Why and How People Over Forty Continue with Lifestyle Sports: Changes in Practice and Meaning.

UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the

degree of Doctor of Education

in the University of Canterbury

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2021

Abstract

This study inquired into why and how people approaching middle age continue to engage in the lifestyle sports of surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding.

Lifestyle sports is a term used for sports like surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding that recognises a commitment to not only the activity itself, but also an accompanying lifestyle. With their roots in the 1960s and 1970s counter-cultural movement, they are seen by participants as an appealing alternative to traditional sports, such as football, rugby, basketball and cricket. They are individualistic and often require significant risk taking, which is why they are frequently referred to as 'extreme sports' and why they are so popular with younger people. The media focus of lifestyle sports is predominantly on youthful, expert participants, which reinforces the stereotype that lifestyle sports are activities for the young.

This study investigated the experiences of 12 long-term and committed participants in surfing, skateboarding and/or snowboarding who were aged between 40 and 53 years (seven male and five female) by employing a narrative inquiry (NI) methodology to gain deep understanding into their experiences. The data was collected through personal interviews using a life-history approach and explored how these participants learnt both the physical practice of their lifestyle sport and the intricacies and values of the subculture. In particular, the study focused on how the meaning and practice changed for these participants as they entered adulthood and onwards into middle age. Dewey's experiential learning theory (1938) was used as the theoretical framework for this study to help explain and gain meaning from the participants narratives. Dewey's theory was particularly useful, as it placed the focus on the learner within the experience.
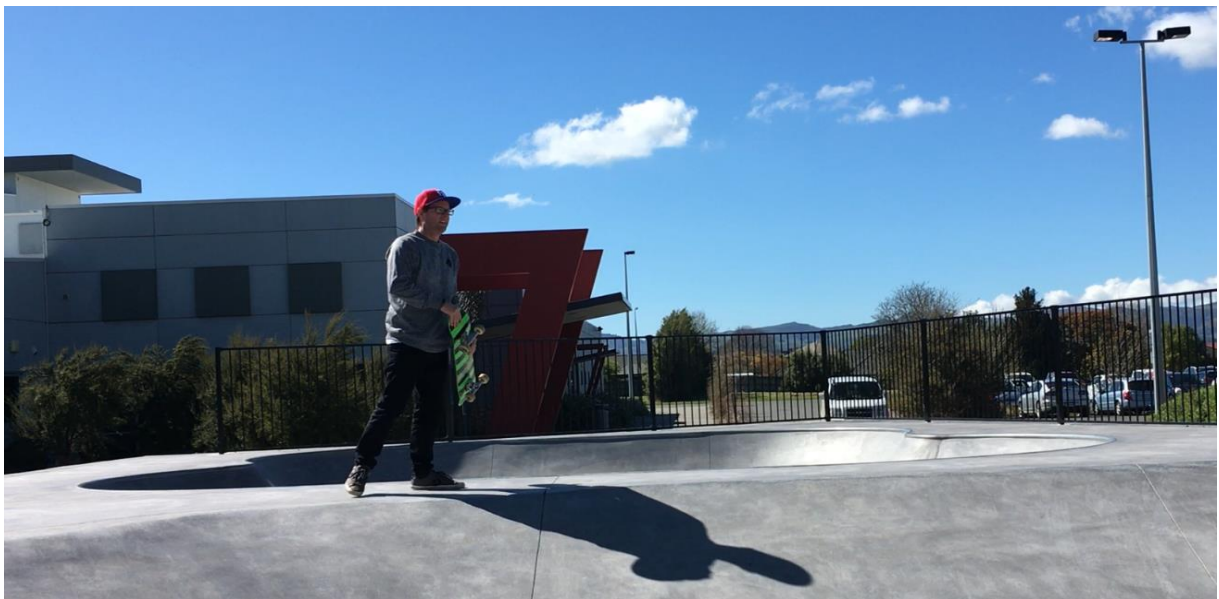
For the participants in this study, surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding provided an essential means of negotiating the stresses, expectations and structures in their lives. Through engagement in lifestyle sports, they found not only an opportunity for expression and creativity, but also tool for defiance against social expectations. Specific focus was given to the experiences of female participants, who used competitions to overcome isolation, create new communities and form lifelong friendships. As the participants became adults, they experienced increased structure and responsibility, and the pressures of expectations that accompanied this. Lifestyle sports provided a physical and metaphorical space from these pressures, allowing for a re-energising escape. This provided an effective means of coping with this stress and made a strong contribution to their positive well-being. In middle age, the participants had adapted their engagement in lifestyle sports to their physical changes and the diminishing recreation time available for them. It was a period of their lives where they had the most responsibilities, which included employment, family,

and mortgages. The participants acknowledged a greater appreciation of risk, as the consequences of a serious injury could affect their physical health, as well as their employment and family responsibilities. Lifestyle sports, however, had taken on new meaning with a family focus, particularly through engagement with their children. Through examples of this, the participants illustrated that lifestyle sports moved from hedonistic, solo pursuits into an activity promoting family connection and the distribution of knowledge between generations.

Dedication

I dedicate this study to my incredible wife, Carissa, our wonderful kids, Tora and Kendall, my mother, Sue, late father, Clay, and brother, Dan. Family is everything.

I also dedicate this to anyone, anywhere, who has found moments of freedom and pure joy on a board.

Nick Maitland, self-portrait, Lincoln Bowl on a writing break.

Acknowledgements

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Introduction: Using Reflective Practice to Define a Research Topic

When asked why I decided to focus a doctoral study on 'old' skaters, surfers, and snowboarders', the easiest response was to tell a story about the first time I felt isolated within the skateboard subculture because of my age. It jarred me as an experience and made me think deeply about my involvement in skating. Eventually, that experience lead me to undertake this study.

It happened at a skate park in Wellington while I was in my thirties. I had been skateboarding since the age of 11 and had been increasingly feeling that I was becoming an ageing member in a youth-orientated subculture. Up until that day, it had not worried me because I was usually with at least one friend and had been skating the half-pipe ramp at this skate park for a long time, which made me confident and proficient. However, things had changed due to my closest skate-mate moving overseas. We were the same age and, like me, he was a confident skateboarder who was always motivated to go skating, surfing, or snowboarding. I had been skating by myself since he left, usually trying to skate at times when there were fewer people at the park. There were some isolated street skating spots where I could arrive, get on with it and then head home. This was harder to achieve at a skate park, due to a concentrated group of skaters congregating during the evenings and weekends when I would skate. Fulltime employment made it difficult to skate at any other time.

As I parked my car, I could see that the skate park was busy with skateboarders and scooter riders. I was disappointed by how many were there, but I had made the effort to drive out and I felt I would be fine once I started. Fortunately, most of the participants were riding the concrete features (street-orientated features, including banks, ledges, and curved transitions). On the ramp, I thought I would be mostly left to my own devices.

There were a number of factors that began to affect me. Firstly, I was struggling to find my flow. I had "bailed out" a few times on tricks I would normally complete every time. I had fallen on a difficult trick, which I knew I should have landed; it was there to be completed and I let it slip. At other times, however, my skateboarding was going well enough and I felt confident to keep going. Things might fall into place, I felt, if I just settled in and "found my groove".

Secondly, I was feeling a bit tired and not able to generate as much power and speed as I wanted. There are few sensations I enjoy more than grinding (any trick where a skater moves across the metal coping at the top of the transition on their trucks, which itself is the metal equipment responsible for holding the wheels to the wooden skateboard deck) at full speed before dropping back into the halfpipe at the latest possible moment. The speed, the sound, the danger, the attention, the control, and the style all combine for a heroic, hedonistic sensation. Absolute magic;

total and nonchalant control over every element of the moment. But I was tired. Having fewer opportunities to engage in a lifestyle sport, mainly due to other commitments taking up time, means I had to make the most of the opportunities I got. Normally, skating tired would be better than not skating at all.

Thirdly, I was on my own. The skatepark was full, but I was becoming increasingly aware of how young the other participants were. They all looked about 12 years old and there had to be a dozen or more of them. The age gap felt too big for me to connect with them. We had nothing in common, other than a shared location. I felt lonely. Skateboarders usually hype each other up and encourage each other to push their limits and aim for new successes. Then, when new tricks are completed or boundaries are pushed, the skater is cheered by his peers and their achievement is loudly recognised. It feels great. On this day I was on my own, despite being surrounded by others.

Frustratingly, these younger participants were not adhering to widely accepted, yet informal, skate park etiquette that expects skaters to take turns on the ramp and to show patience and respect for the skateboarder who is in motion. While I was riding the skate-ramp, the kids were jumping up from the concrete onto the edge of the ramp, performing basic tricks that would normally be undertaken on a stair or small ledge. This was disturbing my rhythm and encroaching on my space and presented the real possibility of a collision that could cause considerable injury. I explained this to them, politely and firmly. I was met with shrugs and blank faces, but mostly compliance. It did little to improve my mood, which had moved from frustration to disdain and now gloom. I stood on the top of the ramp's platform and watched the cars drive past on the busy road. "Why am I still doing this?" I thought. A more accurate question would have been to ask why I continued to skate when, seemingly, so many others had stopped before reaching the same age? I wondered what the people in the cars thought of me, as they drove past. There I was, in my thirties and by myself, hanging out with a group of 12 year olds. If I was lucky, they might cast me off as a Peter Pan-type, someone who needs to grow up. It also occurred to me that some drivers would consider me some sort of predator. The thought crossed my mind again; "Why am I still doing this?" This time I answered myself. "Because I love it. The rest I just have to put up with."

Understanding experiences and making meaning through reflection

I spent many years thinking about that experience. It would be wrong to suggest that every skate session was the same as this, but it was a definite turning point. When I made the decision to start my doctorate it presented me with the opportunity to make a structured investigation into my own experience and to make sense of it. It also offered me the opportunity to make sense of a

significant personal experience and to inquire into the nature of others in a similar situation to me. My early experience of thinking about and designing my study exposed me to the concept of reflective practice that has made a huge contribution toward understanding my own experience outlined above and, by doing so, understanding and analysing the experiences of the 12 participants in my study.

Reflective practice provides the opportunity to gain insights and meanings through exploring past events and experiences. Significant understandings are discovered through the examination of experiences through a systematic process of consideration (Jay & Johnson, 2002). For this reason, reflective practice can combine broad and unstructured situations with organised, technical interpretive methods providing insight where it may not obviously be. Thompson and Pascal (2012, p. 313) describe reflective practice as a move away from traditional methods of learning to a "fluid approach in which there is a greater emphasis on integrating theory and practice." Finlay (2008) notes that reflective practice can provide a wide range of meanings and can be applied introspectively or used in the engagement with others. This offers an opportunity to learn from any event or experience of particular gravitas to an individual or group, regardless of how mundane it may appear to others, and thus requires an open-minded approach by researchers. Rodgers (2002, p. 848) captures the broadness of reflective practice when stating that:

> The function of reflection is to make meaning: to formulate the "relationships and continuities" among the elements of an experience, between that experience and other experiences, between that experience and the knowledge that one carries, and between that knowledge and the knowledge produced by thinkers other than oneself.

Rodgers' summary highlights the seemingly ambiguous nature of reflective practice. Finlay (2008, p. 1) claims that some researchers consider reflective practice little more than "self-indulgent navel gazing." Conversely, Thompson and Pascal, (2012, p. 313) identify how reflective practice is "more a matter of art or craft than science – drawing on formal knowledge as and when appropriate, but not being wedded to a scientific 'technical fix' approach to practice." This highlights how developing a systematic, yet open-minded, approach to reflective practice can provide robust research yielding new understandings and learnings. At the same time, the tension between providing a recognisable framework without compromising the details of the reflective experience by forcing it to fit predetermined theory requires complicated balancing. There is a tension between "delineating specifics of reflective thought and preserving its complexity" (Jay & Johnson, 2002).

To gain understanding from my experience I used Dewey's process of reflection analysis. Dewey (1933) believes that reflection provides a structure to organise thoughts and ideas into

learnings; we reflect and make sense of our experiences in preparation for new situations where those learnings can be useful. Our actions, Dewey claims, are based on previous learnings, just as our future experiences help us to continue to progress and shape our learnings further. "Each phase is a step from something to something – technically speaking, it is a term of thought. Each term leaves a deposit which is utilized in the next term" (Dewey, 1933, p. 3). The individual decides which thoughts and experiences are beneficial to learning and shape our beliefs and which are simply the minutia of life.

Dewey (1933, p. 72) provides five logical steps for the examination of reflection on experience: "(i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of a possible solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection." I have found Rodgers' (2002) summary of Dewey's process more easily applicable to my incident as the origin of this study. The process was: 1 – Identify the experience; 2 – initial interpretation of the experience; 3 – outlining the problems and questions that arises out of the experience; 4 – generate possible explanations; and 5 – experimenting or testing the selected hypothesis.

Using these steps was a structured and elucidating journey for me. The first step, the experience itself, was outlined in the opening of this introduction chapter. With step two, my initial interpretation is that the experience was unfamiliar to me and made me feel uncomfortable. It is clear that I did not enjoy this experience, so much so that I considered quitting skateboarding. Dewey's (1938) continuity of experience principle states that all experiences are informative, either positively or negatively. Whether this is a positive or negative experience depends on his second principle, the interaction, which involves the conditions of the experience. Dewey (1938, p. 48) notes that "as an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts." The skate park was, up to that point, an environment I had always felt comfortable in. A first and cursory summary of the experience would be that it was an off day, I didn't know anyone, I was a bit tired, my skating was going "ok" but not great. We all have days like this. Dewey (1933) notes that experiences of importance are often categorised, accepted and even dismissed as emotional and unexpected. It is important to reflect deeper to learn more about the experience. He states "the essence of critical thinking is suspended judgement" and advises to "determine the nature of the problem before proceeding to attempts at its solution" (p. 74).

The core of the problem involved in my experience is that I felt isolated and alone. Not having my friend there with me was impacting on my experience. For me, lifestyle sports are individual sports but experienced collectively. In this way, it is like golf; possible to be played alone but most likely to be more enjoyable when played with others. With my experience, there were

other people in the skate park, yet I felt unconnected to them. More accurately, I felt their connection to each other and recognised that I resided outside of that. I was focusing on the differences between us; they are younger, they are friends who are supporting each other and celebrating each other's achievement, and they look like they belong at the skate park. Where were the other participants like me? There used to be lots of people skating these places just like me and now there were none. Just me, alone. I was conscious that I would look out of place to a casual observer. I had become self-conscious to the views of the uninitiated, general public. This furthered my feelings of isolation. I was feeling marginalised from an environment I had felt comfortable in for almost 20 years. The continuity of experience principle is shown here (Dewey, 1938). My view of what is happening is changing my perceptions on whether I am a valued and accepted member of the subculture based on the experience that has unfolded and is informing my viewpoint for how I continue in the subculture. The continuity of experience provides a basis for discriminating and categorising subsequent experiences.

I also note that I was frustrated. These young participants were not adhering to the accepted norms and unwritten rules. They were jumping up on the side of the half pipe while I was riding it. To me, the rule is "you do not disturb another rider while they are taking their run," both for safety reasons and for mutual support and respect. Instead, these young participants seemed to think it was a big half pipe and I clearly didn't need all of it. Having to educate them made me feel even more disconnected from them. It was not the role I wanted, that of the educator, and the disinterested looks on their faces when I attempted to correct their behaviour made me feel like a grumpy neighbour yelling at the neighbourhood kids. While lifestyle sports are often free from binding rules, the subcultures are self-governing in terms of beliefs, styles, and behaviours. Dewey (1938, p. 53) says of social control "it is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order but the moving spirit of the whole group. The control is social, but individuals are part of the community, not outside it." The social order, as I knew it, was different to that of these younger participants. Dewey (1938) identifies how maturity provides the opportunity to impart knowledge to the uninitiated. He states that "the adult can exercise the wisdom his own wider experience gives him without imposing a merely external control" (p. 41). For safety reasons, I felt it was important to explain how they were expected to act, but it only further distanced me from them.

I was also frustrated by my own skateboarding that day. Dewey's (1933) fourth step involves using reasoning to provide insights and solutions through careful considerations into the deeper meanings in the experience. In light of this, I conclude that what distressed me was more about my personal value than it was caused by external factors. My inability to perform and prove myself in front of other, younger skateboarders was confronting to my own perceived value within the

subculture. If everything was going well perhaps I would have been so self-absorbed that nothing else would have occurred to me. To be completely honest, if I had been skateboarding better I might have impressed them. I might have "put on a show." It's embarrassing to admit, but that would have meant something to me. It is something that has happened in the past and I enjoyed the attention. There is value in elite performance and it feels good to turn heads. These younger participants were almost completely oblivious to me occupying the same space. Moreover, I did not have my friend there and the truth is that I like performing to a high standard in front of my friends. This is something I have felt in snowboarding, having once been a dedicated core member residing in ski towns and participating almost every day. I worked as a Terrain Park Ranger, or "Parkie" as they are colloquially known. Parkies are responsible for creating and maintaining the freestyle features on the mountain (half-pipes, various forms of jumps, and metal rail features) placing them at the centre of the snowboarding subculture. Parkies have subcultural currency and it meant something to be wearing that uniform on the ski field. Since then, I had become a part-time participant going infrequently to a ski resort when I could.

