fancy doing some routes at Froggat on Thursday?" I knew it would probably be a no from both, but I don't stop asking. In some ways I'm looking forward to winter, as I'll have the girls to climb with again, bouldering is always easier. If only it wasn't so difficult to find other mothers, or even more women to climb trad routes with. Like Becky loved her climbing, but not the risk, which is fair enough. Hmm I hope she doesn't think me climbing trad still is bad? I would never do anything reckless and that's why I'm careful about the routes I choose. Although there are still risks, I get to manage or control them and not have to rely on my husband, or anyone else to climb it for me.

It has always been a nightmare finding women to climb but it is even harder when you are a mum. In the initial months you are, well I was, and like Rachel is now, you're in baby-cuckoo land. Both completely besotted and scared about what on earth to do with this beautiful baby, that is amazingly yours, never mind the physical changes, the breast feeding, getting over the caesarean, the jelly ligaments never mind the baby weight. Every time you get out feels like a massive achievement. Then by the time you feel halfway normal again the non-mums are pulling down the rock, and far too good for you to climb with, or they become mothers and just don't seem to want to climb anymore; or they don't want to climb trad or lead anyway. I remember meeting someone who climbed 7a had a child and then just stopped. I can understand it is difficult to manage, and you do want to sacrifice things for your children but I didn't want to give up, what would I be, who would I be if I couldn't do half the things that make me who I am. Maybe I'm just lucky that Jack has always been so hands-on and always supported me, taken Sam off me and made sure I have the time to climb.

Becky: Monday, last week before work!

So the twins went into the nursery for the day, and I took Olivia to play with a friend, lovely! It's my last full week with her before I go back to work again, and she goes to nursery. I'm ready to go back to work, could do with the break! but I do hope it's not as hard this time. I just have to keep telling myself how good nursery has been for the twins!

I'm in two minds about climbing this week, I got a text from Liz, about going to Froggat.- As I've talked about before, I haven't done much trad since Uni days anyway, concentrating on a bit of bouldering and getting strong at sport, but after having the children, or maybe it's just me getting older? I started getting scared leading and I couldn't face the thought of doing any trad leading, maybe when the children are older but I just don't want to take the risks right now. I don't think other mothers doing it is bad I mean Mike still climbs trad, and yes it scares me the things I know he does, and at that level things can go wrong, but I also know he is careful and is a responsible father.

So I decided that although I could always go and follow Liz up some routes, I would prefer to spend this last week with Olivia I'll just nip to the wall for a boulder or go for a run when the kids are in bed, less of a kerfuffle than going out at four or five for a whole evening.

It's not really a sacrifice, I'm not a frustrated mum, I get enough me time and I love being with my children. You should have seen me before the kids, I was always like, "I must climb this 7a, or whatever" but now the pressure is off so I don't expect as much from myself. I love being outside in beautiful places, doing something physical like bouldering, and being with friends. No more following anyone up anything like I used too! Climbing is a part of me, it will always be there, but it's not the be-all and end all anymore!

Chapter Ten: Women at the wall

Rachel: Monday, Head space

A short one from me today, just wanted to mention the amazing bike ride I've just had. Look at me, honestly as a teenager I never did anything.

I nearly didn't go, I got that "uh, I can't be bothered feeling" but Rob was off work, and he told me to just go, that I'd feel better after it...he knows what I'm like when I don't do anything lol!

As usual he was right, it's not quite climbing but in that 40 minutes my head cleared, just to get some fresh air, nothing quick yet but to start getting fitter again.

Liz: Tuesday: child-care and sneaking out!

I know a lot of mum's wouldn't do it, but Jack and I feel making time for us is important too! Therefore, when Jack's parents offered to pick Sam up from school we jumped at the chance. Sam loves the time with them anyway, and Jack and I snuck out for a climb! What an evening, I've really missed climbing with Jack, I know some couples don't work, but he was my climbing partner for years, we try to make time, but when Sam came along that was the first thing that went.

A snippet from Liz and Rachel's midweek conversation

Rachel: I want to come out on Thursday, but I don't think I'll have the time for trad. Could nip for a quick local boulder or indoors though. Rob is going to give Joshua his feed, so if I leave mine at 6, climb for a couple of hours then make sure I'm back for 9 or so to give her the next feed.
Liz: I want to get out, the Nott's club are out, but if it rains then yes. How are you anyway?
Rachel: Sure I understand, (pauses, sighs) Joshua is grumpy, not sleeping as well,
Liz: is it his teeth?
Rachel: No, I think he's hungry, but I can't seem to produce enough milk
Liz: have you thought about starting to fee, um, Formula?
Rachel: I don't know, I have been thinking about it, as I am getting to that time
Liz: (I interrupted then, I knew what she was going through) about 4-6 months?
Rachel (quietly): yeah, itchy feet, I love being with the kids, you know that, but I feel uh I want to start climbing regularly again, to get leading again, to get my body back. But then it's my choice, I shouldn't complain, I still grab the odd hour or two here and there at the wall, running, going on a on a quick bike ride when Rob gets in from work. He is good, he knows I've spent 9 months plus grinding to a halt.
Liz: You sound unsure? Do you feel guilty? What does Rob think?
Rachel: Yes, I'm not anti-formula but I always wanted to be a proper mother, to give them that extra start, and for George I managed the 6 months through infections and everything. I don't know. Rob is happy either way, he said I should decide.
Liz: Stop there Rachel, don't feel guilty. You have given him that start, I think I started to bottle feed Sam, and give him baby food at about 4 months. You have to do what is right for both you and for him. I'm not going to tell you what to do, but don't feel bad for it.
Rachel: Thanks Liz, it feels better having someone else say it, someone understanding.

Liz: I'm selfishly glad to hear you saying it, I've missed climbing with you, think off all the grit routes we can do next spring.

Thursday evening at the wall, Liz, Becky, Rachel

It is England, it rained, so Becky, Rachel and Liz are meeting at the wall.

Rachel looks at her watch again. "Where is he?" I shouldn't moan she thinks, but George had been off school ill today, and with having to check up on him, the two of them all day had been hard work.

Whilst it was easier second time round they were a handful. She knew Rob was finding it hard too, frustrated at not climbing as much in his efforts to negotiate work, being with the kids and supporting her, but he hadn't spent any prolonged periods with the two of them and she wasn't sure he quite understood how hard it could be with them all day. Putting George in front of the TV seemed to be happening more regularly. Feeling slight pangs of guilt at her desire to get out, Rachel picks a gurgling Joshua up, and hugs him gently.

When Rob does gets home, Rachel rushes out, getting to the wall she opens the door to the old swimming pool, the familiar smell hits her, the chlorine infused walls that no amount of bleach will remove, the slight dampness of the building and crash mats, mixed with climbing shoes and filter coffee. Her throat fills with the chalk that speckles, like stars in the air. Ah it's good to be back. The wall is filling slowly and Rachel smiles with pleasure at the number of women and kids that are climbing. Lots of familiar faces, pairs of men in their 20's, 30's, late 50's going up and down the steep leading wall, couples' take it in turns to top-rope the vertical wall. The usual group of lads at the back on the competition wall.

Liz is already at the wall when Rachel gets there. Rachel spots her traversing gracefully along the bouldering wall, pausing to stretch against the holds, taking her shoes and chalk she wanders over.

"Thanks for that chat the other day, I feel a bit like a weight has lifted."

"Anytime," Liz hugs Rachel.

"Where's Becky?" Rachel asks

"She said she had to put the kids to bed, so should be here soon," Liz replies. They pick up the sheet of problems, and start working through them, chatting about their children, Liz's work and planned holidays. As they work their way through the list, Rachel feels her muscles remembering how to move.

About half an hour later Becky arrives, "Hello ladies, lovely to see you. Sorry I'm late, have you been climbing long?"

"I ended up getting here early, so about an hour, as I've been on a course today, hmm using the web for P.E! I spent the day planning February half term instead."

Becky laughs, "Sounds like fun, I better skip the warm up then and jump straight on to catch up." Becky says, then turning to Rachel, "How's does it feel to be back."

"Hard, heavy, don't think I'll ever have abs again, but it's good to move again," Rachel grimaces,

"I don't know! two children and you look like that, Number one mum I say, where were you storing them?" Liz teases, Rachel really did look great.

They all laugh.

"I better be careful not to get injured though, it's so easy to just think you can climb what you were doing before," Rachel says,

"I made that mistake after the twins, you'll get back again, you did before." Becky adds, "and you may lose strength but good technique never goes."