It is clear to me now that I base my value within the subculture, at least in part, on my ability to perform at an advanced level. I justify my membership through showcasing ability. This tension between value and ability is not all related to age and the deterioration of physicality. I feel that with the right focus and time commitment I could be as good on a skateboard, snowboard, or surfboard as I ever was. But as a father, husband, fulltime employee, and part-time doctoral student, as well as the availability and proximity of mountains, oceans, and skate parks (and the need for adequate weather conditions), my recreational time is limited. This outlines the core issue; I cannot be who I want to be within the subculture(s) with the recreational time currently available to me. I can either accept my current situation and enjoy it or make changes to my current situation to be able to enjoy improving and feel more valuable. It illustrates Dewey's (1938) view that all experiences can be educative or mis-educative, meaning that what an individual chooses to learn from an experience can have a positive or negative consequence. I place so much value on my ability to perform that not doing so directly impacts my enjoyment of the activity. But should it have such an impact? When I stop to think about it, surely an average day skateboarding is better than a difficult day at work or a long, arduous bus ride.

Reflective practice provided me with a far more detailed appreciation for what I had gone through. In doing so, it also sensitised me to the experiences of the 12 participants in my study. But I felt no less isolated. Partly, I felt it might all be in my head. Had I created all of this tension for myself? Perhaps the entire world was thoroughly indifferent to this situation. Then, where are all of

the others my age? There had to be others. But why don't I see them? It was time to find them, talk to them, and learn from them.

Growing Old in a Youth Subculture: A Literature Review

This literature review provides background for the study on lifestyle sport subcultures with a focus on surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding. It draws on relevant academic literature and, where appropriate, uses examples from the broader media. This literature review provides knowledge about the connections, participation and sense of identity of surfers, skaters, and snowboarders. I begin by providing a background on the history of subcultural research as a useful foundation, before focusing on lifestyle sport subcultures in particular. I then review literature focused on gender, age, commercialisation, media, and the Olympics, in relation to lifestyle sports, in order to equip the reader with the relevant knowledge to understand the context within which this study sits.

Subcultures

Lifestyle sports subcultures exhibit many similarities with other subcultures as groups of people who share certain movements or ideals. According to Green (2001, p. 3), subcultures are segments of society that share "certain distinctive cultural elements of their own," that embrace a set of "identifiable beliefs, values, and means of symbolic expression." Subcultures react to mainstream culture through the creation of new meanings, associations and reinterpretations (McArthur, 2009). The Council for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) define subcultures as "subgroups in society who shared activities, beliefs and values that served to distinguish them from the wider class culture" (Coates, Clayton, & Humberstone, 2010, p. 1082). Subcultures are subservient to the dominant culture and are "constantly striving for mechanisms by which to pierce their ideological oppression and thereby create spaces within which to realise themselves as a class" (McCracken, 2008, 84). While the CCCS focused on researchers' interpretations of subculture, a developing focus became the experiences of the subcultural members themselves (McArthur, 2009). Wheaton (2013) acknowledges critique of the CCCS approach to subcultural research, but identifies how its definition of subcultures still holds value and can be usefully applied to lifestyle sport subcultures due to participants demonstrating "more stable, shared and uniform notions of their subculture" (p. 29). Two prominent examples focused on music-related subcultures (Williams 2006), including Hebdige's (1991) examination into the punk and mod subcultures and Thornton's (1995) exploration of the electronic music club scene. However, subculture is a broad term and can be applied to a variety of contexts outside of the music field. Examples include research on graffiti artists (Snyder, 2006), surfing (Booth, 2004; Wheaton, 2017), skateboarding (Snyder, 2012,

O'Conner, 2017), snowboarding (Thorpe, 2011), football hooliganism (Poulton, 2013), and Japanese fashion (Kawamura, 2013).

The relationship between a particular subculture and the dominant culture has been a traditional focus of sociological research. The distinction between what is culture and what is subculture can be complex and often depends on the question being asked and what is being observed. By way of illustration, Oyserman (2017, p. 456) offers that "the United States is both a subculture within industrialized, Western-educated, individualistic wealthy societies and a culture on its own." According to Hebdige (1991, p. 132), subcultures are "expressive forms, but what they express is, in the last instance, a fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second-class lives." Similarly, Kawamura (2013, p. 8) highlights the "us versus them" mentality of subcultures: "If you are not dominant, you are subordinate; if you are not in the mainstream, you are on the periphery." Alternatively, de Burgh-Woodman and Brace-Govan (2006) note that subcultures operate within society and are dynamic, rather than submissive. They state that a subculture "is simply a portion of society, a visible fragment of the greater whole" (p. 16). For them, a subculture can be defined as any "relatively normalised cultural pre-occupation with fragmented, individuated habits and praxis" (p. 16). This means that subcultures are not always activism-based, such as the ideals held by punks. They can be based around recreational activities, such as snowboarders pursuing perfect snowy terrain or surfers searching for the ultimate wave.

Hierarchy within a subculture is determined by legitimacy and status (Wheaton & Beal, 2003) with a variety of different levels of involvement (Donnelly, 2006). While the highly dedicated core members appear most prominently, there exists a vast range of "subcultural participation and participants" (Donnelly, 2006, p. 219). Thornton's (1995) research identifies that taste and style served to create hierarchies within club music culture. Values and distinctions made separations between authentic and satirized members, hip and conventional style, and underground and mainstream media communications. Within the surfing subculture, Palmer (2002, p. 324) elaborates:

> Ranging from weekend warriors who do no training, have little skill and are content to infrequently subject themselves to the waves, the single tracks and the coal faces of the great outdoors, through to hard-core practitioners who are fully assimilated into the argot, fashion and technical skill of their preferred discipline, the extreme sports market is indeed a hotchpotch of interests and expertise.

The dissemination of information is key to creating or growing a subculture. Subcultural members often create verbal and non-verbal symbols, styles and fashions (Kawamura, 2013). Members learn the subcultural intricacies through the communication of distinguishing beliefs and values. To this end, mainstream and niche media play a role in promoting a subculture's identity, philosophies and values. Hebdige (1991, p. 85) explains, "media play a crucial role in defining our experience for [participants]. They provide us with the most available categories for classifying out the social world." Media help define what it is to be part of a certain subcultural group and provide a guideline in how to act, dress and communicate, particularly for new members. Both print and electronic media have a considerable influence on people's understanding and beliefs (Stranger, 1999).

Lifestyle sport subcultures

There is a growing focus in academic research investigating what I will term as lifestyle sports. Lifestyle sport is an accepted term for sports like surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding, although can include anything from rock-climbing to snowmobiling to parkour (free running which involves an acrobatic element to negotiate terrain). Other names for these sports include extreme, alternative, action, and post-modern sports (Wheaton, 2004). Each lifestyle sport is a separate subculture, however, comparisons can often be made. Most lifestyle sports are individualistic, incorporate risk-taking, involve travel and adoption of an associated lifestyle. Many lifestyle sports have roots embedded from the 1960s and 1970s counter-cultural movement. Booth (2004, p. 95) describes 1960s' surfing culture as "hedonistic and irreverent," something that offended and clashed with older generations who had experienced world wars and economic depression. Lifestyle sports are often an alternative to traditional, rule-bound sports, such as football, basketball, and baseball (Bennett and Henson, 2003; Wheaton, 2004). Beal and Wilson (2004, p. 32) identify that skateboarding participants often "contrasted their style with 'jocks,' who were usually identified as football players, claiming that they were more intellectual, creative, and independent. Skaters revelled in an informal physical activity in which they could express themselves in risk-taking and 'artistic' ways."

Certain lifestyle sports, such as skateboarding, snowboarding, and surfing, use a board as the essential equipment, making for obvious comparison. In fact, Wheaton (2004, p. 10) describes surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding as a "love triangle" in reference to broad similarities and how participants can connect and engage in more than one of these activities. Some, perhaps most likely people unconnected to lifestyle sports, are more familiar with the term extreme sports.

Events, such as the X-Games (formerly known as the Extreme Games), and media have celebrated the extreme nature of these sports (which will be examined in more detail later in this chapter). Booth (2004, p. 94) agrees that extreme is a valid description of surfing due to the "irrelevant and 'fratriarchial' nature of surfing culture and associated lifestyles, and given the fact that surfing culture bestows the greatest prestige and honours on big-wave riders, those who risk life and limb in violent masses of water that break with ferocious intent." Booth makes an effective point and the sight of a lone surfer riding an enormous wave at a famous big-wave break, such as Jaws (USA) or Teahupoo (Tahiti), is a breath-taking scene. For the majority of participants, lifestyle sports are as dangerous as they wish to make them with safe, low-risk options normally easy to access. Wheaton (2004, p. 4) prefers to use the title of lifestyle sports, as it is "an expression adopted by the members of the cultures themselves, and one that encapsulates these cultures and their identities, signalling the importance of the socio-historical context in which these activities emerged, took shape and exist." As a skateboarder since the mid-1980s, a snowboarder for more than 20 years and an occasional surfer, lifestyle sports is the title I feel fits most comfortably with my connection to these pastimes and captures the committed, and sometimes nomadic nature, of the enthusiasts. Green (2001) explains that being a member of a lifestyle sport subculture often goes beyond the activity itself. It is accompanied by an expression of associated ideals and a particular identity. For highly dedicated participants their identity within a lifestyle sport subculture can be more important than other aspects of their lives, including their professional occupation, gender, or race (Wheaton, 2004), something O'Conner (2017) calls "emotional significance".

Academic research on lifestyle sports is growing with Coates, Clayton and Humberstone (2010, p. 1082) suggesting that: "Activities such as skateboarding, snowboarding, and surfing hold a certain fascination for researchers, participants, and spectators, at least in part because these activities are seen as different from dominant sporting forms." Green (2001, p. 15), however, argues that like any sporting subculture, indeed any subculture, there are "variations in the ways that values, motives, and social identity are expressed." Participants demonstrate their association to lifestyle sports through attitude, fashion, commitment, style, and knowledge, yet identity and status at its core revolve around "performance of the activity, around 'doing it'" (Wheaton, 2004, p. 9). Wheaton's point, echoes Booth's (2004) argument about the highest honours in surfing going to big-wave riders: this highlights the value of performance and ability. The most prestige within lifestyle sport subcultures is normally bestowed to the most gifted, risk-taking participants.

Many lifestyle sport enthusiasts recognise, share, and protect communal cultural values and beliefs, however, these values and beliefs can also be fluid and weaken over time. Green (2001, p. 4) notes that: "Newcomers tend to hold stereotypical images of the ways in which subcultural

participants express their values through appearance and behaviour." Progressively, participants develop a more informed understanding of a subcultures subtleties and nuances. Thorpe and Wheaton (2011, p. 832) explain:

> While each action sport has its own specificity, history, identity, and development patterns, many also shared characteristics, including anti-establishment, individualistic and/or do-it-yourself philosophies, and subcultural styles; core members saw their culture as 'different' to the traditional rule-bound, competitive, regulated western traditional institutionalised sport cultures.

According to Coates, Clayton and Humberstone (2010, p. 1082), lifestyle sports participants "are seen to resist mainstream sporting values by an emphasis on different rituals and behaviours, such as participant control, opposition through style and confrontational behaviour." Similarly, Beal and Wilson (2004, p. 40) add, "skaters try to distinguish their sport from the mainstream by suggesting that skateboarding loses its value when people participate in the activity to gain social status or be cool." This suggests that popularity and growing rates of participation may be contrary to the original founding principles; that acceptance through popularity and growth diminishes the anti-mainstream, against-the-grain identity that attracted the original participants. Once again, this is likely to be more concerning to older subculture members, as they may have originally connected to the subculture for specific reasons (i.e. because it was strongly against rule-bound sports, anti-mainstream, and almost completely underground). Changes towards acceptability and popularity may be disturbing to older members.

Female participation and gender issues in lifestyle sports

The significant number of females participating in lifestyle sports demands attention to the impact gender has on the experience. Spaces used for skateboarding, snowboarding, and surfing are shared by men and women at the same time offering the opportunity for collegial interaction and connection, unlike traditional sports which have gender separated spaces and divisions (Olive, 2015). Women have a long history of involvement in lifestyle sport and numbers of females engaging are growing. Lifestyle sports are often masculinised environments; a proving ground for aggression, power, and risk (Booth, 2004; Thorpe, 2008; Wheaton, 2013). Female participants can feel uncomfortable, be frustrated at inequity and struggle to gain validity and exposure. Gaining validity can require masculinised conformity. Beal and Wilson (2004, p. 39) highlight that female skateboarders "were quite aware that their acceptance was contingent upon maintaining the delicate balance of proving their skills on masculine-based standards without forfeiting their

feminine or heterosexual identity." These masculinised discourses are reinforced in media. Female snowboarding athletes have been depicted as tom-boys and wild-women (Thorpe, 2008).

Prominent professional participants have used sexuality to gain media coverage, such as Gretchen Bleiler appearing in *FHM Magazine*. More controversially, professional women's surfer, Stephanie Gilmore, featured in a sexualised promotional video for the Roxy Pro Biarritz Pro 2013 event that was labelled sexploitation by some (Holland, 2013). Examples like these may present an opportunity for reflection for lifestyle sport researchers. One view point could conclude that these participants have been able to gain exposure through mainstream media and reach a wider audience, even enjoy the experience the exposure brings (Thorpe, 2008). Another viewpoint suggests that such exposure is damaging and undermines women's efforts to be accepted and gain validity within the subculture (Booth, 2004). There are now female-specific media, shops and tourism, and professional competitions have provided a greater level of exposure, although prize money is still significantly less than for men (Fendt & Wilson, 2012). Yet, gender in sports such as skateboarding, surfing, and snowboarding is still an issue. Female participants may feel more able to challenge masculinised discourses and offer alternative meanings and practices, but ultimately the conventional narrative is through a male lens (Waitt, 2008). Explaining in more detail, Thorpe (2008, p.202) suggests that:

> Despite well-meaning strategies to promote snowboarding for girls and women, the widespread practice of foregrounding heterosexually attractive women tends to symbolically erase women who appear lesbian, bisexual, queer, or "unfeminine." In so doing, the mass media's representation of female boarders tends to be a routine manifestation of wider public and sporting discourses of femininity.

However, this may not materialise in aggressive or nasty ways and could just as easily be observed in males offering preferential treatment or greater tolerance to female participants (Olive, 2015). Overall, this still illustrates women being treated as unusual; as fringe members within the subculture. Gaining a greater insight into the experiences of middle-aged females surfing, snowboarding, and skateboarding was something I was determined to achieve through my research. As Wheaton (2013, p. 52) summarises: "Lifestyle sports have been seen as important arenas where feminist questions emerge and for exploring their potential to be politically transformative spaces in relation to gender, as well as age, sexuality and race."

Growing old in a youth subculture

Depictions of surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding predominantly feature young participants. This is evidenced "by media reports and market research surveys that see interest in lifestyle sports as a narrow age and socio-demographics grouping: 15-24-year-olds, mainly men and those from higher socio-economic classifications" (Wheaton, 2017, p. 61). However, for some ageing enthusiasts, a significant part of their identity relates to their involvement and they continue their dedicated participation as they age. For others, learning a new activity, such as surfing, can represent an exciting challenge as well as a pathway to health and fitness (Wheaton, 2013). While media showcase big-wave surfers in life-threatening situations, the reality for most participants is low risk: "Evidence shows that surfing is a particularly safe activity with the rate of injury no higher than that for fishing" (Booth 2004, p. 103). Developments in the manufacture of equipment also reduce barriers to starting or continuing involvement by making participation easier or safer (Wheaton, 2017). Surfers can choose longer, more buoyant surfboards that can make catching waves much easier. Stand-up paddle-boards or body-boards offer other options to catch waves. Similarly, graduated terrain options mean older skateboarders or snowboarders can remain active in environments they feel comfortable in and avoid more extreme areas representing more danger and a higher degree of risk. This self-governance of risk and how it relates to (changing) ability and quality of experience is a key theme in Wheaton's research. As Wheaton (2013, p. 25) summarises "the majority of participants in lifestyle sports activities practice in safe and controlled ways."

Participants who have a long connection with a lifestyle sport(s) are likely to have witnessed significant change. Subcultures are adaptive, dynamic, and fluid (Thorpe & Wheaton, 2011) and change is inevitable. Fashion and trends influence attitudes and new participants affect change. Leaders and influencers within lifestyle sports are often the most talented, exciting, and innovative participants (Beal & Wilson, 2004; Booth, 2004). Generally, these are athletes in their youthful prime. The changing and weakening of founding principles can be unsettling for older participants, with some believing they are losing important elements of the subculture's history. Through events, such as the X-Games and the Olympics, and increasing levels of commercialisation, more emphasis is given to athlete achievement and success. Using skateboarding as an example, Beal and Wilson (2004, p. 49) identify how "many of the long-term skaters view the next generation of skaters as possessing the wrong attitude about skating; the outcome has become more important than the process." Similarly, Wheaton (2013) describes a developing division within lifestyle sports where some participants embrace the opportunities that growth, wider appeal, and commercialisation can bring, while others maintain a more traditional, anti-mainstream view. She claims that "although in most lifestyle sports commercialisation and popularity have led to the erosion of their oppositional

character; some participants still denounce regulation and institutionalisation and have an ambiguous relationship with forms of traditional competition" (p. 29).

To provide an example, professional skateboarder and multiple X-Games medallist Ryan Sheckler divided opinions within the skateboarding subculture when he appeared in an MTV series centred on his day-to-day life, the pressures of his career, fallout from his parents' divorce, and life as a growing teenager. Some viewed this series as a bold step in crossing into the mainstream while others saw it as selling out skateboarding and a further weakening of the traditional values. Donahue (2014, p. 73) explains that "to thrive in the billion-dollar action sports business, a champion must be a businessman and a skateboarder must be a brand." He observes that Sheckler:

> Epitomises the current state of affairs in skateboarding. Not only does a professional skateboarder have to be a hell of an athlete, but now thanks to the omnipotence of social media, he has to know how to market himself with the same kind of force and flexibility that he shows in the skate park (p. 75).

Many lifestyle sports participants are not happy with growing consumerism within the subculture. This is illustrated by Beal and Wilson (2004, p. 49) stating that "older skaters believe that the newer skaters are more concerned with the competitive and commercialised scene, such as who are the top professional skaters, what products and clothes are the coolest, and within their friendship groups who is the better skater." Professional skateboarder and media pundit, Grosso (2014) is angered by the commercialisation in skateboarding. In episode two of series five in his video series, *Grosso's Love Letters to Skateboarding*, he states, "if we all come from skateboarding and we're all skaters, then why are we fucking taking the thing that we love for the reason we loved it and turning it into the thing that we didn't. It should be our gig." Similarly, Dunsmore (2014, p. 132) ridicules older professional skateboarder's monetising their profile, influence, and recognition in a mock-autobiographical article, stating:

> I'm the older guy with a family and a mortgage to pay and I'm the guy who's looking to make a quick buck off the back of skateboarding. When the big name brands have run outta big name pull, they look for guys like me for a credible angle with the kids. I get called because I can put the pieces together. They want you repping their brands, they want you in their adverts and they want your approval. I've got the contacts and I've got the skaters [sic] trust. I can get you in front of the creative, the advertising execs, and the people who want what you have. I'm skateboarding's equivalent of Judas Iscariot. I'm the one selling you out. However, you can't blame me alone for all the prostitution in skateboarding these days. It takes two to tango, as they say.

Most participants seeking to profit from economic opportunities within the subculture are simply trying to earn a living from the industry they feel connected to. In the majority of cases this will be through employment with associated businesses and organisations or attempting to establish ancillary enterprises. Examples could include working in related retail stores, at ski resorts, or providing 'learn to surf' lessons. Some entrepreneurial members create their own apparel or equipment businesses, media and production agencies, and even coaches and mountain guides. In reference to his own research on the skateboarding subculture, Snyder (2012) claims that "while some have decried subculturalists for selling out, this research shows that many people become involved in subcultures with the hope that they may be able to have a career doing what they love to do" (p. 315).

The way lifestyle sports participants remain active as they age is a key focus for this research. Traditional views of ageing focus on physical deterioration through ageing as "a tragedy of accumulating defects, diminishing reserves, and deteriorating attractiveness and strength" (Phoenix & Orr, 2015, p. 101). A person is either in their prime, or past it. More recently, there is recognition that continuing an active lifestyle is beneficial as we age, both in regards to physical and mental wellbeing. Wheaton (2017, p. 98) summarises:

> Exercise has widely been seen as the panacea, fuelled by assumptions that engaging in exercise into later life will provide psychological and physical benefits that will ultimately reduce the state's financial burden of a dependent ageing population. Thus the so-called "active ageing agenda" is being widely promoted by governments and policy-makers across Western nations.

Much of the research concentrates on the serious health impacts of a lack of physical engagement, such as growing obesity levels, strain on health care systems, and the cost to governments (Phoenix & Orr, 2015). Personal motivations towards physical activity, challenge setting and enjoyment are less well researched and something I address with this study. Phoenix and Orr (2015, p. 103) state that external factors have dominated research narratives within "the subcultures of sport, fitness, and health, which continue to promote instrumental over sensuous kinds of pleasure with performance and health outcomes taking precedent." Similarly, Wheaton (2017) states that researchers have focused on traditional sports, such as running, cycling, and swimming, as a means to delay the effects of ageing and resist the necessity of medical reliance, whereas the later years of an adulthood may represent a period for new challenges, experimentation of new pursuits, personal growth, and leisure expansion. Pleasure is also a key motivator for physical activity. Pfister and Lenneis, (2015, p. 159) note that "age is relative, depending on the situation, and that mastering a task and having fun with others does not depend

on age." Sparkes (2015) identifies how, similar to many young people who visit gym and recreation centres, a workout can be immensely pleasurable or completely demoralising, or anything in-between for ageing participants and that "age, like gender, may not always be equally salient or meaningful in the same way in all situations" (p. 143). Phoenix and Orr, (2015, p. 102) define pleasure as the diverse emotions that make a person feel good, including "happiness, joy, fun, sensuality, amusement, mirth, tranquillity." While physical decline may mean that participants are not able to perform in a similar way to their youthful past, physical activity can be just as pleasurable.

Pleasure is a central concept in this study, although an alternative term can be used. "Stoked" is a common term in surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding circles and describes the fully embodied feeling of euphoric pleasure a participant feels at a given moment (Booth, 2013). Getting stoked, or aiming to get stoked, is a key motivator for ageing participants in lifestyle sports, more so than achieving physical fitness, delaying ageing, and requiring less health care. Summarising her research into ageing surfers, some in their 60s and 70s, Wheaton (2017, p. 102) claims that "in contrast to most Masters sport participants, few engaged in surfing either to get fit, or indeed to stay healthy. Rather, surfers of all ages emphasized the buzz, the adrenalin high, or 'stoke' surfing generated; an overwhelming feeling of well-being." Counter to traditional societal views of ageing, these older participants are engaging in surfing in the pursuit of enjoyment, pleasure, and excitement. Wheaton's participants also noted the significance of interacting with other, often younger, surfers. For some this meant multigenerational experiences when surfing with children and even grandchildren. Conversely, some participants felt they had little in common with non-surfing people their own age. "Friendship, camaraderie, and community were important for these older surfers. Many said they found it increasingly hard to socialize with people of their own age outside of surfing communities, as they did not fit in" (p. 103). This provides an interesting consideration as lifestyle sports are often youth dominated. As a participant ages they are likely to have fewer peers in the sport their own age.

There are perceived benefits and barriers for adults engaging in physical activity and these can act as motivators or deterrents to actual involvement. Brown (2005) studied 398 adults between the age ranges of 18 and 35 years. Improved physical performance (higher fitness level, better muscle tone, improved cardiovascular performance), feeling better (decreased stress, improved mental health, sense of well-being) and task improvement (improved quality of work, less tiredness) were the top perceived benefits. O'Conner (2017) argues that benefits from increased physical health and fitness provide little motivation for middle-aged skateboarders, yet participants in his study felt that it helped them deal with stress. Basically, motivation for regular participation in sport is most driven

by enjoyment and meaning (Light & Harvey, 2017). Fatigue through involvement and facility obstacles were noted as the most notable perceived barriers. Lack of time was a more significant barrier for younger adults (Schutzer & Graves, 2004). This is an important consideration for this research. Participants aged between 40 and 50 years may not have the same physical limitations as the older participants; they may be able to perform at a level not too dissimilar to when they were younger. Yet, time constraints such as work commitments and family obligations can impact on how often they can surf, skate or snowboard. Social stigma from those not connected to these subcultures is also a factor. Coan (2014) notes in an online article for *The Telegraph* about ageing skateboarders that "skating when you're old enough to have a mortgage or haemorrhoids is not a good look…So by all means skateboard, just know that you look ridiculous, and remember that you'll probably end up at some point sobbing in some filthy A&E department." Similarly, middle-aged lifestyle sports participants can feel judged by those outside of the subculture who remark "isn't that just for kids?" (O'Conner, 2017).

Commercialisation, media and the Olympic Games

Growth in lifestyle sports participation and popularity has attracted increased commercialisation and mainstream media interest. As a result, the communication of lifestyle sports information and identities are being disseminated through a mainstream filter. Beal and Wilson (2004, p. 33) identify that the commercialisation of lifestyle sports is "not only a controlling or co-opting force (although it certainly is because the industry and media play a powerful role in actively framing the discourse), but a means to distribute symbols whose use and meanings may vary in specific spaces of consumption." Surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding were established on alternative, anti-mainstream foundations. Yet, commercialisation has seen both a greater access to information and consumables and a weakening in the traditional ethos. Consumption bears a close relationship with identity and lifestyle sport participants are often eager to showcase their affiliation to their chosen subculture, through such things as specific brands of clothing and equipment, and changes to these habits and preferences can signal changes to the beliefs of the subculture (Wheaton, 2004).

The production and marketing of commodities underpins the subcultures. While early pioneers of sports like surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding tell stories of making and adapting their own clothing and equipment, participants now have the ability to purchase a wide range of clothing, equipment, and related products easily either through local retailers or online stores. Numerous businesses and corporations have nimbly capitalised on lifestyle sport consumer growth,

often establishing sub-brands to appear closer to the emerging subcultures (Wheaton, 2004) and employing/sponsoring prominent athletes and personalities within the lifestyle sports to gain greater exposure and acceptance. Established brands within lifestyle sports have been purchased by bigger corporations to exploit consumer connection and reputation. A high-profile example of this was the 2004 acquisition of skateboarding clothing and shoe producer DC by established surfing corporation, Quiksilver, for a reported $87m (USD) in cash and stocks (Fikes, 2004). DC was founded by Ken Block and Damon Way, whose brother Danny Way, a high profile professional skateboarder, acted as their marquee talent and public face. More recently, world-wide sports corporations, such as Adidas and Nike, have entered the lifestyle sport industry, most notably skateboarding and snowboarding.

The growth in lifestyle sports has resulted in increased coverage in media (Bennett & Henson, 2003). Lifestyle sports provide the opportunity for striking displays of unimaginable skill as well as jaw-dropping, seemingly death-defying crashes. Recently, by way of example, footage of the World Surf League Big Wave Award nominees circulated through mainstream media channels (in New Zealand, through online news website Stuff.co.nz). Surfers were shown on waves over 15m in size, some successfully negotiating choppy, brutally fast wave faces. Others were shown to suffer terrifying drops followed by enormous walls of crushing "white-wash" water. Adventurous videos, such as these, can capture the imaginations of many, both within and outside of the subculture (Palmer, 2002). Yet, this also illustrates a key issue; that mainstream media often showcases lifestyle sports through startling examples of rare skill or close, near-death escapes. For most participants, this bears little resemblance to their own experiences. Some may even be offended to see the sports they are so passionate about reduced to a circus-like spectacle. Puchan (2004) notes that lifestyle sports often get mainstream media coverage "on special occasions, particularly when accidents and fatalities occur or when superlatives are involved" (p. 176). Discussing similar issues with snowboarding's depiction in mainstream media, Wheaton and Beal (2003) identify that media coverage such as this does little towards showcasing a realistic and accurate portrayal of lifestyle sports, rather presenting them as dare-devils and stunt performers. Examples from New Zealand media can be used to illustrate this, including freestyle skier Rose Battersby breaking her back at the 2013 Winter X Games (Daly, 2013) or BMX rider Jed Mildon completing the world's first triple back flip in Taupo in 2011 (Wood, 2011).

Mainstream media have attempted to more accurately cover lifestyle sports. American sports television channel ESPN has presented the X-Games since 1995. The X-Games, which hosts both summer and winter series, showcase a variety of lifestyle sports from skateboarding and snowboarding to motocross, BMX, rally car, skiing, and snow mobile racing. The event has pushed

the boundaries by building purpose-built, sometimes ground-breaking, terrain to elevate the showcase. The popularity of the X-Games grew across all regions in the USA (Bennett, Sagas, & Dees, 2006) and continues to be broadcast all over the world. Additionally, the X-Games expanded the event schedule to multiple American legs and international events in such countries as Norway, Brazil, Canada, Germany, and Spain.

Such is the growth and popularity of the X-Games that major sponsors have included the US Navy, Wendy's and JEEP motor vehicles. This presents an interesting situation in which the major corporate sponsors of an event for sports established in an anti-mainstream ethos include a national defence force, a fast-food franchise chain, and a luxury car brand. Widespread growth in lifestyle sport participation has resulted in targeting a specific consumer cluster. The growth in participation and connection has attracted consumer industries attempting to sell everything from cosmetics and soft drinks to automobiles, antiperspirant, or religious faith (Wheaton & Beal, 2003; Beal & Wilson, 2004). It is not just consumables: participants are keen to travel to new destinations for exciting adventures and experiences. Surfers, for example, often seek new beach locations to surf. Fendt and Wilson (2012, p. 4) note that surfing has "become a multi-billion dollar part of the global tourism industry, where millions of surfers travel worldwide to numerous surfing destinations in search of the 'perfect wave.'" Increased commercialisation and exposure have presented opportunities to elite lifestyle sports athletes to profit from their status as leaders.

Despite the X-Games becoming increasingly commercialised, it remains more accepted within lifestyle sports circles than the Olympic Games (Coates, Clayton & Humberstone, 2010). Snowboarding was added as an official Olympic sport in 1998. Skateboarding and surfing are to be added as official Olympic sports at the Tokyo 2020 games. Prior to its introduction, many snowboarders sensed an impending loss of control and were concerned at how the Olympics would present and change snowboarding. The addition in the 1998 Olympics plunged snowboarding into the mainstream media spotlight. The competing snowboarders were well aware that they did not fit the traditional Olympian typecast. USA halfpipe snowboarder and Olympic competitor, Todd Richards (2003) observed that he was "well aware that snowboarders were considered the clowns of the Olympics, young idiots unschooled in media etiquette" (p. 202).

Richards and eventual gold medallist, Ross Powers, were interviewed on a panel by the international press. When asked about any rivalry between himself and Richards, Powers used an expletive in exasperation. Amused, Richards replied, "Well put, Ross." Media took Richards' comment as literal and focused on a perceived dislike between the two. Richards reflects: "Unfortunately, my comment was construed as sarcasm (which it was), meant in a malicious way (which it wasn't)" (p. 202). Richards' experience captures a feeling of alienation of a lifestyle sport

subculture member attempting to communicate through a mainstream media channel under the gaze of a global audience. Sixteen years later, snowboarding's inclusion in the Olympics again caused debate, this time within a New Zealand mainstream media context. At the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, New Zealand media identified the female slopestyle entrants had possible medallists, most notably Christy Prior and Rebecca Torr. Some journalists seemed confused by the somewhat social, casual attitudes of the snowboarders, something that was quite unlike the deep-focused concentration and competitiveness of the traditional sport participants. Unfamiliar with the communal, friendly attitude displayed at snowboarding competitions, some journalists assumed this to be unprofessional. Thorpe (2011, p. 77) notes that mass media coverage of snowboarding is often "produced by non-snowboarding journalists and producers for a mass audience with, often, little knowledge of snowboarding." Mainstream media describe subcultures in simplistic and stereotypical ways that are more understandable for the uninformed audience (Howe, 1998).

Unfortunately for the New Zealand snowboarders, none managed to progress to the finals. The suggestion that success was a possibility had failed to materialise. New Zealand slopestyle competitor Stefi Luxton explains that the media response was swift and brutal: "None of us did well and we got so much bad press" (Grenier & Stone, 2021). For example, *New Zealand Herald* sports journalist, Dana Johannsen, wrote a scathing summary of what she viewed in the women's slopestyle event, something which enraged the New Zealand snowboard community. Johannsen (2014) wrote, "not only has the team bombed spectacularly, they seem to be having a good time doing so. It's more like watching a bunch of Kiwis on an expensive skiing holiday than a bunch of top athletes representing their nation at the highest level." Johannsen slammed the number of snowboard athletes competing, calling it indulgent. She called the assurances from team management that the athletes had been performing better in practice as bizarre, and noted that "the most notable thing a New Zealand athlete has done at the Sochi Games is attempt to pick up the Jamaican Bobsled team," in reference to social media comments from slopestyle athlete, Torr. The New Zealand snowboarding community responded angrily. A total of 183 comments were posted on *the New Zealand Herald* website before comments were closed. *The Herald* added the following notice: "Readers are reminded to keep their comments to a publishable standard."

New Zealand snowboarders published responses to this negative mainstream coverage through subcultural media in a variety of ways. Smith (2014) wrote, in response to Johannsen's piece, on the *NZSnowboard.com* website, "it's 2014 and although we've been around for a long time now, we're constantly bastardised in the mainstream and are frequently and publicly mocked for the vocabulary that we share with our board-sport brethren." In a move that could be described as both subcultural support by a related producer and an attempt to commercially benefit from a public

stand, snow sports apparel brand and NZ Olympic team sponsor, Mons Royale, published an advertisement in *NZ Snowboarder Magazine* (2014, issue 60) in response to Johannsen's article and in defence of the snow athletes. The advertisement displayed a Mons Royale product in a gift box addressed to Johannsen. In the text, it stated "try it on. It'll calm you down next time you're feeling a little angsty about spending 56 cents to help send 15 of the country's most talented winter sports athletes out to risk life and limb for sporting glory." The response by Mons Royale was an intriguing use of marketing, as it not only defended the subculture, but also solidified the brand as part of the subculture by acting as a "spokesperson" on behalf of it.