"Have you been climbing much?" Rachel asks Becky,

"A bit, but Mike's been working a lot of evenings, I could go in the day more but I hate going on my own, Mike's able to do it, just go and train, but I'd prefer to go for a run or something."

"Right all this talk of climbing makes me want to do some, shall we? Liz suggests.

Towards the end of the session, Becky suggests that they go and work on a problem that she has been struggling on, they take it in turns. A man, walks over, watching them for a while he then offers some suggestions about how to climb it. They thank him reluctantly, which he takes as an invite to 'show them how it is done.' He 'thugs' his way up the problem, then stands by to watch as Becky gives it another go. Ignoring all his advice she tucks her body in, pushing off one foothold with her left foot, she lifts her right leg high onto the next foothold. She bends her knee and pulling off a crimp with her right hand and pushing with the left, she shifts her weight carefully over, and smoothly brings her left arm up to reach up to the final hold. The two women grin widely at her as she gets down, the man looks impressed although utters something about "under graded" as he walks off.

Elen: Friday, not superwoman

Writing this at work today!

Meghan was better again, so I dropped her at the nursery, I watched her settle and told the nursery again to call me if she shows signs of getting sick again, within minutes she was pulled off to play house. I turned away and ran, as usual, to catch the train.

As the train moved slowly along the track, I felt my shoulders sink into the seat, the gloom of the morning lifting with each click of the train on the tracks, and with it I felt the worries about the house, the sleeping, the eating, the school waiting lists, the guilt of leaving Meghan at nursery subsided. They're replaced though with bad management, worries about job cuts, trying to do the same job you did before in three days and for a lot less money, but at least there will be some adult company, a different set of challenges.

Today it's Friday, so all being well Dan said he'll be back early, that he'll pick up Meghan, that I should get to the wall and he'll have dinner ready for me when I get back, I love him for that. It's not easy for him, or for me, that he works away especially when Meghan's been ill all week, but it is only four days, and just the mornings on the train, that one night climbing makes everything easier, and I'm more relaxed at home because of it.

For the next one things will be different, I will make sure I try to keep doing something, especially something physical, whatever it is. I think before Meghan I was pretty naive, yes of course everybody told me it would be hard, what they didn't tell me was that the love would both overwhelm you and cripple you with an overwhelming fear and lack of control. I thought I had had a bran transplant, that I was someone else. Maybe because I was older, I'd had years of being selfish, me and Dan had always been spontaneous, and that doesn't really work with children, you can't go out without lunch, without nappies,

without warm clothes. I thought I could carry on regardless, I couldn't, and that's what made it so hard, now I put my hands up and say I'm not superwoman, and that is alright.

10.3. Discussion of the story

Climbing can be seen as a serious leisure practice; not only does participation include commitment, but involvement gives women a sense of identity and of belonging (Kane and Zink, 2004). Furthermore it has been suggested that although sporting or leisure sites are not free from gendered relations that when women normalise the discourses of serious leisure practices, they can construct identities distinct from traditional femininity (Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998). Scraton (1994), however, suggests that an understanding of women's leisure practices cannot be separated from their everyday lives, which will unquestionably "enable and constrain some leisure" (Rainsborough, 2006: 256). I discuss here some of the themes arising from the story above, primarily how the women negotiate contextual, complex and often contradictory identities in a variety of ways, showing that not only does a mothering identity affect how decisions are made about climbing, but that climbing discourses affect mothering practices.

Although the practice of mothering was experienced as constraining at times, most of the mothers managed to negotiated childcare, work and creating space and time for themselves. I will first discuss how the ethic of care, as a cultural discourse was gendered and did impact women's perception of children's needs and their identity as a mother. I then consider how some of these women re-constructed their climbing identity with the support of others.

10.4. The ethic of care

Whilst I risk going back to this discussion again, I want to mention briefly the notion of intensive parenting, or how the ethic if care impacts mothers' individual leisure time. As discussed in chapter four, feminist research focussing on mothers participation in leisure has suggested that women's leisure; both time and access is inherently less than men's even when both parents work fulltime (Such, 2001; Wearing, 1990; Wimbush, 1989; Deem, 1986). Reasons suggested include the discursive position of mothers as the primary caregiver. Foucault's work on the disciplinary nature of power would suggest that discourses produce docile bodies that regulate their own behaviour. Discourses of intensive mothering or the ethic of care has been a particularly powerful notion that has normalised certain 'traits' of behaviour; for example that mother should sacrifice their own time to take care, or provide for their

children is seen as 'true'. Thompson (2001, 1999) suggests that even long-term tennis players' experiences changed quite dramatically on becoming mothers. Indeed many professional climbers, such as Catherine Destivelle and Lyn Hill, found that on becoming mothers, they were less inclined to be away from their children in order to climb (Loomis, 2005).

All of the mothers in the story above, show that parenting limited their access to leisure, and this was particularly whilst breastfeeding and when their children were young. Yet the sacrifice of personal leisure was not necessarily experienced as constraining, spending time with their children was satisfying and enjoyable, indeed Becky shows to some extent that mothering could be experienced as empowering: giving her life a sense of purpose. The association between desire and mothering is complex, on the one hand we cannot ignore that the practice of mothering can be empowering. Yet at the same time Foucault, influenced by Deleuze's 'desiring subject' (Bignall, 2008), indicates that power:

> traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is repression (Foucault, 1980: 119)

Thus the resourcefulness of power is in producing not a repressed but a desiring subject, and so in this case we have the mother like Becky who is willing to sacrifice time to self. Compelled by the discursively normative 'mother as carer', most of the mothers expressed some sacrifice as a necessity of 'being a mother' so as not to miss out on time with children. Desire is not for what women lack or for something missing but instead it is "used to preserve and re-produce what they have" (Mazzei, 2010: 2). In other words it allows mothers to frame the constraints they face as desire, and so they themselves reinforce the position of mothers as primary caregivers (Jackson, 2009). This is why despite sometimes feeling frustration the mothers in the story highlighted that sacrificing their own time was natural and their choice. This is most implicit when looking at breastfeeding; Rachel shows that many women position breastfeeding as 'natural', or as embodying good mothering, supporting other research that mothers feeding (i.e. breastfeeding) is culturally enforced and regulated by mothers themselves (Kanieski, 2009). However at the same time breastfeeding could be seen as constraining, of 'tying' mothers to their babies, thus conflicting with Rachel's desire to start climbing more again. Deciding to not breastfeed till full term (exclusively until the baby is six months)[2] can lead to moral conflict for mothers and Rachel therefore experienced guilt at her desire to stop breastfeeding. The conflict entails that mothers are torn between; discourses of motherhood and childhood which both imply that breastfeeding is best for baby, and their own perceptions of their babies and their

own needs. Even though Rachel's desire to stop is framed by wanting to climb again, she justifies this in relation to what is best for her baby.

Rachel's experience shows that there is a potential division, as Lomax (2009) indicates, between the governmental and societal advice and what is right for women. She also shows that the ethic of care could be experienced as restrictive, or constraining on mothers time to themselves, and their usual participation in climbing, because whilst men are encouraged to and do take on caring roles, mothers are expected to. That this was to some extent normalised is shown in the feeling of guilt that some of the mothers like Liz, Elen and Rachel experienced about wanting to have their own time, at leaving children at nursery and for returning to work (Buzzanell and D'Enbeau, 2009; Miller, 2007; Warner, 2006).

Although the model of intensive parenting may dominate as a discursive practice of mothering, there are alternatives and mothers experiences are diverse. These experiences are often contradictory and how one feels and acts as a mother is contextual and dependent on their positioning in other spheres, which the mothers are shown to negotiate. Despite feeling guilt and a willingness to sacrifice their own time all of the mothers felt their work and leisure was important to their sense of self, they therefore balanced and negotiated responsibilities in order to make time for their own activities.

10.5. Getting back and maintaining time for themselves

In the entries some women, like Becky and Elen, may have been more relaxed about when they started climbing again after having children, and as Liz mentions many of the women they knew did stop climbing once becoming a mother. However, the women in the story did express the desire to get back, and to keep doing something, whether it was climbing or other leisure activities.

Climbing was important on many levels for these women: physically; for movement, exercise, and the challenge of improving, mentally; it allowed women to de-stress, and they felt happier when with children and finally, socially; climbing, as an outdoor activity was experienced as a shared activity which provided important social relationships. Although inevitably motherhood meant that the actual time spent climbing was reduced, for many of these women it was a way of life, and thus something they made space and time for. As Dilley and Stratton (2010) highlight participation in climbing was a dominant site of identity construction for the women they interviewed. Similarly here climbing participation is shown as something that the women actively negotiated with their responsibilities as a mother. Continued participation in climbing

allows them to struggle at the micro level against subjection or "that which ties individuals to himself" (Foucault, 2002d: 331). Foucault suggested one way of doing this was for subjects to question or re-invent the self, or what he called 'aesthetics of self-stylisation' (1983) which he suggests is performed through a combination of creative acts with critical thinking, which can make problematic certain 'truth' identities and construct alternative practices (Lloyd, 1996). This does not mean that individuals are freed from relations of power or the discursive regimes that situate them but that they are agents that use these discourses "to construct stories and truths about their selves for self and others" (Spowart et al., 2010: 1192).

As I will now discuss the women demonstrate a negotiation or compromise between maintaining moral responsibility as a mother and seeking time for themselves. As MacDonald (2003) suggests people choose between competing discourses based on their own experiences or they weigh "up the competing . . . versions of reality on offer within our cultures" (p. 24). However they maintain or re-construct their climbing or leisure identities in different ways, which differ in the degree to which they challenge gendered parenting. Whilst I do categorise their experiences to some extent I wish to make it clear that these are not three distinct categories, instead because of the contextual and fluid nature of identities, the mothers in the story above could not be boxed into a specific type of behaviour, and show that they could use all three strategies.

10.5.1. Just doing something

Becky, Elen and even Liz show how mothers could perceive climbing as less important. In playing down the importance of climbing, in relation to parenting, 'Becky' morally positions care for children as her primary responsibility, or in other words putting children first was seen as a desirable and natural thing to do. Dilley and Scratton (2010) and Such (2002) suggest that there was a perception that motherhood was, and perhaps should be, a disruption of climbing participation because mother's time is the first to go. Despite having this perception all of the women still desired to and in most cases achieved making time for themselves. Thus whilst climbing was still the activity that the mothers in the story above would choose to do, instead as particularly Becky and Rachel show sometimes other activities, like running, or cycling may fit in better with the time that they had. With less time the meaning of activities could be re-conceptualised, where before only climbing would have sufficed, now what was done was less important, as long as it was something.

That it was primarily physical was important, not only to maintain or get back some form of fitness as discussed in chapter six, but the women in this story identified being physically active,

using their bodies, as not only about what their body looked like but about how it felt. Furthermore doing something physical was seen as social, a chance to be with friends and a momentary escape from mothering, a way of using their body differently. As Dilley and Stratton (2010) suggest physical activity can provide women a sense of self as "active, physically capable and competent beings who valued the functionality of their bodies" (p131) which is in opposition to the alienated female body. As Rachel and Liz show, some of the mothers began to be physically active again post-childbirth, they felt in control over their bodies and experienced a holistic feeling of well-being (Dilley, 2007; Wheaton and Tomlinson, 2002). Interestingly for some mothering as having a positive effect on her climbing identity. Whilst before motherhood Becky suggests that she put a lot of pressure on herself to show improvement, once becoming a mother she was more relaxed about her aims, instead just enjoying the time out. Perhaps from this it could be implied that a construction of self as a mother allowed some of the women to question some of the discourses of climbing, and create alternative ways of thinking about climbing. In this way then physical activity could be seen to allow mothers to alleviate stress both temporarily during the activity and in the longer term (Spowart et al., 2010; Currie, 2004). Elen for example shows taking time out to do something increased her value of herself as something other than a mother, yet at the same time meant she conceived that having a break or a momentary escape from childcare improved home relations, or allowed her to be a better nurturer or mother.

In relation to the performance of good mothering, whilst continuing to make time for themselves may challenge the assumption that caring mothers should give up their own time, it may not necessarily transform dominant notions of parenting. Some of the mothers, shown in the experiences of Becky and Elen, like some of the surfing mothers in the research by Spowart et al. (2010) who draw on notions of good parenting in justifying their continual involvement in their activity. In other words they "re-frame their positioning as surfing (or active) mums as something that contributes to rather than detracts from their capacity to 'perform' as caring mothers and partners." (Spowart et al. 2010: 1196).

10.5.2. Alternative forms of climbing

Whilst children were very young Liz and Becky's narratives are used to show that the mothers that keep climbing often re-constructed their climbing practices in some way. For example where they may have climbed more traditional and sport routes before having children, in the early months and even in the early years they spent more of their individual and family time, bouldering or climbing indoors. Having to make these sacrifices or changes could be framed as disempowering for these women as climbers, yet the mothers reflections show that instead these

changes could be seen as "coping mechanisms" (Markula, 2003: 103) to perhaps not transform discursive constructions of climbing, and gendered parenting, but to adjust them to make sense of their own experience.

As was discussed in both chapters three, and in relation to fathers climbing in chapter seven, a discursive reading of some of the research, and the media representation of the British climbing scene would perhaps see this as 'in-authentic', as Crook suggests: "typically groupings of adventure and sports climbers do not take bouldering too seriously" (2002: 53).   Indeed bouldering and indoor climbing have received little consideration academically (see Hardwell, 2007) and traditional climbing has been framed as the discursive norm or the 'subcultural core' around which it has been suggested there is evidence of appropriation of a range of climbing styles (Donnelly, 2003).   The increase in bouldering or indoor climbing whilst children were young, as Becky suggests bouldering has become an alternative, can in part be explained by Hardwell's (2007) analysis of climbing forms.   As suggested in chapter seven, bouldering is perceived as the least dangerous form of rock climbing It is the only form of climbing that can be done in relative safety without a partner, it requires less time and is more accessible and thus can be fitted in more regularly than other climbing forms.   Similarly indoor climbing is more accessible, for mothers alone, and with their babies.

Changing the form of climbing is not necessarily limited to women, indeed, as Lee showed in chapter seven, he also bouldered more on becoming a father, yet at the same time it is suggested that gendered parenting played a significant impact on the re-construction of climbing forms. This is primarily related to gendered discourses of risk and time. In terms of risk as discussed both in chapter four and in the previous chapter, normative mothering implies that mothers should not take risks, and instead exert caution for the well being of their child (Furedi, 2008; Laurendeau, 2007) and to not do some, mothers face criticism and being labelled as selfish and irresponsible. In relation to time there is the sense that mothers did not feel like they should sacrifice too much time with their children for themselves, and felt that their partners do not necessarily face the same constraints, or have to make the same choices that mothers do. As May (2008) highlights, "fathers are able to follow a more individualistic moral imperative of self-care, whereas the ethic of care for children is overriding for mothers," (p473).

So far, then, it has been suggested that mothers can be disempowered, both by their position as a mother, and by the implication that they are no longer an 'authentic climber'. I argue now though that for mothers like Becky and Elen it was not so much which form of climbing that they took part in, but that they were still climbing that was important. In a sense these practices may not be transformative, but they are coping mechanisms (Markula and Pringle, 2006). As

Little (2002) suggests mothers compromise and look for ways in which they can temporarily seek different challenges. Any time getting out climbing was seen as a personal achievement, and the move to bouldering or indoor climbing allows mothers to continue, or maintain both their mothering and their climbing identity, demonstrating their commitment to climbing in new ways. This troubles the notion of an 'authentic' climbing identity, as Hardwell (2007) indicates rather than one core group that direct climbing, instead in post-modern culture climbing is increasingly diverse:

> Traditional climbers are often in awe of the technical prowess of the sport climber and boulderer. Boulderers and sport climbers shudder at the exposure and total psychological commitment necessary for traditional climbs. And on the many inclement days the British weather gives during the dark winter months, climbers succumb to indoor temptations...Throughout the research a healthy regard for all climbing types has been shown, together with their individual achievements and contributions to contemporary British climbing. The sum of its parts is greater than the whole. British climbing is vibrant because of its constituent parts. The shape of its future rests upon continued recognition and demarcation of climbing types and appreciation of their unique contributions to a vibrant rock climbing scene (Hardwell, 2007: 304).

It could be implied then that parenting made some climbers more inclusive of diversity. The flexibility of bouldering and indoor climbing meant the mothers could fit them in with their increasing time constraints, as they could take an hour or so out of the day or evening to go and get a good workout. For the mothers like Becky, and Elen; it enabled them to maintain some independence, to not be reliant on others which they would if seconding their husband on routes. Varying the form of climbing allowed mothers to continue climbing, or to preserve their enjoyment but perhaps not to ultimately question their performance as a mother (Spowart et al., 2010; Thorpe, 2008).