Since it was introduced in the Olympics, snowboarding has garnered widespread media attention, grown its own superstars, including Shaun White and Lindsey Jacobellis, and launched multi-million dollar industries devoted to clothing lines, snowboard designs, and a punk-like style among fans and riders (Jones & Greer 2012). Skateboarding and surfing communities now contemplate the potential change Olympic inclusion may mean for their sports. Opinion is divided. Core skateboard magazine, *Thrasher*, offered an opportunity on its website for a host of current and former professional skateboarders to communicate their thoughts. Veteran professional skateboarders John Cardiel and Brian Anderson (Cardiel *et al*. 2016) illustrated their concern. Cardiel states, "to me, skateboarding is all about individuality and originality. It has nothing to do with highest, furthest, longest. Skating being an Olympic sport contradicts everything that I believe skateboarding to be."

Anderson reflected on the change from the more prominent anti-mainstream stance of skateboarding in his earlier years; "It feels like we're losing the core part of skateboarding and the punk rock aspect of it. Being 40 years old, I got to see skateboarding in the '80s when it was not cool and not accepted and that made it fun." Seven-time X-Games skateboarder Nyjah Huston was more positive, stating "I'm excited about the opportunity to be able to skate in the Olympics! Whether people like it or not, skateboarding is bound to grow into bigger things like this sooner or later. So, in my eyes, it might as well be now." Nora Vasconcellos, a female professional skateboarder, notes that the Olympics offered a new platform for exposure for female snowboarders and had the potential to do the same for female skateboarders. She stated, "I don't care because skateboarding will always be skateboarding to me. If anything, it's good because as women skaters we now have more contests to go to and travel opportunities. It totally changed snowboarding for the women."

Similarly, Douglas (2015) canvased opinions of the surfing communities. Again, opinions varied from strongly against: "No, no and err…no. Olympic sports are all anchored around fairness and level playing fields, but the ocean doesn't offer that" (Doherty, cited in Douglas, 2015) to supportive with "surfing should be an Olympic Sport for sure. We surf against the best surfers from

countries around the world on the ASP" (Knox, cited in Douglas, 2015). Again, snowboarding was used as a comparison, with Aguerre (cited in Douglas, 2015) claiming, "if surfing were to be included in the Olympics, I don't think it would change the sport at all. Look at snowboarding for a future view of what surfing could look like if it were a part of the Olympics." We can understand then that the participants can interpret commercialisation and growth in popularity and exposure in different ways. Divisions seem to be forming, particularly with older subculture members, who hark back to more familiar, maybe even simpler times. It may also be that they long for a past they had more control over and felt more valued.

Surfing, skateboarding, and snowboard participants can have a deep connection to their pastime and have dedicated a significant part of their life to the subculture. Age and gender are not barriers to participation and connection, but do bring different considerations. The fluid nature of subcultures brings change, particularly through the effects of commercialisation and the differing attitudes of younger members. Older participants can find that change challenging, as they see the founding beliefs weakening and struggle to find their place within the hierarchy. These are the themes my research addresses. It explores the meaning and nature of experience of participation in the lifestyle sports of surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding changes as long-time participants move into their forties. Additionally, much of the research to date has concentrated on individual lifestyle sports, such as surfing. Yet, many participants are involved in multiple lifestyle sports. This offers a gap in the current research.

It is possible that safety and health have increased involvement in some "safer" lifestyle sports while diminishing the involvement in other, risker options. Reflecting on my own involvement in surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding I note that I am more anxious about skateboarding as falling on concrete is more damaging and painful than falling on soft snow (snowboarding) or in the water (surfing). The barriers for participation in middle age are also under researched. Wheaton's 2017 research focused on older surfers, some in their 60s and 70s. While this group certainly have their own barriers, time and money are likely not to be amongst them. Self-reflecting again, I know my young family and work commitments mean that time and disposable income are barriers to snowboarding, which is costly and requires travel to the mountains. Yet, when I experience a great day engaging in any of these lifestyle sports the feeling is almost indescribable; pure elation through movement and self-expression. Stoke. Lifestyle sports participants in their forties represent a group by which we can learn new understandings about subcultural connection and participation which gives my research a unique value within current academic knowledge.

Theoretical framework

As a study that sits within the sociology of sport sub-discipline it may seem odd to have a theoretical framework based on the work of educational philosopher John Dewey. This would reflect, however, a narrow and limited perspective on the concept of learning and education as used by Dewey. Dewey's use of the term education is not limited to schools and other educational institutions. His work on the importance of experience in relation to education (in the broad sense of it), and his concept of experience and learning as a lifelong continuum offer an ideal framework for understanding how the participants in the study changed over time when seen as a process of learning.

While Dewey's 1938 book, *Experience and Education*, focused on the role of the educator as the facilitator of students' experiential learning and key differences in traditional versus progressive education, the concepts he outlined can be applied to a variety of contexts. Learning occurs both within and outside of organised contexts and involves the entire social system. As Roberts (2003, p. 5) observes, "The notion that it takes a village to raise a child is consistent with Dewey's experiential learning theory." This fits well with research focused on lifestyle sport subcultures where learning can be physical, as in learning the act of snowboarding, skateboarding, and/or surfing, and philosophical, in regards to learning the beliefs, styles, fashions, and behaviours of subcultural participation.

When learning to be a member of a subculture, it is often unguided and without plan. It is also learning that is often implicit and unnoticed. This highlights the ongoing process of lifelong learning and the central role played by experience and context. It means that education arises through any interaction with peers and other participants, non-participants, and media (both mainstream and subculture-specific niche media). It can be the responsibility of the learner to filter and decide whether the experience is of quality and useful (although often likely to be also reinforced or dismissed by other subculture members) which will then guide future learning. Subculture members are also educators as they indoctrinate new members into the subculture, help people learn the sport, and pass on valuable history.

Dewey's (1938) experiential learning theory focuses on two principles, which are the continuity of experience (that all experiences are informative, either positively or negatively) and the interaction (the intention and conditions of the experience). Dewey (p. 48) notes, "as an individual passes from one situation to another, his world, his environment, expands or contracts." There are a variety of situations within lifestyle sports where this can occur, for example a surfer physically learns to surf while in the ocean and so too socially while talking with other surfers while waiting for

waves. Dewey (1938) claims that continuity of experience relates to the discernment of experiences by the learner into what is beneficial and what is not. What is essential for the continuity of experience in a self-governing environment, such as for lifestyle sports participants, is the quality of experience. Kolb (1984, p. 22) claims that Dewey's principles explicitly focus on the "developmental nature of learning … learning transforms the impulses, feelings, and desires of concrete experience into higher-order purposeful action." There must be something in the experience that would make continued participation inviting. Dewey states the quality of experience is dependent on "agreeableness or disagreeableness" in regards to its "influence on later experiences" (p. 16). A series of positive experiences becomes habit forming, as the experience persuades habit, which then informs a viewpoint for subsequent experiences. Habit, Dewey notes, is the basis of emotional and intellectual attitudes, covering "our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding to all the conditions which we meet in living" (p. 27). Simplified, the continuity of experience provides a basis for discriminating and categorising subsequent experiences. It encompasses elements from that which we have experienced in the past and influences that which we experience in the future. For example, an older participant may adopt the current ways of the subculture and adapt, or conclude that their past learning experiences were more valuable to them and hold on to their traditional values. This could cause a tension between the past and present, potentially between young and old, and challenge their connection to the subculture. Continuity of experience provides a basis for "preference and aversion" (Dewey, 1938, p. 39).

Interaction has a marked effect on experience. As the second guiding principle of experience, Dewey (1938) defines it as the "objective and internal conditions" of the experience (p. 39) and gives importance to the situation or context that experiences occur within. This is an important consideration for my study, as the environment plays an essential role in surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding. In simplistic terms, a surfer needs oceans waves to surf, a snowboarder needs snow-covered descents in which to ride, and a skateboarder needs a skate park or suitable concrete terrain. The nature of the physical environment also involves particular sensual experiences that shape learning. The social environment plays an equally important role in shaping experience and learning. The learning experience is effected by the sharing of knowledge within a social context.

For Dewey, prior experience shapes current experience, which, in turn, shapes ensuing experience. This means that the conditions of the environment need to be conducive to development, or at least, conducive enough to continue forward. Prior experience does not only mean the knowledge that someone has and how it influences interpretation of the next experience, but also dispositions and attitudes toward those experiences. As the learner continues their

development, so too must the conditions change to foster further learning. This is crucial in relation to the learner's attitude towards learning, in particular for these self-governed learning contexts, because it influences the learner's motivations to continue. As Dewey argues, "the most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning" (p. 49). For lifestyle sport participants over the age of 40, this is an important consideration. This is a time in their lives when their motivations and attitudes are likely to be different from when they first learnt to surf, skate, or snowboard. What constitutes a positive experience may have changed considerably and, so too, their preference for the environmental conditions in which the experiences unfold. Additionally, negative experiences can have the same effect. For example, a bad wipe-out while surfing could effect a middle-aged surfer's choices for future engagement even if no serious injury was sustained. The surfer may consider themselves lucky to have escaped and be more risk adverse for subsequent surfing escapades.

Social control affects the conditions for experiences. As established in the literature review, the anti-mainstream philosophies and promotion of anti-social behaviours can be attractive for lifestyle sports and for lifestyle sport participants. In fact, engaging in lifestyle sports could be seen as a defiance towards social control. Dewey acknowledges "the ordinary good citizen" is "subject to a great deal of social control" and even the opposition of radicals is based on the belief that "other and to him more normal modes of control would operate with abolition of the state" (p. 55). Dewey illustrates social control in normal, everyday life with the example of structured games. These games involve governing rules for clarity and fairness. Providing that all of the players understand the rules, the conditions are impartial. As Dewey notes, "no rules, then no game; different rules, then a different game" (p. 56). Even when a discrepancy occurs, the player is not objecting to the rules, rather a violation of them. According to Dewey, "those who take part do not feel that they are bossed by an individual person or are being subjected to the will of some outside superior person" (p. 57).

Dewey also notes that occasionally individuals can be "bumptious and unruly and perhaps downright rebellious," but is somewhat dismissive of these behaviours, calling them "exceptional cases" and recommending that that the educator "has to discover as best as he or she can the causes for the recalcitrant attitudes" (p. 62). He does recognise, however, that structured learning needs to be flexible enough to permit creativity and free play for "individuality of experience" (p. 65). This will be an important focus in this research, particularly in relation to the experience of the participants when comparing structured, traditional sports to lifestyle sports, as well as public attitudes to lifestyle sports.

While lifestyle sports are often free from binding rules, the subcultures are self-governing in terms of beliefs, styles, and behaviours. Dewey (1938, p. 53) says of social control "it is not the will or desire of any one person which establishes order but the moving spirit of the whole group. The control is social, but individuals are part of the community, not outside it." This point is relatable to the plight of older lifestyle sport participants. The social order, as they knew it, has progressed to reflect the attitudes of the majority, bringing change that may not reflect the individual's beliefs. This could be particularly conflicting for members who felt they were active in the formation of the subculture, believing the particular values were crucial to the foundations. As middle-aged subculture members, the will of the community is now in the hands of the majority, who are likely to be the youthful members. Their philosophies are likely to have some significant differences (refer to the Olympic section of the literature review as an example).

Alternatively, detailed knowledge can come from long-term participation. Dewey argues that maturity provides the opportunity to impart knowledge to the uninitiated. For him, "the adult can exercise the wisdom his own wider experience gives him without imposing a merely external control" (p. 41). Dewey also notes that adaptation and change through experience continue whether intended or not. Roberts (2003) argues that past experiences influence the conditions for future learning and a learner needs to be prepared to learn. This is a key point in relation to unstructured, ungoverned subcultures. Older participants in lifestyle sport subcultures may have experienced change in focus and beliefs. How they have adapted to the current climate within the subculture is a personal decision; they can either go with it, ignore it, or stand against it.

Dewey addressed the importance of intrinsic motivations of freedom in learning and development. The learner's will drives their growth, or as Dewey explains, an individual's growth lies in "the intellectual springs of freedom without which there is no assurance of genuine and continued growth" (p. 70). Dewey used the example of traditional structured school environments, with strict expectations on behaviour resulting in passive engagement, benefiting from classroom activities with freedom and creativity followed by reflection. Freedom of movement, he notes, is particularly useful as a "means for maintaining normal physical mental health" and the amount external freedom needed "varies from individual to individual" (p. 73). In the absence of external structure, it is paramount for the learner that freedom supports intellectual growth. The individual is required to be reflective and use judgement. Dewey remarks: "The old phrase of 'stop and think' is sound psychology" (p. 74). The learner is required to use observation and memory from previous experiences to distinguish the most appropriate course of action for subsequent experiences.

In order to continue to develop, learning through experiences requires purpose. Purpose provides a goal or destination in which to aspire towards and therefore directs activities and

experiences. Dewey states that purpose is an "end-view" and "involves foresight of the consequences which will result from acting on an impulse" (p. 78). According to Dewey, the formation of purposes involves observation, knowledge (past relatable experiences and available information), and judgement. In self-governing learning environment, a learner may engage in the pursuit of a purpose despite not having any significant background in the area or available information to assist in learning. Dewey defines desire as the factor in these situations, noting that "desire for something can be intense. It may be so strong as to override estimation of consequences that will follow acting upon it" (p. 80).

We can consider this idea in relation to lifestyle sports. For some, the idea of surfing a powerful wave, jumping a skateboard down 10 concrete steps, or snowboarding down a steep, treacherous mountain slope, would be unimaginable and too dangerous to contemplate trying. For others, an indefinable attraction exists that is impossible to resist. All of us have desires, Dewey states, and "the intensity of the desire measures the strength of the efforts that will be put forth" (p. 83). This will be an important observation in this research, as we gain insight into the efforts put forward by the participants as they dedicate themselves to their lifestyle sport.

I chose Dewey's theory of experiential learning as the theoretical framework because it centres on the individual learner "within" the experience, as they attempt, interpret, and respond to what they are undergoing. As outlined in the introduction section of this study, this introspection of my own place as an ageing skateboarder in a skatepark full of children made a powerful impact on me and my connection to skateboarding. Without doubt, that experience, and others like it, have shaped my future experiences. For example, I prefer to skate at 8am to avoid any crowds. Ord and Leather (2011) state that Dewey's conceptualisations enable researchers to fully understand the power of the experience from the learner's perspective, whereas other theories, for example Kolb's "plan-experience-reflect-conceptualise" model, are an over simplification of the essence of the experience. They underline the importance of the "lived experience" and argue that experience is a transaction between the individual, their social context, and their environment and is therefore a consequence of their "trying" and "undergoing" within that experience. Kolb's model applies a rigidity, which makes it less adaptable to unique situations, such as my area of inquiry. The use of simplified, broad models can result in a loss of essential detail (Orb & Leather, 2011). For this reason, Dewey's research has been deemed more suitable to my area of inquiry and more useful in understanding why surfers, skaters, and snowboarders continue to engage in so called "extreme" sports.

Methodology

A methodology is a scientific procedure for investigation with the use of the term "scientific" pointing to the deliberate, strategic, and detailed consideration involved in its selection (Babbie, 2012). Mueller (2019, p. 2) defines methodology as an "ontological philosophy of inquiry" in that it provides a governing and focused procedure of investigation. Methods involve the specific strategies that collect and analysis data within a methodology (Mueller, 2015). Kara (2015, p. 4) outlines the distinction between the methodology and methods:

> [Methodology is] a coherent and logical scheme based on views, beliefs and values that guides the choices researchers make. Within this methodological framework, methods are the tools that researchers use to gather and analyse data, write and present their findings.

Once I had decided on my central research question – *Why do adults over the age of forty continue to participate in 'extreme' sports and how does their experience change?* – I looked for a methodology that would allow me to answer it, choosing narrative inquiry. In any study, the choice of methodology directly relates to the research question and area of intended study. As Maple and Edwards (2009, p. 34) state, "whatever [methodological] approach is selected, you have to find one that matches your objectives."

This chapter explores my choice of methodology in relation to the goals of my study. In particular, it provides a comprehensive outline of my methodology choice and the specific methods used, including particular focus on participant section, data gathering, and coding strategies processes.

Justification for the study

My study inquired into the experiences of lifestyle sports participants approaching middle age, specifically between 40 and 53 years of age. I chose this age range because it is an age at which most people are still physically capable of participating, however, they are also well past the age of the more youthful participants typically associated with skateboarding, snowboarding, and surfing. Conducted within an interpretivist paradigm that is "concerned with the uniqueness of a particular situation, contributing to the underlying pursuit of contextual depth" (Kelliher, 2011, p. 46), my study explored how these participants learnt both the physical practice of their sport as well as the intricacies and values of the youth-based subculture. Dewey's experiential learning theory (1938) is used as the theoretical framework for this inquiry.

I focus on why the participants continued to engage in sports that are more commonly associated with younger participants. Surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding are established sports, yet older participants are far less common than those aged in their teens and twenties. My own engagement in my forties encouraged me to ask why then do some remain active and committed? From my own experiences, I've struggled to understand who I was within subcultures that I have long been a member of yet not thought about. As I have matured, my identity as a skater has changed. Being the oldest person at the skate park, for example, made me question my involvement and is the origin of my central research question.

While the study originates in my own experience and is driven by my personal curiosity, the findings can make a valuable contribution to the development of knowledge about maintaining active lifestyles through middle age and the role that sport plays in the well-being of New Zealanders (and others) over the age of 40 years. Government health policy and substantial research attention focuses on encouraging physical activity for health benefits to the individual and the wider community. These include better mental health (Paluska & Schwenk, 2000), better overall health in later life (Hamer, Lavoie, & Bacon, 2014), and implications of public health care systems and national budgets (Lubitz, Cai, Kramarow, & Lentzner, 2003).