10.5.3. Prioritisisation of climbing

I now discuss primarily Liz, who, whilst not situated outside the influence of the intensive parenting discourse, maintains a strong desire to keep trad climbing, to maintain her climbing identity, critically challenging the idea that mothers have to stop. In doing this 'Liz' shows critical reflection of the norms of mothering, and positions herself against mothers who do 'stop' climbing (Foucault, 2000d).

Rainsborough (2006) suggests that women involved in serious leisure activities re-prioritise their time in order to create space for their individual leisure activity, expelling external threats such as relationships and housework. This was shown through Liz experience in the story,

where she may have done various other leisure activities they were dropped in order to focus on climbing. However, unlike the women in Rainsborough's (2006) study, these women were mothers as well as having careers, and therefore developing an identity as a mother meant that a high proportion of their time was dedicated to childcare and paid work. Time to climb then conflicted primarily with two other life spheres, and thus maintaining the same amount of time commitment to climbing as before the conception of children was problematic.

If the mothers alter their time climbing in order to accommodate family (Stalp, 2006) they potentially disrupt their climbing identity (Wheaton, 2003; Donnelly and Young, 1988). This is because, as suggested in chapter three, time commitment allows climbers to demonstrate their dedication, however, at the same time, 'climbing hard' or discourses of improvement also demonstrate commitment. It could be said then that for some climbing at a high standard can demonstrate a climbing identity when one cannot put in the time in terms of hours. Liz demonstrates this, showing, like Jack in chapter seven, that whilst she had less time to climb, she was more productive with her time and focussed on improving, after becoming a parent (Little, 2002). This was either by focussing on pushing grades or by getting more climbing done in the time available. Pederson (2001), Metz (2008) and Palmer and Lebermen (2009) also found that elite performers once becoming mothers were more focussed on performing, their 'spare' time was structured in a way that allowed them to get back to their best, and this time was experienced as more meaningful. The re-construction of Liz's climbing practices enabled Liz to maintain her self-identity in climbing, and to attain "status outside the sphere of motherhood" (Pederson, 2001:267).

In justifying her desire to keep trad climbing, Liz subsequently positioned women who stopped climbing altogether, or stopped leading on motherhood as 'other.' This was not necessarily in a derogatory way but it did serve to categorise between what was seen as desirable (continuing climbing) and undesirable (stopping climbing) (Foucault, 1983). These dividing practices have similarly been noted among femininities in snowboarding (Spowart et al., 2010; Thorpe, 2005; Sisjord, 2009) and windsurfing (Wheaton, 1997). Within Spowart et al. (2010) and Wheaton's (1997) work, whilst they are not referred to as such, it is possible to see how these dividing practices have been used by mothers, and women in lifestyle sports as a process of defining or distinguishing oneself against something that is seen as 'bad'. Spowart et al. (2010) for example, suggests that some mothers who surfed distinguish themselves from mothers who stay at home, using this as a reference point, for how they don't want to mother. As Woodward argues (1996)

> For women who have historically been defined by their ability to nurture others, a commitment to nurture themselves, through windsurfing, or any other means, is a radical departure from what is expected of them (Cited in Wheaton and Tomlinson, 1998: 260-261).

Problematically differentiation in this way has been used by author's to reinforce certain practices as more 'authentic' than others (see Wheaton, 1998), which can reinforce inequitable binaries. What I suggest in relation to the story above is that whilst Liz does see mothers who stop climbing as emphasising normative mothering, it was not necessarily that they were seen negatively. Instead it was more that women like Liz were frustrated at the lack of role models and the difficulty of finding other women to climb trad with. In disassociating themselves from mothers who stop, whilst they continue to repeat the discourses of climbing, 'Liz and Rachel' are shown to be critically aware that discourses of motherhood encourage women to stop, and their desire to maintain their traditional climbing identities offers a critical resistance to normative mothering (Foucault, 1984). Whilst this did not mean that they did not identify with nurturing or caring for others, their sense of self as a climber also was a sense of themselves as something other than as a mother. Challenging the notion of the passive, nurturing mother, they used their bodies physically, and took some managed risks for their own pleasure, potentially "problematising women's present cultural condition" (Thorpe, 2008: 218) by troubling the assumption that mothers can't climb, work and care for their children.

I do not contend that notions of gendered parenting were not still oppressive to women's maintenance of a climbing identity but seeking, and managing to maintain a climbing identity did allow for "more fluid identities among *some* women" (Wheaton, 1997: 308, emphasis in original).

10.6. 'Doing it all' with support

All of the women are either on maternity leave, working part-time or full-time, although work inevitably meant greater time constraints on the mothers, they still sought and were able to find space and time for climbing (or other exercise). This is an indication of the class status of the women, as Brown (2001) demonstrates it is middle-class working mothers who are more likely to negotiate their caring responsibilities in order to take time for themselves. Nevertheless these competing identities were experienced as conflicting by some of the women, for example Liz highlights concern that she would not be able to make enough time for Sam when going back to working full time, and whilst work was seen as a welcome break for mothers like Elen she expressed guilt at feeling this.

As these mothers position themselves in various life spheres they adopt discourses of 'mother does all.' The 'superwoman' discourse has been associated with working mothers in the 1980s, popularised by a series of non-fiction novels representing women as capable and excelling at anything and everything (Dudovitz, 1990). This representation is somewhat unrealistic for most mothers to live up to and in attempting to do so, Choi et al.. (2005) suggest that women hide behind a mask of femininity that is, un-critical and reluctant to ask for help. This does not consider, though, that work and climbing were shown as enjoyable because they offered different challenges to mothering, and a chance to escape from the somewhat disciplining discourse of mothering (Markula and Pringle, 2006). Mothers like those in the story above value their 'role' as a carer but they also value their identities as a climber and 'employee' and even though Becky, Rachel and Elen were shown to prioritise their mothering responsibilities, they make time and space to maintain their other identities (Blumenthal, 1999). Therefore instead of hiding behind a mask, by maintaining their 'can do it all' attitude Montoya (1997) suggests women are empowered to "reject the . . . masks that we shrank behind and seize instead our multiple, contradictory, and ambiguous identities"(pp. 60-61).

Rather than not accept help, in order to take time to themselves the mothers in the story above were not just reliant on, but they were all supported by both family and external childcare (Pfister, 2001). As suggested in chapter seven the men's ability to make space to climb was somewhat reliant on the support of women, which Robinson (2008) suggests maintains normative gender relations. However, this worked the other way too and these fathers encouraged and supported mothers' maintaining their own time them. Spowart et al. (2008) also found that when both partners were active snowboarders making time to snowboard was much easier for the mothers. This highlights both the potential of active female climbers to make, and use space for themselves away from the home, and family time. Spowart et al. (2008) however indicate that although fathers were happy for their partners to snowboard, they weren't always willing to look after the children. This was not the case here and fathers were willing, and felt it was their responsibility to help care for the children, however, there is the indication that mothers still did more. Indeed it has been shown that fathers generally both wanted and did take an active role in looking after their children, willing to give up their own time to both spend time with the children and provide their partners with their own time.

Together the parents in this research negotiated time to enable the mothers to climb or access other leisure activities, this was either through timetabling in regular climbing time (shown in Liz and Elen's narratives) or being spontaneous and making the most of any possible time they could (as shown by Rachel). Similarly when they returned to work many of them, benefitting from their economic position, used external childcare; paid childcare or family members living

nearby. Although this childcare was usually for when both parents were at work, unlike the mothers in Spowart et al.'s (2008) research 'Liz' shows that some couples would on occasion make use of childcare to go out climbing together without the children. Using childcare to work, let al.one to take time for oneself is seen as at odds to normative mothering, and women face negative judgement from others in using childcare (Miller and Brown, 2005).

In order to maintain their multiple identities, the mothers sought a balance between all their life spheres. Although the ethic of care constructs and shapes mothers experiences in many ways that constrain their own leisure time; from their feeling guilt and their alignment to discourses of the superwoman, the mothers made negotiations, with support, to balance their time and maintain their climbing identity. Their participation in climbing enabled them to challenge both the discourse of the normative 'good' mother and to challenge the absence of mothers in a climbing space.

10.7. Chapter summary

This chapter has focussed on the experiences of mothers who climb, showing the ways in which mothers articulated, and constructed themselves in relation to discourses of climbing and mothering. Their stories, although showing similarities were quite different, and some of the mothers did have trouble in maintaining their climbing identities, and indeed there were some spoken about who stopped altogether. Nevertheless, even those whose sense of self as a climber was no longer as important, did not narrate their sense of self as solely for children. This is an important consideration because whilst theoretically and in discourse mothering may be represented as an all-consuming identity (Furedi, 2009) which allows little negotiation, in practice this was not shown by these mothers, and this is in part because individuals are always positioned within multiple discourses (Helstein, 2007). If the mothers did not keep climbing, they worked or took part in other leisure activities, and thus maintaining the balance between all these spheres were important for these woman's lives (Richards, 2003).

In relation to discourses of risk and responsibility, it does seem that mothers, more than fathers, are more likely to be aligning themselves with discourses of risk-avoidance or management when they become mothers. However, for some mothers, like 'Liz' who sought to maintain their traditional climbing identity, the experience of risk, remained an important and empowering experience.

Whilst it can be argued that most of the mothers create practices that allowed them to maintain identities other than intensive mothering, these did not all transform dominant discourses of

mothering and femininity, as this would entail critical thought as well as the creation of alternatives (Foucault, 2000). Whilst always situated within discursive formations, some of the mothers, however, did critique the notions of intensive mothering; this is shown here in: 'Liz's' distancing herself from the mother who stops, and in a sense in 'Elen's' critique of the supermum. I would further add that these mothers were able to maintain time to themselves (including time at work) cannot be separated from their relations, and thus support from fathers, as well as the support of external care providers, which they were able to afford.

In the next chapter, the concluding chapter of this thesis, I attempt to bring these five discussion chapters together.

ENDNOTES ──────────

[1] An earlier version of this story appears in Coates (2010)

[2] As recommended by the World Health Organisation (WHO) whose advice is: To enable mothers to establish and sustain exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, who recommend:
- Initiation of breastfeeding within the first hour of life
- Exclusive breastfeeding – that is the infant only receives breast milk without any additional food or drink, not even water
- Breastfeeding on demand – that is as often as the child wants, day and night
- No use of bottles, teats or pacifiers

Chapter Eleven
Conclusion

The stories presented in the final part of this thesis, the result of individual interviews with seven heterosexual couples, reveal both the fluid and complex nature of identity. In getting to this part of the thesis, it would seem somewhat strange for me to go back to a 'scientific' approach and to offer some absolute findings or 'truths' that have been shown through my empirical research. For, this research was an exploratory journey searching to understand and not to generalise, and the resultant stories are my own partial interpretation of the data. Furthermore, using a Foucauldian approach allowed me to recognise and show through the characters of Liz and Jack, and their friends, that subjects "take, assign and assume multiple positions," (Rich, 2002: 118), including parent, climber, partner, employee, son or daughter, and that these can be contradictory, and thus it is somewhat difficult to provide any final truth. However,this does not mean that there were not some general conclusions to draw from this research, and in this chapter I wish to reflect on these in relation to the research questions outlined in chapter one and attempt to bring more light on any possible, whilst somewhat crude, implications of these findings. First, however, I wish to comment on the use of the methodological and theoretical approaches that have guided this research.

11.1. Reflecting on the methodological approach

The methodological approach that this thesis has taken has been influenced by post-structural approaches to narrative, the central contribution of this thesis is not only the interviewing of both parents in a couple (because most research has focussed on either mothers or fathers) but in the way that the stories were constructed. The approach taken therefore critiques modernist scientific enquiry, highlighting the need to be reflexive because a researcher's values and beliefs are implicit in the research process.

A narrative constructionist approach has been valuable in seeing that individual identities are not fixed or essentialist, telling of a hidden 'true' self. Instead this view involves an understanding of narrative and stories as part of the way humans tell stories about themselves as social beings, culturally and historically situated. Partial life histories or stories were sought to see retrospectively how individuals' experiences were transitional. This strategy which helped explore the process by which individuals construct their identities was combined with

ethnographic techniques, particularly by observing and participating in climbing with some of the individuals that I interviewed. On reflection participant observation of the parents and families who rock climb could have been more extensive and it would have been beneficial to climb with all of the interviewees. Whilst I did attempt to do this some of the interviewees did not take me up on it, because of their competing time demands, their geographical location and because some of them no longer climbed very much. Further participant observation would have been a benefit to this research because it would have useful to study parents in the climbing context, as well as at the home, this could have provided additional detail to the stories. Another limitation of the methodological approach taken is that the interviews were retrospective, this was necessary because of the time span of this research, but future longitudinal research exploring the transitions of climbers as they become parents would be informative, as would be more research into parents with older children.

The crisis in legitimisation and representation has guided researchers to consider the way that they write their empirical data, leading to a blurring of genres, of science and literature, and of the 'fact' and 'fiction.' I came to writing the data as ethnographic fictional stories both with a concern over ethical issues and being somewhat dissatisfied with a purely thematic analysis. Writing the stories in this way allowed me to show the complexity of everyday lives, and give the reader a chance to access and interpret the lives themselves, without the distraction of abstract theory. This approach can provide readers an insight into a world they may have known nothing about, as Sparkes (2002a) maintains ethnographic writing "can inform, awaken, and disturb readers by illuminating their involvement in social processes, about which they might not have been consciously aware" (p221), whether I have done this the readers of this thesis will have to judge. One particular limitation of this approach could be that the stories were limited to a particular time frame, and thus some of the mature couple's narratives or experiences of parents with older children do not come out as clearly in the stories.

Whilst the lived narratives, told to me by my interviewees may not be mine, the version of reality that is presented is mine, and to make this clear, some of the themes that came out of the stories have been discussed in more detail in each discussion chapter. I acknowledge that this may appear to be unorthodox when using this form of writing (Richardson, 2000) however in alternative writing methods what is orthodox or accepted is in flux and is open to negotiation. I felt that in this context a theoretical discussion adds to an understanding of the issues, contributing to a picture where the lives I studied and theory sit alongside one another (Blackshaw, 1999).

11.2. Theorising identities with Foucault

Whilst I cannot deny that this thesis has been informed by research adopting a variety of theoretical approaches from edgework, to neo-Marxism, it is the work of Michel Foucault, and Foucauldian inspired authors to whom this thesis is indebted. Foucaldian thought has allowed me to think critically and reflexively about parenting and climbing culture, and his methods have been particularly useful in seeking to understand identities.

As has been discussed in chapter one Foucault, like other post-structuralists, rejects the notion of a core or essential self, instead suggesting that social groups, subject positions, actions and choices are always prescribed by discourse, so identity is not pre-existing and fixed but instead is constructed through the workings of discourse, technologies and lived experiences (Shogun, 1999). This concept has been particularly useful in chapters two, three and four in looking at political, media, legal and 'scientific' institutions and how these institutions help to regulate what is known about parents and climbers.

This comprehensive analysis went beyond the time in which the interviewees live, and in chapters two and three I took a genealogical approach to parenting and climbing respectively. This provided context and showed how these subjects have been constructed through a discontinuous historical development of "dominant and marginalised knowledge that has influenced individuals' understanding of themselves." (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 33). Markula and Pringle (2006) highlight that these understandings shape experiences. Thus it can be seen that from this approach that there is a critique of the universal, and that individuals positioned within these institutions produce multiple, fluid, contradictory and contextual identities. However, because individuals are situated, and themselves normalise or repeat certain discourses of what it is to be a climber and a parent then there were also connections, or similarities between the couples. These post-modern subjects were shown in the stories. The characters of Jack and Liz were used to demonstrate a collective, or an alternative story of parenthood (Richardson, 1997) but other characters were brought in to show similar and different experiences, and this highlighted some of the differentiation in climbing forms and understanding of parenting.

This thesis has also used post-structural theory to look at the gendered nature of parenting and climbing. It has been suggested that in a post-modern society not only that parenting and climbing cultures are increasingly diverse, but also that gendered identities are increasingly blurred (Scratton, 1994). However whilst the discourse of the 'caring/involved/moral' father, as well as the availability and consumption of lifestyles and work for women does indicate that

alternatives are available, there remain significant discursive links between particularly parenting and gender.

Whilst Foucault's work on discourse, and the technologies of discipline, has been his most referenced work, this work has been criticised for its rather negative outlook, ignoring individual action and reflexivity in the formation of the subject. His later work on the technologies of self however has been of more use to feminists because of its recognition of the ways that individuals "think about themselves, act for themselves, and transform themselves within power relations" (Rail & Harvey, 1995, p. 167). Whilst individuals are still understood as situated within discourse, they are seen as active subjects thus able to question and possibly transform themselves (Foucault, 1988a). This does not mean that subjects have an innate ability to trouble their identities, but instead that people sought alternative practices through "knowledge and experience" of their immediate worlds (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 170).