Governmental policies focus on the potential impact of increased physical activity in adults in lowering health care expenditure. The New Zealand Ministry of Health's Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults (2015, p. 46) policy states that "physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for non-communicable diseases and is estimated to cause between 3.2 million and 5 million deaths a year". This instrumental approach reduces sport to mere physical activity; a tool in the fight against lifestyle diseases with the importance of meaning and enjoyment largely ignored despite lifestyle sport participants identifying this as an important motivation. The enjoyment, excitement, and self-expression, commonly identified in the literature as "stoke" (Wheaton, 2017), is a driving force behind continued engagement with fitness and health as an additional motivation for some.

Participants selected to take part in my research all had a long history of involvement in lifestyle sport subcultures that have experienced significant change through adaptation, growth in participant numbers, and commercialisation. My research enhances understanding how these participants adapted to, and met the challenges of, maturation in order to continue their sport and how its meaning changed for them. It investigated how physical change over time affected their board-riding abilities with a particular focus on risk appreciation and management. It provides an understanding of how family and work commitments compete with their sport for free time. Manaf (2013) identifies a lack of time and available facilities, physiological changes due to age, and not

having peers to participate with as barriers to physical exercise in adults. Discovering more about this can inspire other adults to get back on the board for better mental and physical well-being. This study generates understanding of how these 12 individuals used their board sport to negotiate and navigate the responsibilities, stressors, and structures of adult life.

Narrative Inquiry

My aim in this study was to understand changes in practice and the meaning of lifestyle sports in the lives of 12 people in New Zealand. I wanted to provide deep understanding of, and insight into, individual personal experience over time. To this end, I chose narrative inquiry (NI) as an effective methodology for achieving these aims and answering my central research question. Qualitative methodology dominates research on lifestyle sports (see, Wheaton, 2017; O'Connor, 2018; Thorpe, 2011) and, as a form of qualitative research, NI is concerned with understanding the phenomenon from the actors' perspectives through their personal experiences (Firestone, 1987). Wheaton's use of a NI methodology in investigating middle and older-aged surfers, in particular, was an inspiration to me because of how it allowed the collection of rich, meaningful, and insightful field texts through giving prominence to the study's participants.

NI methodology generates understanding from people telling of their experiences (Clandinin, 2013). Using NI methodology facilitates researchers learning about human experiences through capturing, constructing, reconstructing, and analysing stories (Mueller, 2019). Stories are given prominence as an essential element for understanding human behaviour (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007). That includes studies on participation in sport (see, Light & Evans, 2018; Wheaton, 2017). It provides an opportunity for people to communicate how they see themselves and highlight significant moments of change in their lives (Creswell, 2013). Smith (2007, p. 391) suggests that "narratives are important in the process of constructing selves and identities," which is the essence of my project, to tell untold stories and create new learnings from them. Storytelling can be communicated through a variety of methods and embody any form of artistic expression, including discussion, dance, media, visual art, music; and, ultimately, are "articulations in which one describes overtly or implicitly 'what is important,' presenting a view of the world and of oneself" (Bresler, 2006, p. 22).

Through capturing stories and experiences, researchers gain insight into people's directions, emotions, and desires. As Clandinin (2006, p.51) notes, "the truth about stories is that that's all we are." These insights can be made sense of and applied for wider application. Clandinin (2013, p. 52) explains that "listening deeply and inquiring into our changed lived and told stories calls forth the

possibility of attending differently, of shifting practices, and of creating possible social-political or theoretical places where our work and our lives can make a difference." This is an important point, as it underlines the ability of a person's stories and experiences to be of value beyond themselves: there is an opportunity for wider value throughout society. In addition, the experiences occur within societal contexts. Understanding these individual and societal implications is central to the development of NI, according to Clandinin (2006, p. 45), who notes "arguments for the development and use of NI are inspired by a view of human experience in which humans, individually and socially, lead storied lives."

Parallels have been drawn between NI and Dewey's experiential learning theory, which places value in examination of the experiences of learners. Dewey (1938) states that a researcher only gains an understanding of true experience by acquiring insight from the individuals having the experience. Dewey's view of experience was the starting point for other researchers' views for the narrative study of human experience (Hutchinson, 2015). This view allowed for the study of experience that acknowledged the embodiment of the person in the world, following the work of philosophers, such as Johnson (1987). NI has been used to study the individual's experience in the world as storied both in the living and telling. This could be studied by listening, observing, living alongside another, writing, and interpreting texts. Narrative researchers encourage their participants to reflect and communicate their life-histories so that they can make sense of and glean value from them (Creswell, 2013). Bresler (2006, p. 25) calls NI a quest for "empathetic understanding [by providing] a space for others to articulate experiences, to create arcs of narratives in the process of reflecting on meaning."

NI's three dimensional view of space is based on Dewey's experiential learning theory. Dewey (1938) gains understanding from experiences through two criterion: the continuity of experience (each experience shapes the next) and the interaction (the conditions of the experience, including the environment they occur in). Clandinin (2006) directly relates these criterion to the three spaces in NI: "The three dimensions of the metaphoric NI space are: the personal and social (interaction) along one dimension; past, present, and future (continuity) along a second dimension; place (situation) along a third dimension" (p. 47). This is a useful illustration of the overlap between NI and experiential learning. It provides a common structure in which to explore and make sense of individual experiences and, in particular, how experiences build overtime, how the conditions change, and how the individual learns and adapts as a result.

In addition to spaces, Clandinin (2013, p. 38) states that the "shifting, changing, personal, and social nature of the phenomenon under study" requires NI researchers to focus within three commonplaces. These commonplaces include: temporality (points inquirers towards the past,

present, and future of people, places, things, and events under study), sociality (the conditions under which people's experiences and events are unfolding), and place (where the inquiry and events take place). Again, the parallels with Dewey's experiential learning are clear. The temporality commonplace relates to the continuity of experience, whereas the sociality and place commonplaces directly relate to the interaction. These commonplaces are all relevant to my research. The temporality commonplace is perhaps most obvious as the core of this research is understanding the life histories of the participants. It gives prominence to them as the learner at the centre of the context, as well as their purpose for learning and their desire towards their ultimate goals. The sociality commonplace relates to the subculture in that the participants are part of a community. Their experiences could be individual or as part of a group, but the lifestyle sport community is likely to be an influence. Examples could include what manoeuvres and styles are in vogue, what locations are seen to be more desirable, or even what music and fashion trends are most current. Here, we see the influence of the subculture, what Dewey defines as social control. The individual has their experiences shaped by those whom they share the sociality commonplace. Lastly, locations feature prominently in the place commonplace. Lifestyle sports are location-based, whether on a mountain, in the ocean, or at the skate park. These locations have a powerful influence over the experience, with participants acknowledging feeling a strong, almost spiritual, connection to these environments.

To collect rich and deep data, connection with subject/subjects is vital. Clandinin (2013, p. 38) identifies NI as a partnership between researcher and participants "over time, in a place or series of places, and in social interactions with milieus" which can result in new knowledge that challenges accepted understandings. Clandinin (2013) identifies the importance of relationships in NI research, not only for the benefit of the researcher, but for the participant too: "Narrative inquirers also negotiate ways they can be helpful to participant(s) both in and following research. In the moments of negotiating ways to be helpful, narrative inquirers often call on, and are called, to live out professional responsibilities and to express personal practical knowledge" (p. 51).

Researchers employ a number of tactics to help elicit meaningful data, including emphasising the significance of participation, sharing stories, connecting over similar interests and experiences, ensuring confidentiality, and negotiating meaning through additional discussion (Atkinson, 1998). This illustrates further the benefit of being a researcher who also resides within lifestyle sport subcultures. It also recognises the responsibility of the researcher to the participants involved and, more widely, to the subcultures they reside in. A research project may be important, however, there are implications both during and beyond that project which must be understood. Clandinin notes that participants may not see researchers as researchers, rather they "come to know

and see us as people in relationship with them – a reminder of our short-term and long-term relational ethical responsibilities" (2013, p. 51).

Interviews are typically the primary form of data collection in NI research (Creswell, 2013). Many researchers note that personal interviews are a useful method for collecting qualitative data, particularly in relation to cultural behaviour, to "understand particular social phenomena by developing intimate familiarity and a detailed, dense acquaintanceship" (Frey, Botan & Kreps 2000, p. 273). Studies focusing on participants' experiences throughout their lifespan can benefit from the life-history interview approach that I adopted in this study and articulate later in this chapter. Creswell (2013, p. 73) describes a life-history approach as portraying "an individual's entire life" rather than focusing on singular or multiple incidents, or isolated situations. Atkinson (2007, p. 234) identifies life-history interviews as useful in narrative research:

> [The life-history interview method] is an ideographic, subjective approach to expressing the parts of one's life as a whole and conveying the meaning taken from them. A life story gives us the vantage point of seeing how one person experiences and understands her or his life over time. It enables us to see and identify threads that connect one stage or component of one's life to another.

Life-history interviews can bring powerfully detailed stories that provide researchers with a "heightened sensitivity" to the topic of inquiry (Goldman, Hunt, Allen, Hauser, Emmons, Maeda, & Sorensen, 2003, p. 576). Atkinson (2007) identifies life history interviewing as a central element of NI, as it provides the opportunity to understand single lives and the roles they play within society: "The life story offers a way, perhaps more than any other, for another to step inside the personal world of the storyteller and discover larger world" (p. 224). Similarly, Mueller (2019, p. 2) acknowledges a strength of life-history interviews over more structured interview styles is the ability for the interviewee to discuss their personal experiences within "contested and complex social phenomenon."

Reflexivity and an insider perspective

Qualitative researchers acknowledge the ways they influence and interpret the data generated. I have had a dedicated connection with skateboarding, snowboarding, and surfing for more than half my life. They are more than pastimes; they are passions and a way of being that has influenced my taste in music, art, fashion, style, even the way I communicate. When I close my eyes I can vividly recall my best days snowboarding when the fresh snow was lighter than air and

completely silent to ride, or the weightless feeling of surfing a wave, or the singing sound of a skateboard truck grinding at speed across the coping on a skateboard ramp.

These shared experiences and histories are an advantage when conducting research on lifestyle sport subcultures. We are less "researcher and subject" and more "skater talking to skater." This required careful consideration. Firstly, I had to select participants that best served the research, not just my personal views or what was easiest to organise. Secondly, it required me to find a balance between analysing the experiences of the participants without celebrating or dismissing them and acknowledging and controlling any assumptions I had about meanings of an event. Thirdly, it required me to consider the impact my research could have on the subculture(s), the members, and the participants in this research. A researcher owes a duty of care to their participants, beyond simply obtaining the information required for the research work.

I found that using insider perspective was hugely beneficial in this study. Insider perspective is defined as a principle where "particular groups in each moment of history have monopolistic access to particular kinds of knowledge" (Merton, 1972, p. 11). Stranger (1999) notes that being a dedicated member of more than three decades in the surfing subculture provided decisive experience for his research and permitted access beyond the superficial surface. This "privileged participant observation," where the researcher is essentially allowed to look behind the curtain (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004, p. 70), can enable trust, openness, and intimacy (Roulston, 2010; Snyder 2012). Using an appropriate communication style can allow for a deeper discussion and richer understanding of the data collected (Snyder, 2012), by interpreting "subtle communication codes" (Senda-Cook, 2012, p. 136). Qualitative research, for example personal interviews, observations or focus groups, can allow for more self-revealing responses. Nelson (2013, p. 1153) provides more detail:

> An insider may be able to read signs within a subculture that an outsider may not. And perhaps most importantly when focusing on flippant, irreverent subcultures that are prone to mislead the outsider, the insider may have advantages such as the respect of the participants or the ability to determine whether the respondents are attempting to deceive.

Some claim that residing within the subculture can also be a disadvantage with Cooper and Schindler (2011) stating that the researcher needs to maintain a distance from the subject, as an existing connection to a subculture could create a predisposition towards meanings and events. This perspective suggests that with exploratory research, such as investigation into subcultural behaviour, it is can be useful for the researcher to have "little previous experience" as it can give the

opportunity to discover what the key issues are (Keegan, 2009, p. 38). Merton (1972) defines this as the outsider perspective. The personal views and histories can cause bias, assumptions, and inconsistencies. The researcher can preconceive conclusions before properly assessing the data. This suggests the influence of the positivist paradigm while reinforcing the need for reflectivity. As Pinnegar and Daynes (2007, p. 15) argue, no one can be totally objective and researchers need to identify the "implausibility of being able to truly distance themselves from what they come to know and understand." Being reflective recognises the implausibility of ever being completely objective and the need to identify and take account of the ways in which the researcher can and does influence the data generated.

Clearly, my background in lifestyle sports and familiarity with the participants influenced the data generated and the analysis of it. Recognising this possible influence, I noted it and considered it over the duration of the study. Rabbidge (2017) defines reflexivity as being thoughtful, conscious, and self-aware as the research project takes place, rather than reflectively recounting what took place. By accepting that no one is without bias or completely objective, I can accept and incorporate my own history and experiences and commit to being open minded to the experiences of others. As Gambold (2017, p. 407) notes "we are not objective observers. We are trained observers but we bring our history and positionality to the field site." I felt I used my history and knowledge to facilitate open conversations during interviews (more specific details on this method in the next section) with the interviewees free to express their thoughts and ideas. In this environment, Rabbidge (2017, p. 1) claims interviews become "places of interaction that result in knowledge being co-created by both the interviewee and the interviewer." Similarly, Bresler (2006, p. 28) highlights that "authentic, meaningful engagement with a story involves getting inside it and letting it get inside you, internalizing as well as analysing it." It is beneficial that the knowledge from both the researcher and participant overlap and interact. In summation, Merriam, Johnson-Bailey, Lee, Kee, Ntseane, and Muhamad (2001) identify that both the insider and outside position is legitimate in research and a researcher can be either depending on the context or participant response.

The participants

This study involved 12 participants across the lifestyle sports of surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding in New Zealand. Participant selection involved two stages of sampling, including purposive sampling and snowball sampling. The first five participants approached used purposive sampling, as they were people with whom I had an existing relationship. The purposive sampling technique is described as the "deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant

possesses" (Guarte & Barrios, 2006, p. 2). This method is justified as it specifically targets a group of people known to have the requisite experience to be included in the study. With these potential participants, I knew enough about their individual lifestyle sport history to be comfortable that they had enough relevant experiences on which they could draw on. It should be stated that, while I knew these potential participants, they were not all friends. Stacey, for example, I had never formerly met, however, she is well known in New Zealand skateboarding circles for being a pioneering women's skateboarder.

Initial approaches were made via phone, email, or social media direct message. I provided an overview explanation of the project for them and asked if they were interested in being involved. Those that were interested were sent a more detailed project information sheet (see Appendix 1) and a brief pre-interview was conducted either in person or by phone. I then invited those I thought would be suitable participants (those that had over 15 years of involvement in at least one of the three lifestyle sports) to participate in a full interview. Participants who chose not to be involved were thanked for their time.

This study then used snowball sampling to find the remaining participants. Snowball, or chain-referral, sampling is a method where study participants refer other potential people who share the same or similar characteristics for inclusion in the study (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141). Snowball sampling is justifiable for this study, as the participants of interest are acknowledged as a unique group. They remain actively committed to lifestyle sports while over the age of forty, something that is uncommon (O'Connor, 2019; Wheaton, 2017). By using snowball sampling, I gained access to more of these unique individuals. As a result, all of the participants were asked to recommend people for consideration of an interview. When a recommendation was given, I asked the participant to approach the recommended person directly first and seek permission for me to make contact. This process was used to avoid unsolicited contact or giving any perception of pressure to be involved. Once I received confirmation that a potential participant was interested in being involved, I followed the same process of sending an overview (via the contacts given), then sending more detailed information (following an indication of confirmed interest) and a pre-interview and, finally, booking a full interview time/location. I continued these processes until I had 12 suitable candidates for interview.

This study settled on 12 participants to be interviewed that were equally divided between the three sports. This included four skateboarders, four snowboarders and four surfers. I was committed to including female participants for a strong female voice to this study. As a result, five of the 12 participants were female, including two surfers, two snowboarders and one skateboarder. I remained hopeful of finding another female skateboarder for complete balance across the three

lifestyle sports, holding the twelfth spot open, but failed to locate a suitable candidate despite the snowball sampling. As is illustrated in Stacey's interview narrative (the one female skater, appearing in the later section), very few females were skaters in the 1980s/1990s in New Zealand with Stacey herself describing going years without seeing another woman skater.

Data Generation

My study generated data through the three methods of (1) a personal interview, (2) photo elicitation, and (3) provision for a short semi-structured interview (if required). Interviews were the primary form of data gathering for this research project with a life-history type interview the main way of generating data. I interviewed 12 lifestyle sport participants (seven males and five females) who had been involved for more than 15 years in surfing, snowboarding, and/or skateboarding. The interviews included four snowboarders, four skateboarders, and four surfers, although it needs to be acknowledged that almost all of the interviewees engaged in more than one of the three lifestyle sports focused on in this study. I followed Atkinson's (2017) three-step approach for life-history interviews, including the planning/pre-interview, conducting the interview, and post-interview/transcribing.