This latter work was of particular importance for part three of this thesis, constructing the stories to show the ways in which some parents drew on and were critical of, and sought alternatives to, dominant discourses of intensive and gendered parenting, and how their understanding or knowledge of climbing enabled this. It is with this theoretical background in mind that I move on to discuss and bring together some of the findings in this research.

11.3. Research findings

In this part of the chapter, in summarising and drawing some conclusions from this thesis, I refer to the parents, not specifically as the characters in the story, but more generally as those who have been interviewed and whose narratives have made the stories that were presented in the third part of this thesis.

The onset of parenting was both expected to be, and subsequently experienced, as exciting and worthwhile but equally as somewhat disruptive and constraining for the parents' climbing or leisure identities. That some parents could position some curtailment of climbing as necessary, or show a willingness to sacrifice their time for their children is not an unexpected outcome, especially when taking into account the lack of control experienced at this time in their leisure lives. As discussed further below, this is related to both assumptions about parenting and climbing and the contradictions between the two, as well as paying heed to the notion that the parents themselves have a part to play in the way that they come to understand themselves (Rose, 1996). For if we understood experiences only in relation to discourses it would seem to

imply that climbing would be relatively constricted in accordance to a normalised and universal way of middle-class parenting. The parents whose experiences have framed the stories in this thesis have shown that whilst power relations are omnipresent this does not mean that ways of knowing are fixed. Individuals interact with each other, with other parents and with other climbers, and the parents here at times did "transform or strengthen existing discursive constructions" (Markula and Pringle, 2006: 215). This does not mean that climbing parents did not believe that responsibility and spending time with children was important, but many desired and sought to maintain their climbing identities and some of the parents questioned or actively practiced alternatives to intensive parenting. Critiquing the assumption that parenting was necessarily all encompassing, or that it had to involve a sacrifice of self.

In relation to the negotiation of climbing and parenting, the dominant discourse of middle-class parenting is that it is intensive and all encompassing and risk-adverse, reinforced by both social institutions and parents themselves. At the same time, imagined[1] or not (Bauman, 1992), climbing is represented as culture of commitment, where to be a climber is to show it, and taking risks (even managed ones) is somewhat normal. Therefore the construction of oneself as a climber and as a parent is understandably somewhat conflicting. That they conflict does not always mean that the experience of parenting always constrains climbing identities (although it certainly did for some), the two interacted and in making them part of the everyday one cannot ignore other influences such as gender, age and work (Robinson, 2008). Whilst it was expected, and generally experienced that climbing did temporarily curtail and some of the parents did stop or decrease their climbing once they became parents, this was not the norm, and all of these parents maintained some personal leisure space. Brannen (2005) notes that changes in society has meant that lifestyles are increasingly important for the performance of an identity and this raises challenges for balancing and negotiating personal leisure and family. How parenting influenced climbing and other identities was often quite different.

For some, parenting did disrupt a climbing identity, and time was conceived as increasingly child-centred. Therefore it was reflected that as some of the parents began to see themselves as mothers and fathers (a process that happened for many of the mothers and some of the fathers prior to actually giving birth (see Lupton, 1999a)) they began to structure their climbing around their children (Such, 2002). As I have mentioned elsewhere, Furedi (2008) argues that in post-modernity adult identities are increasingly uncertain, and this with the disciplinary nature of intensive parenting can help to explain why parents own activities would cease. With uncertainty and individualism, Weinzierl and Muggleton (2003) and Blackshaw (1999) suggest that there appears to be a loss of community and increased insecurity about the longevity of social relationships. In reaction to this, discourses of intensive parenting produce parents who

desire, and morally should invest in their children (Foucault, 2002b) and adults seek somewhat more stable relations through parenthood. However the parents did not, for the most part convey themselves in this way, instead there was the sense that they desired, and in some cases consciously and critically questioned the notion that their climbing should stop. As suggested in chapter three, as climbers, these individuals have been subjected to discourses of commitment, and style, appropriations of which have become 'truthful' ways of demonstrating authenticity (Robinson, 2008; Erickson, 2006). Whilst in chapter three I painted a somewhat gloomy view of how these discourses could discipline, or produce quite specific types of climber, climbing was a pleasurable and meaningful experience for parents. As discussed, primarily in chapters seven, eight and eleven in the discussion of fathers, families and mothers climbing, although how commitment was demonstrated by climbers may have changed once they became parents, discourses of commitment and improvement were still drawn upon by some of the parents in order to maintain climbing identities.

For some of the parents their experiences of climbing changed once they became parents, for example they changed the form of climbing that they focussed on, they took up other activities that were easier to fit in, they made sure they had specific nights for climbing, or they perceived climbing as less important so were more spontaneous in their approach. The differentiation of climbing identities is related to assumptions of post-modernity, where it is suggested that there are no longer fixed and static social groups and instead there are a variety of sporting forms as well as divides within sports (Atkinson and Young, 2008). The differentiation of climbing forms was shown in chapter three, where it was argued that despite these changes, the climbing media, climbers themselves and academic research on climbing (Lewis, 2004) seek to maintain the authenticity of traditional climbing in Britain. Within this thesis whilst traditional climbing and the onsight style, were recognised by interviewees as the dominant form of rock climbing in Britain (Hardwell, 2007) this did not mean that it was the only form of climbing, and climbers were involved in other forms of climbing. Other forms were always there in both the background of some stories and the foreground of others, and for some these forms were recognised as becoming an alternative climbing practice on becoming a parent. Furthermore approaches to ethics changed, for example as highlighted in chapter seven and eight some fathers were more willing to pre-practice routes (headpoint or redpoint) because they had less time to get strong for onsighting climbs. Also in chapters eight and eleven it was discussed how some mothers and fathers would take up alternative forms of climbing like bouldering, or climbing more indoors, which were seen as fitting in better with their family lives. Thus whilst in relation to climbing discourse these parents could be positioned as 'in-authentic' and it could be said that parenting did significantly disrupt their climbing identities, they were in a sense making climbing fit in. May (2008) highlights that motherhood could result in a sense of loss of

control and of self, and thus a need to maintain their own time and space. Similarly for both the mothers and fathers in the above stories, the desire to maintain an active self can be in the wish to be seen and to see themselves as something other than only a parent. These practices were used as a negotiation of their identities as parents and as climbers, allowing parents to maintain a balance, however they did not necessarily critically question notions of intensive parenting, and therefore they could perhaps instead be seen as coping strategies (see Spowart et al., 2010, 2008; Thorpe, 2007). In a Foucauldian framework coping strategies are ways of dealing with dominating discourses but do not necessarily involve the troubling of one's identity.

Other parents were consciously and actively critical of some of the notions of intensive parenting, and actively negotiated and supported each other to share parenting. This was shown in chapter six, where some of the pregnant women and parents reflecting on early parenting challenged external 'expert' advice, and critiqued the notion that pregnant women should not climb. Additionally some of the fathers in chapter eight were aware and troubled the notion of gendered parenting, seeing themselves as actively involved parents. In relation to time, many of the parents could be seen in chapter eight to critique the child-centred nature of family time. Through critical thought combined with practices to transform 'known' ways of being (Foucault, 2002) some of the parents then could trouble dominant notions of the expert guided, child-centred time and risk-adverse approach to parenting as necessarily the way in which parents must perform parental identities. This does not mean that these parents were free to choose who they want to be, but instead that they questioned and created alternative ways of being in relation to discursive possibilities.

One of the findings of this research indicated an interesting way in which alternative ways of parenting were actively created in relation to the notion of individual/child and family centred leisure time. It has been suggested that the universal moral code of parenting implies that parents should protect their children from risk and morally sacrifice their time for their children so that family time would centre on children's activities. Whilst this code did come out of the narratives in chapter eight and some parents certainly seemed to feel that they should sacrifice their own time for their children and not expose their children to risk, there were alternatives to this. Maintaining time for self, and taking children to potentially risky environments does not mean that parents were completely disciplined by discourses of individualism, or were behaving selfishly (even though some parents did suggest that climbing could be selfish). Instead it seemed that in constructing climbing as a family activity or as family time that the parents create alternative ways of doing or performing ethical parenting (Kelemen, and Petonen, 2001). Parents were not uncritically taking their children into these environments and did make changes for their children's short and long term well being. Thus in doing this, they manage

their time not always in expert driven, universal ways but in individual ways that they saw as being for their children's benefit, but also as allowing them to maintain time to climb. How parents conduct and regulate themselves as parents is not only in relation to the moral code of parenting but is constructed in relation to parent's own upbringing and in relation to working, ageing and leisure identities.

In relation to notions of gendered parenting, whilst a post-structural approach may imply that social categories are no longer fixed, this does not mean that forms of power do not produce certain bodies (Foucault, 1983b) and these discourses and technologies of power make possible (in specific contexts) certain gendered experiences and not others (Shogan, 1999). Therefore it is understandable that mothers were shown to experience parenting as more conflicting on their climbing identities than fathers did, this was both in access of individual leisure and also when their children were at the crag, the mothers found it more difficult to ignore their responsibilities to their children. Even in the context of the crag, these mothers found it hard to 'switch off' from the 'ethic of care' and they acted as gatekeepers for the maintenance of family leisure. Shogun (2002) argues constraints are not necessarily negative but can be empowering. This seemed to be the case for some of the parents, and particularly the mothers. Some of the mothers were consciously aware of their evolving mothering identities, and this was something that was as important for their sense of self as climbing was. The ethic of care can mean that if parents manage to maintain time and space to oneself, it is experienced as more rewarding and can be seen as a sense of achievement for both parents.

Furthermore through critiquing normative gendered experience and creating alternatives parents can make the restrictions and notions of mother-female and father-male problematic. Producing alternatives to gendered parenting does not necessarily mean that gendered notions of parenting are removed. Instead I would argue that they allow for more equitable and shared relations between parents, which were more favourable for both mothers and fathers. Creating these alternatives involves not only individual practices and challenges but relational ones, for example mothers can question and seek to maintain time and space for leisure, and fathers can seek to become more involved in fathering, but to be able to do this in practice they are reliant on support from and negotiation with their partner (Robinson, 2008). For the couples that were both actively involved in climbing, whilst their experiences of parenting, and climbing often differed they both sought to create alternatives to normative gendered parenting, with both taking an active involvement in parenting, and maintaining their 'traditional' climbing identities. It cannot be simply suggested that it is primarily maintaining commitment, or the involvement of both mothers and fathers in climbing that results in 'alternative' ways of parenting because their situation is related to their working and class subjectivities which

facilitate their practices. However as Thompson (1999) also suggests sharing an activity means that parents are more understanding of each other's desire to maintain identities aside from parenting.

In relation to risk and responsibility this research indicates that experiences of risk were contextual, highlighting the need to take into account notions of risk and responsibility both in terms of parental risk taking as well as responses to children's risk taking.

In terms of individual risk taking, experiences were often contradictory, for example, some of the men whose experiences were discussed in chapter seven felt that they were not risk takers yet they enjoyed some unpredictability and the experience of taking risks. I would suggest perhaps that this implied that whilst risk taking was an enjoyable experience, it was a control or management of the risks that was sought. Furthermore, like Robinson (2008), I suggest that risk taking needs to be understood in relation to other life spheres and to the life course, parents' constructed their experiences quite differently in relation to multiple (both local and wider societal) discourses on risk, and responsibility. Whilst some of the fathers and mothers implied that their risk taking did not change in relation to increased responsibility, others seemed more aware of their responsibility in relation to their risk taking, however this was not only in relation to the responsibility of parenting but also related to understandings of age, work and gender. Some mothers and fathers seemed to construct risk perception as gendered, indicating that mothers risk boundaries were more likely to change than fathers. Whilst this may have been experienced or understood as 'true', the 'naturalness' of this was troubled by some of the fathers increasing sense of responsibility and by some of the mothers for whom taking managed risks was experienced as empowering and a part of their experiences of climbing (Young and Dallaire, 2008).

Parents' experiences' of children at risk were discussed in chapter nine. Again a variety of experiences were shown, from the risk-avoidant to the risk accepting. This was shown to be influenced by parents' subjectivities as climbers, in relation to dominant notions of parenting and in relation to constructions of childhood. Those that were still active climbers were perhaps more accepting of risk, and more likely to see risk as a positive experience, whilst those that no longer climbed as much seemed more likely to perceive risk as something their children should be protected from. However, this did not mean they did not want them to climb at some point, but 'universal' developmental guidelines, and the notion of children as innocent were drawn upon in relation to these decisions.

The desire by some parents to expose children to risk was not by any means a wish to put children in danger. Instead it seemed that parents' explained their taking children to crags and out climbing through a number of rationalising strategies including: seeing their children as agents who were somewhat aware of risk (even at a very young age), positioning adults as individually responsible and in control. Finally some suggested that it was their responsibility as parents to teach children to develop their own understanding, and to manage risks, as future adults. It is difficult to interpret parents' desire to teach their children an awareness of risks, because in some part this could be understood in relation to neo-liberal notions of individual responsibility, where parents are positioned as expert-guided but being responsible for their children as adults and the future of society. However at the same time, some parents questioned any universal or expert norms and instead suggested they needed to 'let their children go' to some extent, seeing that they themselves had benefitted from being offered the opportunity to control and manage risks. I would therefore suggest that 'labelling' certain parenting practices as irresponsible can be problematic.

Again the perception of children at risk was gendered, mothers were shown to perceive their children at risk, and would put more restrictions, and be more vigilant of their children in these spaces (Nelson, 2008). This has been explained in relation to the construction of mothers as primarily responsible for their children, and thus to put their children at risk, means that they are more likely than fathers to be 'seen' as irresponsible and blamed.

11.4. Final words

This thesis has provided some answers to the questions outlined in chapter one, and has told us much about the lives of mothers, fathers and their parenting and climbing worlds. If I were to summarise this thesis I would suggest that I have attempted to tell stories that give a sense of the fluidity to the lives of parents who rock climb, to show the intersection of leisure, family and working lives.

The implications of this research as I have stated do not aim to be generalised for a wider population, they are stories that have been created from my interpretations of the experiences that I was told and recorded from seven parental couples. Further, whilst some similarities were found there was considerable diversity between mothers and fathers, and between couples. Indeed, individual's identities themselves are often contradictory and complex. Identities are not fixed or singular, instead they were very much contextual and multiple, how one makes sense of oneself is influenced by one's subjectivity within a number of discursive fields, but also by how an individual negotiates these identities. Whilst there were differences between the

individuals, and the extent to which this transformed gendered and intensive parenting, I would suggest that all of these parents did seek or desire a balance (even if they didn't achieve it) between competing interests.

This research has contributed to existing knowledge on parenting and leisure, by considering the influence of parenting on both mothers and fathers who were or continue to be involved in a particular activity, that involves a dimension of risk taking and time commitment. Whilst this research did not involve the quantitative examination of time use by parents, time was a concept that came out of the research. Instead of always being seen as a linear conception I would suggest that time was related to meaning, morality and transition. In this sense making time for climbing was something that was seen as important, as something that had to be fitted in to their everyday lives. Whilst this could be seen as the spectacular (climbing) as separated from the mundane (family/work), for many of the parents the two intertwined, the climbing was special, but was also ordinary, and a space where many could take their family, and the family could be just as spectacular. This research therefore does add to the understanding of how parents manage their time, and the meanings of different forms of time (individual/child focussed and family) and this can contribute to seeing how time constructs gendered identities. Whilst many of the parents were show to construct their time together and relatively equally, there was still the sense that mothers time is constructed for others, whilst fathers can access leisure and work with less guilt.

Individual interviews were important to consider how mothers and fathers constructed and understood their identities in relation to discourses on parenting and climbing. However, gaining, an understanding of these families everyday lives, and of the relational and dynamic aspects of parenting would not have been possible without interviewing both mothers and fathers in a couple. This indicated that an understanding of parenting did impact parent's access and involvement in personal leisure, and that both mothers and fathers recognised that it was mothers who did more of the care work. However most of the fathers and mothers negotiated time and attempted to chare caring.

Finally, I would suggest this research has contributed to an understanding of family leisure, not in relation necessarily to organised and children's activity, or the meaning of irregular family activities but instead exploring how parent's involve children in their own leisure activity. On reflection, this research started off with an interest in adventure sports, and sporting subcultures, and became more about family life, about parenting. Turning the interviews into stories allowed me to live the experiences, to feel empowered by them and to try and see things both

from the perspective of 'others' but also critically as an observer/outsider. As Richardson (1997) suggests writing is a method of inquiry.