Life-history interviews

The life-history interviews began in July 2019 and most were conducted within a two-month period. The interviews were unstructured with the participants in control of what was discussed and in how much detail. I found all of the participants to be open and welcoming. Here, I acknowledge the value of my own lifestyle sport history. Strong bonds of trust were established and I was accepted as a peer. In relation to this, I had to be aware of my own excitement in them sharing their stories and remain passive during the interviews, interjecting only on occasions where I needed more explanation of a point, story, or experience, or if I felt they needed some encouragement to continue. More generally, I found their stories very uplifting and, on several occasions, I found myself needing to visit the skate park within a few days of the interview. Their passion, commitment, and stoke was inspiring. It was something I could only make sense of through my own engagement and experience. They made me want to ride more! It was infectious.

All of the participants were given a printed permission form to sign at this point (with the option to sign after the interview transcripts were reviewed). The location for the interviews were determined by interviewees in order to maximise convenience and comfort. My only stipulation was that the environment be suitable for audio recording. Most often, the participants requested an

interview at their home. This worked particularly well as the participants were at ease. In some cases, this enabled them to show me items relevant to the conversation. This included skateboards, surfboards and snowboards, old clothing they had kept, and magazines. These souvenirs provided additional details to topics of conversations, but also energy and excitement, which further aided comfort and rapport.

The other physical location selected was the participant's workplace (after hours or during lunch break). Again, this was convenient to participants, mostly in relation to available time. As a location, these workplaces provided to be suitable and aided the comfort and confidence of the interviewee. I found them to be grateful that I had made the extra effort to accommodate them, which further aided the positive connection and helped to facilitate open conversation. In one case, an interview was conducted in a skate shop storeroom. This too provided items to illustrate conversational points, such as skateboard decks, and branded clothing and shoes.

Some participants lived too far away from Christchurch for me to travel for face-to-face interviews and in these cases I conducted online interviews. I used Skype and Messenger software to facilitate these online interviews. While I was initially concerned about this approach (opting to trial it once to test the approach), I did not observe any discernible disadvantages. Instead, I found the interviewees very comfortable, conversational and open. Indeed, I found that the online connection continued after the scheduled interview in many instances with the participants sending me links to lifestyle sport videos and websites, highlighting a keenness to maintain the relationship. While this ongoing communication was outside of this project, and none of the communication was assessed or used, it does show the passion these participants have for lifestyle sports and the enthusiasm they had to share their experiences.

The interviews were unstructured and followed a life-history approach where I encouraged the interviewees to tell their full lifestyle sport story. Using the life-history approach gave the interviewees opportunities to free-form ideas, tell stories they felt were important, and express their thoughts. This required me to constantly assess the interviewees' responses to capture the full meaning of what has been said. The interviewer is not a "passive recipient of information but needs to be active in checking what the interviewee is saying, watching for inconsistencies, encouraging fuller detail where the story is incomplete and generally keeping the research aims in mind throughout the process" (Coolican, 2009, p. 159). This includes being sensitive to non-verbal cues. Being primarily a snowboarder, skateboarder and, to a lesser extent, a surfer, was an advantage for me in this respect. I was often familiar with the experiences they are referring to and the people they were talking about. I was able to react to their responses with follow-up questions when I sensed there might be something that could provide more insight into the stories they had told me. I

wanted to gain full and rich insight (Keegan, 2009) while they were focused on their life histories. Where this was the case, I asked the interviewee to go into a little more detail on certain experiences I suspected might be relevant. Kim and Latta (2009, p. 79) advise that deeper understandings can be gained by "spending time unpacking the contradictions, clarifying understandings, revealing the lived consequences." This too identifies an advantage to me being a participant. The interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 95 minutes. The participants were all made aware that the interview would be audio-recorded.

Following the conclusion of the life-history interview, I entered the post-interview phase of Atkinson's (2007) approach. The interview audio recordings were transcribed into a Word document. Word was selected as a common and easy to use software. These transcripts were a full and exact account of the interview and were devoid of any notes, comments, or questions from me. The transcripts were sent to each individual interviewee to ensure I only proceeded with information they were comfortable being analysed. This is an important step, as unstructured interviews, such as the ones I conducted, encourage people to discuss intimate and revealing details of their lives (Corbin & Morse, 2003). It is vital for a researcher to protect the participants from potential harm. To this end, I used "member checking", which involves checking data with participants to increase the credibility of the results. It not only provides an essential ethical practice but also offers an opportunity for increased data clarity (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Each interviewee was encouraged to read their transcript on receipt, and to make any changes they felt necessary and/or add to their responses when they would like to clarify their narrative. A follow-up reminder email was sent when transcript changes were not received initially. Almost all of the interviewees made changes to the transcripts, most often of a superficial nature. All of the interviewees acknowledged approval of their transcript (with their changes accepted).

Photo elicitation

Verbalising passion for an activity or an intense connection to a lifestyle sport subculture can be difficult. Wheaton (2017) identifies that interviewees may struggle to verbalise their experiences completely. In reflection of this, photo elicitation was used in this research. Photo elicitation involves the use of photographs to stimulate new and additional information while also offering a "visual dimension to the unobservable thoughts, feelings, experiences, and understandings" of research participants (Richard & Lahman, 2015, p. 4).

Photo elicitation aims to evoke the interviewee into deeper and more detailed responses. The use of photos encourages a different form of information than conversation-only interviews by

engaging more of the brain's capacity: "The parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information" (Harper, 2002, p. 13). It serves as a tool for both researcher and interviewee. Firstly, photos allow the researcher to expand on questions, and secondly, the interviewee can use the photos to help communicate and illustrate dimensions of their lives (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). By using photos as a visual prompt, interviewees are able to access memories and emotions of meaningful moments in their history. Moreover, the photos serve as a visual representation of earlier experiences (Harper, 2002). Not only can this drive the conversation, the image itself acts as a form of evidence to illustrate the stories being told. Additionally, using photos in interviews can aide the building of rapport by providing something familiar and comforting for the interviewee. Clark-Ibáñez (2004, p. 1512) states that photos can reduce "awkwardness" and provide a point of focus, "especially if the photographs are taken by the interviewee and they are therefore familiar with the material."

As a supplementary data source, each interviewee in this project was asked to bring one to five photographs that they felt captured the essence of what lifestyle sport(s) meant to them to the interview. The photo could be of anything as long has it had significance to their experience as a participant. Copies of the photos were not kept after the interviews. Most of the interviewees chose not to bring photos, however, those who did, used them thoroughly. Brian, for example, was a skateboard photographer and brought an impressive collection of photos from his career. These photos were particularly useful for illustrating points during his interview. Similarly, Stacey (skateboarder) took great pride in showing me her photos with some legendary international skateboarders. Not only did this stimulate a detailed discussion, it added significantly to the warmth, trust, and connection between us. Many of the interviewees have maintained contact and invited me to go skateboarding, snowboarding, or surfing with them. Again, this speaks to the bond created during our interviews and the pride they have as subcultural members. I felt very touched that they wanted to remain in contact.

Focused interview

The study made provision for a second, shorter, semi-structured interview, if needed. The aim of this interview was to provide an opportunity to gather small amounts of additional information, seek clarity, or confirm details and to explore emerging themes and ideas in the early stages of analysis if necessary. The timing of this interview was after the point of open coding data analysis and represented the first opportunity for comparison of interview transcripts, highlighting broad areas for comparison and, therefore, any issues with interview data clarity. Although there

were 12 life-history type interviews, I only conducted two focused interviews. Both of these interviews focused on seeking clarity on comments made in their life-history interview (with the specific quotes being discussed and expanded on) and to check dates, as it was not clear when during their life certain references occurred. These interviews took less than 10 minutes and ended with me reading back my summary for clarity and approval. These two participants reacted positively to the opportunity and both commented on how much they enjoyed the first interview and how it had provoked many memories and feelings that they had been reflecting on since.

Data Analysis

Robust NI research relies on a well-defined system for the interpretation of interview data, but with the NI methodology this can be problematic. Unstructured interviews, like life-history interviews, can yield broad and diverse data transcripts that can be demanding for the researchers, but which can offer key insights and details. To overcome this, I chose thematic analysis as the most relevant method of data analysis for this study. Thematic analysis is used across a range of qualitative research methodologies and focuses on examining themes or patterns of meaning within the data. Researchers use thematic analysis to gain insights from shared or collective meanings and experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57). It can emphasise both the organisation and description of the data and theoretically inform the interpretation of meaning. Thematic analysis goes beyond simply counting phrases or words in a text to explore explicit and implicit meanings within the data. It is applied across a data set to discover commonalities (Braun & Clarke, 2012) or, as Joffe (2012, p. 209) notes, "salient constellations."

Thematic analysis is a systematic and transparent approach that establishes effective models for measuring people's thinking, feeling, and experiences (Joffe, 2012). It is this combination of flexibility and robustness, along with the focus on human experiences, which makes thematic analysis the most appropriate form of data analysis for this study. Its flexibility for framing theory, research questions, and research design appealed to me. I used this form of analysis to take an inductive approach that explored questions about the participants' lived experiences, perspectives, behaviour, practices, and how they adapted to ageing. Thematic analysis enabled me to identify the factors and social processes that influenced my participants' adaptation to ageing (while staying in their sport) and the social construction of the meaning it held in their lives. The theoretical flexibility of thematic analysis suited the aims of my study, as it embodies specific embedded theoretical assumptions. This allowed me to focus on the 12 participants' subjective experiences and how they made sense of these experiences.

Coding is the primary process for developing themes by identifying and categorising items of analytic interest in the data. Acknowledging this, Maple and Edwards (2009, p. 39) recognise NI data coding as a crucial moment within a study: "The lack of formal analytic steps allows for a freedom and flexibility of data analysis that may be lost when using other methods." Using a NI methodology, therefore, requires a data analysis system that is clearly defined, systematic, and thorough, yet also allows the unique and idiosyncratic voices of the interviewees to come to light and create new and meaningful learnings. Katz (2015, p. 139) identifies how "so long as a researcher's encounters with data are governed by pre-set coding rules, they cannot be exploited to develop qualifications in substantive analytic categories." Comprehensive planning and clearly defined rules safeguard against guesswork, manipulation, and spurious findings.

In inductive approaches, the themes identified are strongly linked to the data (Boyatzis, 1998) and this is the approach I took. Inductive approaches allow "frequent, dominant, or significant themes" to rise from raw data (Thomas, 2006, p. 238). It allowed that the process of coding to occur without trying to fit or even force the data into a pre-existing theory or framework. The same approach was adopted by Light and Evans (2018) in their study on Australian Indigenous sport as a study that influenced my research design. It is important to note, however, that even when adopting an inductive approach it is not possible for researchers to free themselves from their assumptions which means that coding will always reflect some aspect of their philosophical standpoint and research values.

My study involved a three-stage process of coding. This included: 1) familiarisation of the data, 2) initial coding of the interview transcripts, and 3) focused coding of the interview transcripts.

Coding stage one: Familiarisation

For the familiarisation stage, the transcripts were clustered into groups based on their primary lifestyle sport (surfing, skateboarding, or snowboarding). Within these three lifestyle sport categories, I read each transcript twice to establish an appreciation for the general themes and aid interpretation. Carpenter and Light (2019, p. 8) identify this as developing a "feel" for the participants' stories. On the second reading of each transcript, I began to make simple notes in the margin. I allowed the data to form the direction of these notes, keeping things broad and without preconception. Smith (2007, p. 393) notes that "plausible interpretations of narrative are generated in a highly flexible way and without mathematical or strict formulas." Katz (2015) recommends keeping these notes to a single sentence where possible for easier grouping when more detailed analysis is undertaken.

Coding stage two: Initial coding

The second stage of my coding approach involved initial coding. This process involved capturing the interview data with broad coding categories to help take an analytical position towards the transcripts. I followed Charmaz's (2007, p. 37) outline of initial coding by "examining each line of data and defining the actions or events that you see as occurring in it or as represented by it." This required me to study the transcripts to identify common ideas, elements, and themes, as well as words and phrases. I organised these elements under initial headings that I gradually developed by rearranging data, modifying names of codes as I went. The codes were revisited, assimilated, and modified to eventually settle on a tight set of themes ready for interpretation. The interviewee responses were compared and analysed thematically (what was said) and structurally (the nature of the story) and then grouped into chronological order for better interpretation (Creswell, 2013). These initial codes were related to similarities between the interview transcripts, the literature review, Dewey's experiential learning theory, and NI research. This form of data analysis is where concepts and theories informs coding, and is defined by DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, and McCulloch (2011) as theory driven interpretation.

I divided the transcripts into three groups: surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding (in that order), and completed the initial coding with one group at a time. This was done to have the most comparable data considered at the same time and help with generating initial codes. This period of my study was both challenging and exciting. The volume of data felt overwhelming at first glance, an experience that can be common in research (Seers, 2012). I found that initial coding is not a process that can be completed quickly. I needed time to absorb the transcripts to properly ascertain the meanings and connections. There was a wide variety of codes and even small passages of a transcript often illustrated several themes and categories. Often, I experienced moments of insight in unusual places and, particularly, times when I was away from the printed transcripts. The two most common places were either while out running or while trying to sleep. Having my iPhone with me was invaluable, as I could write or voice-record ideas and insights before they were lost in the moment. More than once, I had to sprint home from a run (on those rare times I didn't have my phone) to hurriedly capture an insight, all the while repeating it over and over to avoid losing the train of thought. These examples speak to my engagement in the data analysis phase of my study. I had been entrusted with these wonderful, emotive stories. They were having a profound effect on me and I felt a clear feeling of responsibility to capture the critical elements for wider learning. As a result, I would return home, revisit the transcripts, reconsider a code(s) or related quote, and adapt my notes accordingly.

I first used Nvivo software for initial coding, as it appeared to be very useful, but I abandoned it after the four surfing transcripts because I found splitting sections and quotes into themed folders overly simplified, too broad, and not useful for achieving my aims. Once I revisited the quotes in some of the folders, I felt crestfallen. Seeing the quotes in list form under folder themes seemed particularly impersonal and I felt I had "lost" my participants, having spliced them into a hundred detached pieces. At this point, I started over, preferring to use pencil on the printed transcripts. This involved initial coding with a brief title and short, key notes in the margin of the interview transcripts. This process, I found, worked far better and I gained a richer insight into each individual's interview, never losing the context of what was said.

During this period of initial coding I acknowledge the support and expertise of my supervisors. Having formed open-coded themes, I was able to discuss, in-depth, the broad topics and key participant quotes. Professor Light and I met weekly for an hour for these discussions, something that was invaluable, aided additionally by Professor Light being a life-long surfer. These discussions helped to crystallise thinking, group themes and topic points, and gain deeper understandings. By way of example, during one of these discussions we related (through interview quotes) that skateboarders' connect to cityscapes and architecture was remarkably similar to a surfer's connection to the beach. There were strong themes of emotional and spiritual connection for both groups, something not immediately obvious with a cursory comparison of these environments.

Coding stage three: Focused coding

The third stage of my coding approach involved focused (closed) coding. Focused coding involves taking the initial codes that continually appear clustering them into more selective and conceptual coding headings (Charmaz, 2007). Through the initial coding process, themes and concepts had already become prominent. Focus coding allowed me to regroup strong codes under linking titles, developing them into more robust, clustered groups. Likewise, codes that were weak were discarded. Focused coding allows researchers to view data as part of a "developing analytic framework" (Charmaz, 2007, p. 40). I again drew on theory and relevant literature to revisit the initial codes looking for those that made the most analytical sense. I found this to be most important, especially when I reached a point where I was finding it difficult to reduce the number of codes further. Through drawing on theory, I was able to see the remaining codes in a new way, which provided me with some breakthrough moments and, ultimately, lead me to identify the main themes which have been developed throughout this study.

Throughout the process of focused coding, I used a codebook. DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall, and McCulloch, (2011, p. 137) identify the use of a codebook "as one of the initial, and arguably the most critical, steps in the interview analysis process" as it provides a "formalised organisation of codes." I listed all of the codes in a notebook. Each code had a title, explanation, summary of interviewee response, and a link to theory or literature (highlighting either as "verification of" or "in opposition to"). I then looked to combine codes, where possible, and remove redundant codes, aiming to streamline to 20-30 codes. From this, I continued to reflect and examine the codes. Key themes emerged and these themes became the major findings in this study. Several codes go into a theme but themes don't overlap (Creswell, 2013).

Finally, I wrote individual narrative stories on the interview participants as a way of capturing their story. This was based on their interview transcripts, taking care to include the relevant quotes relating to the focused code themes. This style and structure was heavily influenced by Light and Evans' (2018) book on indigenous elite athletes, which used a similar structure. Light and Evans formed each individual's interview into a standalone narrative within two sport sections (rugby league and Australian rules football). The effect, I found as a reader, was a wonderful appreciation for each individual and their unique story. This structure overcame my concerns with losing my participants stories within the discussion of themes. By creating individual narratives, I feel I have been able to be more open with the data generated and give prominence to the individual participants.

Project Ethics

A key consideration of this research was the ethical treatment and protection of all participants involved. The focus of research ethics must be to protect the people in the study throughout the entire research process (Tolich, 2001). It is important to remember that the centre of ethical research lies around "human wellbeing" and not to "privilege systems over people" (Beckett, 2003, p. 51). It is also critical that the research reflect an unbiased and accurate account of the findings.

This project gained University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee approval to proceed on 13 May 2019. This project was identified as low risk. Regardless, protection of the participants was given the utmost importance. As this project required the participants to indulge details of their past that are likely to be significantly meaningful to them I took great care and responsibility to ensure their privacy and safety.

Upon initial contact with potential interviewees, all interviewees were presented with an information sheet and required to sign a permission form. The project's primary researcher is storing the transcripts securely and copies were supplied only to the primary supervisors. I have kept none of the photos supplied by the interviewees during or after the interviews.

Every effort was made during this study to protect the participants. Primarily, this was achieved through the member checking of the interview transcripts. In addition, I refrained from using names that could aide their identification, including towns, cities, specific ski resorts, beaches, and skate parks, as well as employers, family members, sponsors, or schools. The exception to this was Brian, whose specific experiences relating to the Christchurch earthquakes was relevant to his skateboarding journey (both as a historian via his local photography and being inspired to restart skateboarding after watching skateboarders in the post-quake environment). I also used my own judgement and chose not to use data that I felt had the potential to increase the chances of identification or that revealed information that was particularly personal. I illustrate this with two examples. Firstly, one interviewee was (and remains) particularly prominent in their lifestyle sport. While their name was already changed for anonymity, specific details and comments within the interview transcript, in particular through prominent sponsorships and media coverage, could have suggested their identity. For this reason, I chose not to use those particular quotes. The second example related to a participant recalling the attempted suicide of a family member. It became obvious to me at the time that the participant was uncomfortable discussing it, despite bring up the story without any prompting. The participant seemed to trail off from the reflections, as if suggesting they regretted discussing it. Despite the comments remaining in the transcript after member checking, I felt very uneasy using it and, ultimately, avoided doing so.

Section One: The Surfers

Jamie, 43, surfer

Jamie is a 43-year-old surfer, snowboarder and occasional skater currently living in a coastal city in New Zealand's North Island. He has a long history of sport and physical fitness. This includes being a recreation centre manager, personal trainer, and professional rugby player. Physically, he is very fit and active. As well as board sports, he is a dedicated mountain biker, runner, and swimmer and regularly visits the gym. Currently, he works in a professional role for a Government department.

I have been friends with Jamie since we were 12 and went to high school together. We have skateboarded and snowboarded together a lot over the years, and, to a lesser extent, surfed together. I selected him as an interviewee due to his intense commitment to board sports, particularly surfing. I would call him a born adventurer, someone who is in his element when venturing into nature. Jamie is a deep thinker. During his interview, he gave long consideration to most of his responses, often taking time to digest the question and reflect on it before offering his thoughts. His passion for board sports and nature came through strongly throughout his interview.

For as long as he can remember, Jamie has felt a connection with the ocean. It holds for him strong feelings of adventure, challenge, and spirituality. Living with his mother and brother in a coastal North Island town on a tight budget, limited their choices for recreation, with the beach offering a low cost option:

> It was probably really cheap recreation for Mum because when we were young we
> didn't really have any money so it was really easy for her to take us to the beach any
> time the weather was okay. We'd be swimming in the water and then trying to do a
> little bit of boogie boarding and stuff around the waves and were always looking for a
> little bit more adventure in it.

Surfing always held allure for Jamie. Watching surfers riding waves when he was at the beach filled him with a sense of wonderment. However, his family's financial position prevented him buying a surfboard. "I really liked the idea (of surfing), but I think when I was young just from financial constraints, I never really did anything." Around the age of 11, Jamie felt drawn to skateboarding as an alternative, and cheaper, sport that shared similar characteristics to surfing for him. On a skateboard, he could take advantage of streets, schools, and concreted environments that were near his house. Once he had his own board, he experienced freedom, no longer reliant on others for transport, support or guidance.

[Skateboarding] was more accessible. It wasn't that much of an outlay to get an okay [skateboard] that you could cruise around on and get into stuff. All my early skating was just sort of stuff around schools and [locations] that were readily available from where I lived.

Surf club membership from his late teens provided the opportunity for Jamie to start surfing because they had a variety of craft he could use in the ocean. In his late teenage years, he also started snowboarding and, after leaving high school and enrolling in an outdoor education programme near a mountain range, he immersed himself in an adventure-based lifestyle with others who shared his passion for nature and adventure. The location was conducive to frequent engagement with mountain-related activities and his student loan enabled him to purchase the equipment he needed. He pursued snowboarding, as it combined his love of nature and adventure and, being a board sport, made good use of his skateboarding and surfing skills. This pathway also connected him with other students who shared the same attraction to adventure. Together, they formed a community, each encouraging one another to go to the mountain.

My first opportunity to really get into snowboarding was the year that I did [outdoor programme] in [North Island town] and student loans gave me access to cash so it was "spend it on snowboards". That was when I first got into snowboards and started really riding 'cos we'd drive or hitchhike up the mountains and rip into it.

Sport and fitness had always been important in Jamie's life. He worked in the fitness industry, had been a national level competitor in surf lifesaving, and played several years of professional rugby overseas. Success in team sports came naturally for Jamie but board sports presented more of an attractive challenge.

I always found [structured] sports, I suppose, not particularly individually challenging 'cos everything I did growing up was physical. I could catch and throw and run and not have any issue with physical stuff. But board sports were all quite challenging and I think it takes you longer and a lot more dedication to learn.

The freedom that board sports offered him when compared to organised team sports provided Jamie with pleasure and enjoyment. For Jamie, highly organised team sports were constraining while board sports provided freedom and escape:

Obviously, with any board sports you've got more freedom to ride when you want to, when it suits and I guess, as a skateboarder, you are always doing it in your leisure times. It's a choice rather than something that's a bit more structured and sort of forced on you.

Freedom from structure presented Jamie with opportunity to be expressive and creative. It offered him agency. Lifestyle sports emphasise creativity, progression and style, where structured sports, like rugby or netball, are governed by rules and involve point scoring or measurement. The absence of structure reflects the roots of lifestyle sports in free expression (Thorpe, 2011) and, as such, surfing offered the opportunity for personal expression, something that appealed to Jamie.

People sort of ride with their personalities… you have the ability to cruise, or really push yourself or to ride really aggressively or just flow. It's nice to ride in the mood that... riding sort of expresses the mood that you're in and maybe the type of personality that you've got. It was nice to be able to ride the way I felt, to almost express myself to myself more than to other people.

In his mid-twenties, Jamie's professional rugby career took prominence in his life. He played in New Zealand, and then he was paid to play overseas with surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding holding less prominence in his life. However, the demands of rugby took a physical toll on him and he retired from professional sport in his mid-thirties. This allowed him to re-engage with it and embrace board sports once again as they took prominence in his life:

I sort of said to myself I want to be the best I can possibly be [at surfing] by the time I'm 40 and now at 43, [I'm] thinking "oh yeah, I can still get better". So, that's good. Yeah, so... it's a massive part of my lifestyle now and I surfed last night, I snuck away from work at 3 o'clock, headed down the coast.

Jamie and his wife eventually settled back in the city where they had grown up. He noted that access to surf spots and mountain terrain were important considerations when choosing where they would live.

It was certainly a factor in the decision to move here. It's that potential for a mountain-to-surf lifestyle, which is really important to me, but then I could hopefully make that important to my daughter as well. As soon as we started talking about having a kid, it was [North Island coastal city] that we wanted to live in and the ability to have good waves in that lifestyle was a big factor.

Connecting with nature is at the core of Jamie's involvement in surfing as an activity involving interpreting and responding to a changing, flowing natural environment. He aims to maximise the experience of every wave and all the sensations involved as he exercises control, style, adaptability, and flow:

You'd be out in a challenging environment and every wave would be slightly different so there's always a challenge and the sort of the glide or the feeling of getting high lines on waves and dropping in with them as well as the experience of the power of the ocean.

Jamie's enjoyment of surfing led him to consider its link to his well-being. Surfing provided him with an opportunity to escape the pressures of modern life and find solace. He explained how he used surfing to reduce the tensions in his life through the distance it provided metaphorically and literally from the stress he left behind as he paddled out. His surfing sessions were often so engaging that he would be lost for hours in the flow, being immersed in a dynamic fluid environment:

I can sit out there and everywhere I look I can see industry and people and society but I can't hear them at all. It's like they've gone away so I can sit out there and see all these people but I'm not a part of it any more. I'm just doing what I'm doing out there. I guess it is a sort of spiritual scenario or even a disconnect from that main society and getting into an environment where it's more just you, you and what you want to do, your choice and you're in control.

For Jamie, a good surfing session transcends time. It can provide a disconnect from the structure of society, the mundane: the normal. Jamie explains that when he is surfing nothing else burdens him. He focuses solely on his environment and his position and adaptation to it.

When you're surfing, I never wear a watch. I've never got any idea of how long I've been surfing for. Sometimes it feels like you've been out for two and a half hours, sometimes you're out three hours and it feels like you've only been out the one hour so you definitely lose track of the here and now... surfing takes all that away from me so if things are on your mind they're not on your mind when you're in the water too much, which is nice.

Jamie missed the social nature of team sport and said that he found few people his age were still surfing, snowboarding, or skateboarding. He enjoys the occasions when he could surf with his friends who are still involved, but this was usually difficult to organise. While he enjoyed the social side of surfing he also enjoyed the connection with nature and reflection surfing alone produced.

You can be social, you can go out with your mates and you can have a crack and you could challenge each other and you could talk shit, but if you want to be a bit more solitary you can get away and find your own space and feel quite satisfied at the end of a session.

Looking into the future, he does not believe physical decline needs to be a barrier to continuing surfing. Technical advances, such as epoxy resin surfboards that have more buoyancy, are easier to catch waves on and enable people to continue surfing well past middle age, help he says. He feels that a surfer has control over their own future and can challenge themselves in different ways. Surfing involves interpretation of a wave, which does not necessarily mean dominating with power and speed. Style and grace are also esteemed traits linked to the soul surfing of the 1960s that can be motivators for older surfers. Jamie feels that these present opportunities for surfers of any age.

> You can still have pretty good self-gratification from those sports; you'd be better at challenging yourself and you're doing things that you couldn't do before or maybe tidying up your style and your technique and stuff so that you flow a bit more…you can still have that little bit of mastery in there.

Eve, 41, surfer

Eve is a committed, passionate surfer and the first female participant I approached. I first met her professionally as she is a photographer. We also lived in the same coastal suburb and would bump into each other on the beach, often stopping to discuss the surf conditions. I knew she was a good surfer who achieved well in local competitions. She is a larger-than-life, mother of two who lives a mere 50m from one of her favourite surf breaks. As soon as she agreed to be part of this study, I was looking forward to interviewing her, as she is known for being candid. During the interview, she was very direct and frank with her responses and did not hesitate to say what was on her mind. She was often very funny and I appreciated her honesty. I got the impression that she is comfortable with who she is, something which I responded to well. I also had the sense that she lives, and surfs, for the moment, not seeing much use for complication or future planning.

For as long as she can remember, Eve was fascinated with surfing. For her, the graceful way a surfer interprets and responds to a wave holds a certain allure. "I think it always seemed kind of cool." However, growing up in a small non-coastal South Island town, coupled with the expense of buying a board, meant that she would be 23 years old before she could finally try surfing for herself. Returning after an Air Force post overseas, Eve was in a position to purchase her first surfboard. After years of built-up expectation, she was finally able to buy a board. She remembers vividly being in the surf shop and looking at her options. It was an enormous moment for her:

> There were all these awesome surfboards and it was just like "ooooh" and I had money
> in the bank to do it…. [I] got this surfboard and managed to somehow squeeze it into
> the car and that was it. That was my first surfboard. It was all go from then really. I
> didn't have anybody to go surfing with but I went out to [local surf spot] and just sort of
> went surfing by myself.

Her first surfing experience confirmed and reinforced her resolve to make surfing a significant part of her life. The fun and enjoyment of her first experiences of surfing motivated her and made learning the skills of surfing exciting: "I was just, basically wading out, waist-chest height and jumping on the board and catching white water. I caught the first lot of white water and managed to stand up and it was like this massive rush." Eve made up for what little knowledge she had with enthusiasm. After many years of patient waiting, she was now in the water, catching waves on her own board. She was elated and remained in the water for as long as her energy would allow. She can still recall the feeling she had afterwards, as she walked back up the sand to the carpark.

I remember feeling like I'd pushed myself, like my body had really worked, and then there was the actual thrill of catching a wave and standing up. I thought I was going so fast. I walked back up the car after my first surf and I still distinctly remember how great I felt, like on every level, just so happy.

A new boyfriend had a pivotal influence on her surfing development. As a surfer, his motivation to go surfing more often and the coaching insights he provided for Eve motivated her and helped her learn more quickly. Surfing is so dependent on positioning, feel and timing when catching a wave and he was able to help her with this.

I went out surfing with him. And that was great because I could go out a bit further and he kinda helped me because I couldn't see still…he said "turn around, paddle now." I caught like my first green wave and it wasn't until I was right on it that I could tell that it was a green wave and that was like a super, super thrill.

Eve was progressing well but was being held up by issues with her vision that she corrected later with disposable contact lenses. She moved back to the South Island in 2004, where she met a new boyfriend, who was a committed surfer and later became her husband. They rented a flat close to a prominent surf spot and her surfing developed more rapidly.

Meeting [husband] at the end of 2004, suddenly I was like dating a pretty hard-core surfer who's going out all the time and was encouraging me to go out. We didn't have really many responsibilities I guess… whenever there was surf in our free time we'd try to be out there.

Eve's husband competed in local surfing competitions, which introduced Eve to the wider surfing community. At first, she was happy being a spectator and supporter but, gradually, she became curious about entering a competition herself. Initially, she was concerned about her lack of ability, but she wanted to be involved. "[I] started off just going in club competitions for the [local] long-boarders and just, like participating. Then eventually as I got better, I started actually becoming competitive at them and then eventually started winning some of them."

The camaraderie of the female competitors appealed to Eve as something she saw as being different to the males. From Eve's perspective, the male competitors would act aggressively and dismissively toward each other, whereas the females would be supportive and encouraging. She felt connected to her female peers and invigorated by their support:

The girls, they're always quite supportive and would all be hugging after their heats and going "oh you surfed really well." It was kinda like, most of the competitions, we'd even be talking during the heats, as well, like "hey, your last wave was great" or you'd say "how're you going" and the other girl would say like "I'm having a shocker" and you'd go like "oh, just get a wave, come on, there's a few minutes left, just get a score on the board."

Eve continued to compete for several years with continued success. However, the birth of her daughter and her husband enrolling in tertiary study made it difficult to continue. This, combined with fatigue from competing, had Eve reassess her surfing goals and expectations.

I'd won quite a few and I just kinda got sick of standing around all weekend but only surfing in the heats. And then also, even though I had won them I was still like... it was still really stressful going into competitions. Like, so I just sort of felt like I'd rather have my weekends. I didn't really feel like I needed to put that pressure on myself anymore.

Eve felt that competitive surfing was not vital for her to enjoy surfing. The essence of catching and riding a wave, interpreting and responding as it changes shape was, ultimately, what connected her to the sport. Being judged and given a marked score now counted little towards that experience.

If you get a good wave or you have a good session where you've had a few waves and you've done a few really nice nose rides or some nice turns or whatever like you just get that satisfaction in yourself. You know it's sweet if someone sees it and you're like "yeah, someone saw my [turn]" but you also don't need that.

The ocean has uplifting qualities for Eve. Being at the beach has a calming and settling effect that has become an essential part of her life. She describes the ocean as "restorative," adding "I found it really transformative which probably had a lot to do with that magic feeling you get from being in the ocean, not only surfing, even just swimming or wading can be so amazing for your soul." Surfing has the ability to recalibrate her life, as she explains:

There's something about getting in the sea that just makes you feel better. Sometimes you don't even have to get in the sea, but you certainly feel better when you get in the sea, like, you can go out there feeling stressed and shitty and cranky and unwell with a head full of snot and you get out and you feel a million dollars even if it's just for a short time.

Eve and her husband's commitment to a surfing-focused lifestyle effects almost every element of their lives. She states that they are reluctant to make obligations in case the surfing conditions turn favourably. Reflecting, Eve notes:

> I was going to say [surfing is the] structure of our lives but it's been the opposite, it's been a un-structure of our lives in that we've always tried to not have too many commitments because if the surf's good you don't want to miss it.

Having children has affected Eve's ability to surf. It has directly impacted her available recreation time. After the birth of her daughter (aged four at the time of interview), she was particularly focused on getting back into the water to surf as soon as possible. Her motivations were both enjoyment seeking and to reclaim her fitness. It was more challenging to go surfing, now that she had more commitments and responsibilities. She also noticed that her surfing style had changed. She had to adapt to both restraints on leisure time and getting back her proficiency post-birth.

> My surfing changed a lot [after her daughter's birth]. I was able to still get in the water quite frequently but there was a lot more in it, like a lot more coordination and we couldn't both just go down to the beach when it was cold. And then it took a long time to sort of get my mojo back, I guess. And, like my nose riding's never really been quite up to the same standard.

Having recently given birth to her son (at the time of the interview), the pressures of being a mother to two children has made leisure time more difficult to find again. Being a mother presents unique responsibilities for her that her husband is able to avoid. As she notes, "it's a lot easier for [her husband] to go out for a surf [as] he's not breastfeeding the baby." This, combined with winter [at the time of interview], meant that she had not been able to re-engage with surfing like she did after the birth of her daughter:

> Definitely harder to just drop everything and get out. Like, you know, once [daughter] came along, I think I got in the water for a surf probably at about like when she was 6 or 8 weeks old or something. Similar with him. I got out for a surf at 6 or 8 weeks. But I've only been out for one surf since he was born 'cos the weight does not fall off as quickly for number two and I didn't want to rip my winter wetsuit.