To end this thesis I would like to make some suggestions or recommendations for future research:

1) Studying parents' involvement in other sporting activities.
2) Future work examining further the relational aspect of parenting.
3) A more diverse sample, looking at parents from different educational and class backgrounds and different ethnic groups
4) Whilst researching nuclear 'traditional' parents was a benefit for this study, it would be interesting to study diverse families including same-sex parents and divorced parents.
5) Studying parents with older children, or indeed studying children's experiences of their parents climbing.

ENDNOTES

[1] Imagined community: Bauman (1992) suggests that postmodern communities are imagined because class and other previously stable identities have become fragmented and therefore he suggests that new life-worlds value the individual and not the collective. As there is no 'real' community Bauman suggests that people search or lust for community, for belonging and for a sense of who they are.

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Appendix One:
Email send out to interviewees with information about research

To

Below is some information about my research and the interviews, with some information about commitments etc.

I am doing a PhD at New Bucks University (in High Wycombe), although I am primarily based in Loughborough. My research involves exploring the experiences of parents who rock climb. I am interested in hearing the stories from both mothers and fathers who climb (or have climbed), and so in order to collect the in-depth data I require I am hoping to conduct about three interviews with each person. There will be a time gap between each interview, as defined by you, so that I am not intruding on your time. All interviews will be recorded, but they are confidential so only my supervisors and I may listen to them; furthermore you are free to withdraw participation at any time.

The initial interview will be very informal and focused on hearing your stories around topics such as your family, climbing, work, becoming and being a parent. You may also wish to use photos or a climbing log book to discuss certain memorable experiences.

If there is anything else that you would like to know then feel free to ask, any help you can give would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks again for contacting me.

Best wishes,
Emily

Appendix Two: Sample Characteristics

	Age (Feb 2010)	Education	Occupation	Years climbed	Still climb	Number of children (age in Feb 2010)
Couple one Mother	41	MSc	Cognitive Behavioural Therapist	15	Y	Two (age 19 and 6)
Father	34	BSc (hons)	Physiotherapist	17	Y	One (age 6 years)
Couple Two Mother	42	PhD	Research Associate	18	Y	One (age 2 years)
Father	36	PhD	IT Consultant	17	Y	One (age 2 years)
Couple Three Mother	33	PhD	Clinical Psychologist	17	Y	Two (age 3 and 6 months)
Father	42	BSc, PGCE	Manager of refugee workers	27	Y	Two (age 3 years and 6 months)
Couple four Mother	36	PhD	Clinical Psychologist	20	Y	Two (3 years and 1 year)
Father	37	MSc	Events consultant	20	Y	Two (3 years and 1 year)
Couple Five Mother	33	BSc	Nurse	11	Y	One (18 months, pregnant with second child)
Father	32	BSc	Fire service	14	Y	One (18 months, pregnant with second child)

Couple Six						
Mother	62	Diploma	Retired radiologist	11	N	Two (27 years and 23 years)
Father	61	FRCP	Cardiologist	35	Y	Two (27 years and 23 years)
Couple Seven						
Mother	34	BSc and PGCE	Teacher	18	Y	One child (1 year)
Father	40	BSc and PGCE	Teacher	22	Y	One child (1 year)

Appendix Three: Interview details

	Date of Interview one	Interview One (time in minutes)	Date of Interview Two	Interview Two (time in minutes)
Couple 1			26 January 2010	
Mother	18 September 2009	83		60
Father	5 September 2009	61		64
Couple 2	13 September 2009		8 November 2009	
Mother		82		85
Father		67		95
Couple 3	28 September 2009		3 November 2009	
Mother		93		102
Father		94		93
Couple 4	12 October 2009		14 January 2010	
Mother		61		82
Father		60		65
Couple 5	28 October 2009		25 November 2009	
Mother		93		75
Father		87		70
Couple 6	12 November 2009		N/A	N/A
Mother		77		
Father		73		
Couple 7				
Mother	9 December 2009	70	27 January 2010	83
Father	10 December 2009	66	28 January 2010	73

Appendix Four: Interview one: Narrative questions

I just want to re-iterate that taking part in this research voluntary and so if at any point during or after the interviews, you wish to withdraw your participation that is entirely optional. Each interview will be recorded, however they are confidential and only me or my supervisors may listen to the interview. Furthermore your identity will remain hidden in any data used for this research. After all the interviews have taken place you may listen to the interviews and read through transcriptions in order to check for accuracy, and on completion of the research the tapes can be returned to you if you wish. Do you still consent to taking part in this research?

Initial Question: Can you please tell me about when you first started climbing? You can start wherever you wish and take as long as you like.

Prompts (when areas come up)

Topics	Sub-Topics	Questions to encourage narrative
Upbringing/ early experiences	Outdoors?	What you did as a family? Similarities with way bring up own children?
Climbing	Experiences Risk/Injuries/Fear/control Relationships Changes since becoming a parent Forms of climbing Changes to risk-taking Life	How got involved? When? What get out out climbing? Same now? Tell me about any memorable climbs Any changes in own experience/noticed in climbing? How has parenting influenced climbing?- positively/negatively? Anything else ever got in the way?
Work	When/What/How experiences	Tell me about work? Is job satisfying/constraining? Fit in with climbing? Supportive of children?
Relationship partner	Experiences together changes on parenthood	Tell me about meeting your partner and some of your experiences together
Experiences of parenthood	Expectations Before /During Pregnancy/ Enjoy/Stresses of parenting Change distribution of work? Worries	What were your expectations of being a parent? Ideals of how you would parent? Discuss with partner? actual experience different? Tell me about being a parent? What does it involve? How do you parent?

Finish: Anything you would like to add/talk about further?

Appendix Five: Interview Two: Guide

Part one: recap on any issues from the previous interview, in the order mentioned by the interviewee. Allows further information on any areas

Particularly:
How has climbing influenced relationships with other/relationships influenced climbing?
How did relationship with partner change once became a parent?

And: **Ask further about parenting**
How learn about parenting? –where get information from?
What scared/excited you about being a parent?
What were your worries?
When did you first hit you that you were a parent?
Did it come naturally?
Do you see your role as different from your partners?
Can you tell me some things you do/ypur partner does?

Then: Present day

Initial Question:
I want you to tell me about the everyday life? Describe an average week including: climbing/ work/housework/ things you do alone, with your family or with friends?

Prompts/areas

Themes	Subthemes	Possible questions to get them talking
Time/ leisure experie nces	Climbing/ other leisure	How often? Where? What? Tell me about your family/individual leisure? What does this time mean to you? Different? Tell me some experiences
	Family time	Why have family leisure? Anything you do that you don't enjoy How important do you consider activities to be for children/you?
	Individual	Is climbing an escape from family? How structure individual leisure time? How does your partner support your leisure time? Who do you climb with? Does climbing cause conflict with your partner? Do you think how your partner feels about climbing differ from you? Have you ever sacrificed anything for own leisure?

		Main benefits individual time?
Childcare/ time	Children Division of labour	How do you provide for your family? How are you involved in childcare? Do you provide emotional care? What does it mean to be a family? Things you do with children? What activities do you do with your children?
Support:	Who/how	How do you support your children? When at work? When climbing? How do you divide housework?
	Paid work	What do you do if you need to work in the evening? Advantages of part time work (If do)
	Other family members/n ursery Childcare/f riends	Who supports you externally? Is this help important? Do you feel you get enough? Are you happy using external care- nursery/childminder? Why?
Decision making		How do you decide house/ child/ climbing? How do you manage?
Life	Responsibi lity Lifestyle Fatigue	What are your biggest stresses now?
Relations hip with partner	Couple time	How do you make time for you and your partner What is couple time? What does it mean for you? How do you support your partner and vice versa?

Finish: Anything else you would like to add/talk about.

Appendix Six: Feedback from interviewees

Feedback one:

I've been reading ur phd, just finished first couple of chapters and like how its written as a on line forum. Chapter two yet again different, narrative I keep trying to recognise who it is at times. I'll continue next week but really enjoying the read.

Feedback two:

Hi Emily

This is really interesting. I certainly recognised some of our themes re: risk taking and about identity and maintaining a climbing "career". I also see the similarities and differences between ourselves and others that you define. It's a bit odd to read your own themes explicitly expressed by someone else (the characters) and I found myself trying to find us and also our friends who also contributed.

Really interesting approach to the ethnography. I wonder how easy it is to do this when you are not embedded in the culture the way you are?

Feedback three:

Started reading the stories, they're amazing ! Really looking forward to a proper read soon, thanks for forwarding.