At the time of the interview, Eve was about to move to a South Island town, far from her current location, as her husband has a new employment opportunity. She notes there are surf breaks in the new location, but some are accessible only by a drive of up to an hour. She is apprehensive about her immediate surfing future, unsettled by a lack of knowledge of the area and not being connected to the community. When asked about surfing in the new area she said that:

It will be quite a mental challenge because I'll have to go and surf a bunch of spots I haven't surfed before. I will be getting back into surfing and trying to re-find my condition on unfamiliar waves like on point breaks and stuff and I'm not sure if there's even many chicks who surf down there.

However, for Eve, new challenges present new opportunities and she is buoyant about the task of adapting to and getting to know new territory.

For the first time in our lives, we'll probably just live in the suburbs, yeah. Which is going to be quite different for us but you kinda drive in either direction depending on the conditions. You could go surfing at the town beach after work on a weekday if you only had like an hour and you just wanted to get on for a wave.

Longer term, as their children grow up, Eve is excited by the idea of family surf trips. Her daughter has already shown a keenness to surf. "[She's] already been. She's already stood up on waves. She can stand up on my boogie board even. I push her into a wave on the boogie board and she'll just stand up." She hopes that her son will show a similar interest and can imagine a future where they hunt waves as a family.

We're kinda thinking we might try and get a van or something so when we do go off on the weekends [driving to surf spots] the person who's not on the water, if it's cold and rainy the person who is not surfing at the moment can hang out in the warmth with the kids, you know.

Paul, 47, surfer

Paul was recommended for this study through a mutual friend. They were both committed surfers and I was aware that they often went on surfing escapades together. Through this connection, we crossed paths sporadically over the years. He is an enthusiastic, humble and friendly person who is also highly successful in business. In addition to holding CEO positions, he was the principal of a large secondary school for four years. In sport, he is a former New Zealand kayak representative, and national surf lifesaving and kayak titleholder. The last time I saw Paul, before asking him to be an interviewee, was at a skate park near where he lived. He was there with his son, skateboarding while his son rode his bike. I was not aware that he skateboarded and he told me that he had only recently started. To see a father and son interacting in that way was heart-warming, particularly as I had not often seen that happen in the skate park environment. Sometimes, I see parents sitting while their children skate or scooter but I could not remember seeing a parent participate before then. I approached Paul to be an interviewee because I was confident he would be genuine, honest and insightful. I also wanted to broaden my data by interviewing people I knew little about.

Paul started surfing at the age of 13. Living in a coastal North Island city, he saw people surfing while at the beach and it motivated him to try it. To him, surfers looked "relatively cool." "Heck, I'll give it a go," he thought. Paul approached his parents to ask for a second-hand surfboard. They were reluctant at first. They were particularly concerned because they were not confident swimmers and were worried about the dangers involved.

After becoming more comfortable with the idea, Paul's parents took him to buy a board and supported his interest by taking him to the beach after school, often watching from the shore. Paul was excited to be surfing, despite not knowing at all how to do it. With no one to help him, he did the best he could to teach himself and figure it out. "I didn't know what I was doing. I just saw people paddling and trying to stand up so that's how I sort of started surfing. [His parents] would have been in trouble if I'd have got in trouble because they couldn't have saved me." The support he received from his parents was pivotal to the development of his surfing.

Soon after he began surfing, boogie boarding became a popular sport where Paul lived. Closer to body surfing than stand-up surfing, it is an easier way to catch waves. Many of Paul's closest friends started boogie boarding and tried to persuade him to switch to it from surfing. Paul was not interested. He chose to stick to the sport that had originally captured his imagination.

My really good friends at school started boogie boarding and there was quite a bit of pressure to change to boogie boarding. I'm a bit of a stubborn person and even though

all my mates bought boogie boards, I stuck with surfing. I just liked it better and didn't
want to do just 'cos what they were doing.

Paul's engagement with the ocean, and his increasing knowledge of it, encouraged him to join
a surf lifesaving club, which opened his eyes to other ocean-based sports, a wider community, and
competitions. This also gave him options at the beach when the waves were not suitable for surfing.
"I discovered surf lifesaving where it didn't really matter what the surf was doing; if there was a
wave you could have fun on a paddle board or a surf ski or body surfing so surfing took quite a bit of
a back seat for quite a while." Surf lifesaving also spoke to Paul's competitiveness. He entered local
surf lifesaving competitions, soon progressing to regional and national competitions. One of his
favoured disciplines, surf ski (a form of ocean-based sit-on-top kayaking), lead him to sprint kayaking
on freshwater. He dedicated himself to surf lifesaving and kayaking, eventually gaining national titles
in both and being selected as a New Zealand sprint kayak representative. During this time, Paul
notes that he had little time to surf. "Kayaking was my main sport and I was doing it twice a day,
every day, for about six years and I didn't surf at all really in that time."

It was only when Paul retired from elite level sport, to concentrate on his business career, that
he considered starting surfing again. "When I finished kayaking I needed to find another buzz and so
that's when I got into surfing again." He describes himself as naturally competitive but surfing is one
of the few things in his life where he feels no competitive drive.

> [Competitive sports and surfing are] completely different for me. One is a driven desire
> to win and compete, you know, [at] all cost - but morally - but everything within your
> power to do everything you can to be the best that you could possibly be. Whereas
> surfing is for me an outlet, a relaxation, pure endorphin, a nature experience, and the
> most uncompetitive thing that I can think of. It's probably one of the only areas in my
> life where I'm really not competitive.

Here he identifies how it provides an escape from normal life, the buzz he needed, and a
connection with nature. The social elements of surfing are also attractive to Paul. Having close
friends who are surfers is pivotal to his keenness and involvement. It is collegial and he likes how the
individual abilities of his friends is not a factor in the collective enjoyment of surfing. The experience
is often open to all regardless of experience: "it doesn't matter what level you are . . . providing the
conditions are within everyone's ability, everyone will have exactly the same amount of fun and
stoke factor."

The experience of connecting with nature and being part of it also provided great pleasure
and motivation for Paul. The act of catching and surfing a wave is a deeply meaningful experience for

him. In his own words, it's "only me and the ocean." When he catches a wave, his focus is purely on the sensation; on being in the moment. "I'm out there with friends . . . and knowing that they're there is cool, but I actually just like it to be about me. I enjoy looking at the mountain and, you know, the cold or the warmth and the waves and. I actually like just being by myself."

After a good surfing session, Paul feels elated: "I come back in the most amazing mood and I guess that's what all surfers live for . . . you live for that perfect day." Sharing these memories in conversation with the people with which he shared them physically is an enjoyable experience. This adds to the enjoyment of the experience as one that is shared physically and relived through conversations:

> And you still talk about it. [Surfing friend] and I can still talk about this one day with a full moon when it was at [local surf spot] and . . . it was epic surf and you know we can feel it and smell it and touch it; it was that good.

Surfers have to be tuned in to nature. They understand how the size and direction of the swell, the strength and direction of the wind, the tide and the changing sand banks all combine to determine the quality of the surf. Perfect days are thus few and far between. The conditions of the ocean has a huge influence on a surfer's mood. Usually Paul's surfing involves adapting to the available conditions, but this can be frustrating and mood affecting.

> Unfortunately, you have way more worse bad days where the wind's shit and the tide was shit and there were too many people and I come back a bit, you know, a bit grumpy from it but it's yeah, it's that real opportunity to . . . you're searching for that amazing time and you come back just elevated.

Available time is another factor affecting Paul's surfing. A successful career involving senior positions in several organisations has impacted his involvement: "Depending on the roles that I've had in work have depended on how much I've surfed. And some of the roles I've had have been pretty busy and so therefore have limited my amount of surfing." Put another way, "When you are time poor surfing's a bit of a 50:50 thing." When he is time poor, it is difficult for him to prioritise surfing, particularly the travel to surfing locations.

> You could go in search of a wave and not get one and that 50 per-cent chance of not getting a good wave I've got to weigh up and go "well I've only got two hours so I'm actually better to go for a run," knowing I'm going to get some exercise or spend some time with the kids or the family or do some work around the house rather than driving around and not achieving anything.

A combinations of new technology and wanting to be involved with his children's physical activities, lead Paul to start skateboarding in his forties. He lives close to a local skate park, which undertook a refurbishment with the addition of a bowl. His children like to play at the skate park and Paul found the new bowl had an alluring quality for him. "I've got two kids who spend a lot of time at the skate park on their bikes and scooters. I was down there a fair bit standing around. I don't like doing nothing so I need to do something." At the same time, he became aware of Smoothstar skateboards, a skateboard variant that emulates surfers carving motions and aims to aid development. Paul explains, "a friend of mine had a Smoothstar down at the skateboard bowl. The instant I jumped on it I was like "wow, this is really, really cool" . . . I'm addicted to it, it's not an understatement."

Skateboarding is far less weather dependent that surfing. Having a suitable skate park near to home provides more opportunity for involvement. Paul jokes that he was spending so much time at the skate park that his children wanted to go home before he did and that he would often return in the evening for short escapades.

> It got really funny when I was at home and it would be 7 o'clock, and I'd look at [his wife] and we'd had dinner and the kids were in bed and I'd say "just going down the skateboard park" . . . There were kids down there playing and stuff and parents and dads would be going "oh, whose your kid?" and I'm like "um, I don't have one here".

Paul feels conscious of being middle aged in the skate park environment. He is careful about when he goes so there is a minimal numbers of other, younger skaters. "I'm selective with when I go so I know when it's quiet. I only go to [a city-based skate park] when it's really early in the morning in summer." At the time of interview, he had recently concluded a four-year term as a principal at a prominent high school. Because of this role, he is recognisable to many in the community. This made him uncomfortable in the skate park as he sometimes felt he drew attention when he would rather continue learning without any public glare.

> That was a little bit, I guess, not nerve-wracking but a little bit confronting in that you know lots of people that are in the community and there you are with your helmet on looking like Michelin Man with elbow pads and knee pads and they're going "what's this tosser doing?" And also I'd see lots of my students there as well so I just thought "bugger it . . . what's the worst thing that people can say, you know, that I'm having a go." And now that I've got past that really kooky stage where I can actually sort of do it, not amazing but I'm okay, then it's not a big deal because it's like "oh, it's Paul, he's actually okay."

Looking to the future, Paul aspires to continue to be active. He does not feel age is a barrier for continued engagement in surfing and skateboarding. More broadly, he wishes to remain physically active for as long as possible:

> I want to be the 70-year-old guy who can still drop into a bowl and, you know, catch a wave and go skiing, go on a stand-up paddle board. I really want to do it as long as I can. And I'll do everything within my powers and controls and the controllables that allow me to do that. I think I'll still be, you know, surfing and skateboarding . . . albeit slower.

Sarah, 44, surfer

I had not met Sarah before interviewing her for this project. She was strongly recommended to me by another interviewee and a brief discussion with her suggested that she might be someone I wanted to talk to. She had purchased a surfing-related business several years ago and I was intrigued by the idea of following the experience of turning passion into a career. As a passionate surfer she feels strongly about women's rights in surfing and creating inclusive women's surfing communities. We set up a time for the interview, which was held at her surfing business. I really appreciated Sarah's openness. Her narrative covered some extremely stressful periods of her life, yet she did not shy away and remained frank and honest. She felt that surfing could positively change people's lives. It had for her and she felt strongly that it could for others too. We were still talking, afterwards, as she walked me to my car. As I drove away, I felt very fortunate to be able to share in her story.

Sarah clearly remembers her first sight of the ocean. Her family had recently moved to a South Island coastal city and, in her early teens, the family visited a local beach. The impact was immediate: "I was just like 'woah, a beach!'" Her brother purchased a surfboard and started surfing. Sarah immediately started saving to buy one too and by the age of 15 she had bought a board. "I just thought [surfing] was really cool." Inspired, and with remarkable initiative for someone of her age, she started traveling to the beach by herself. "[I] jumped on the bus and just took myself to the beach and started teaching myself how to surf because I really liked it."

Sarah's local surf break was a masculinised and unfriendly environment for her, which made it difficult being the only female. "I was on my own and I was the only girl out there… [surf spot] is very male-dominated, 'I'm-very-cool' kind of surf environment." She persevered and earned some respect from the local male surfers, but they also enjoyed setting her up to fail on occasion.

Eventually the guys at [surf spot] I think kinda, maybe felt sorry for me or were like "oh, she's not given up" and they just started calling me into waves and they knew I'd fail, they were like maybe just doing it because it was funny. But, yeah, that's how I learnt.

Female surfers in 1980s New Zealand were small in number, meaning there was limited availability of gear. Wetsuits, an essential item in New Zealand's colder months, were particularly hard to find. Sarah had to make do with what she could find and afford. She notes "[I] bought myself like these crappy old wetsuits with holes in and still freezing cold but...cos there was no real girls' wetsuits back then either, like it was everything was just guys." Similarly, she made do with the only surfboard she could afford and was unaware that it was not suitable to her size and ability. Bigger, more buoyant surfboards can be more conducive to learning, as they make wave catching easier and

provide a more stable platform for a learner to stand up on. Sarah was trying to learn on a small surfboard.

> I didn't know, like, I was on this tiny little thin thing that was the hardest thing in the world to learn on . . . just the lack of information I guess made it a lot more difficult and it took a lot longer to learn. But then because of it, I guess, I was probably more determined to stick with it and not to let those [local surf] boys beat me.

Sarah's involvement in surfing continued to develop. At 18, she started work in a surf shop, a pivotal moment she claims, as it connected her to the surfing community and developed her knowledge of equipment and fashions. She immersed herself in the surfing culture, something that her parents were not thrilled about, particularly in light of the surfing stereotype.

> [My] family was really religious, and we weren't encouraged to do extracurricular [activities]. We weren't encouraged to be part of that surf culture particularly back when the surf culture was more about . . . it was perceived to be druggies and, you know, real loose hippies, basically. That was the perception of the surfing world. I wasn't allowed to hang out with anyone in that world, unless I was in the water obviously.

Surfing provided a sanctuary from the structure and pressures in Sarah's life. It presented an exciting escape from her strict parents and the expectant church community. Moreover, surfing provided a sense of achievement and status, and provided her with a sense of confidence. She states:

> [Surfing] was a sport I could do without any judgement. It was also a sport with no rules. No one was really judging me; it was just me and the ocean and the ability to feel cool for a change, instead of a weird outsider that didn't fit in with anyone.

A trip to the surfing town of Mooloolaba, in Queensland, Australia, at the age of 18 had a huge impact on her surfing. She immediately fell in love with the surfing scene and immersed herself in it. It was her dream lifestyle with easy access to quality surfing spots and a connection to other surfers in a friendly community. The experience was so powerful she decided not to return to New Zealand.

> I'd got like a part-time job at KFC and I just surfed every day and I made some friends over there because I didn't have to go to church over there 'cos I wasn't being sort of... and I made some surfy friends and I would just surf with them all the time. I don't think I washed my hair the entire time I was there. I was covered in sand and wore bare feet everywhere...and just like completely embraced the whole surfing persona basically.

After a month in Mooloolaba, Sarah informed her parents of her decision not to return and was startled by their response. "They gave me the ultimatum, like, I had to get on the plane and come back or they'd never speak to me again. So, I came back 'cos I was like 'woah, that's pretty intense.'" Sarah returned to New Zealand, to her parents and the church. Through pressure from her parents and the expectations of the church, Sarah sought to find a suitable husband and leave home, claiming that, "if you want to leave home basically, you have to get married so I like checked out all the options that I had in the church. It was like 'I guess you'll have to do.'"

By 19, she was married and, fortunately for her, her new husband was enthusiastic about learning to surf. She continued to work in the surf shop and go surfing as often as possible. They moved into a bedsit close to their local surf spot. Then Sarah became pregnant, unexpectedly. Suffering with pregnancy-related sickness, and unable to surf, her mental well-being suffered.

> I wasn't really surfing very much but I really struggled like mentally, just really mentally
> bad for my health. I was really upset to be pregnant. I thought I was the fattest person
> in the world and I didn't want a baby and I couldn't surf; it seemed all quite bad.

Sarah became pregnant with her second daughter and she accepted her role as a mother and settled into family life. After about five years, however, Sarah and her husband separated, and she left the church. Sarah states: "It was a really massive like traumatic event in my life and I was really depressed." This resulted in total isolation.

> When you leave a church that has been part of who you are for like, 30 years of your life
> and you're told what a bad person you are because you're killing your children and you
> know you're quite mentally pushed, you lose your entire identity. Like I lost all of my
> friends . . . the only identity that I had left was my surfing.

Sarah threw herself into surfing. It was a cathartic release from the turmoil she was experiencing and she used surfing as a channel for her emotions. Reflective of her state of mind, she states that she took extreme risks.

> I would look for the biggest surf that I could find because I didn't really care. It was like
> "oh, if I get held down, I get held down" like it was something in my life you know like . .
> . But obviously it was always with the kids in the back of my mind. . . but yeah, it did
> change my mindset to look for bigger waves and push myself to challenging situations;
> maybe get a kick out of it I suppose.

Throughout this period, surfing became pivotal to regaining her health and confidence. Surfing provides an opportunity to abandon her pressures, to gain clarity and to rejuvenate. She described

surfing as "a high; an adrenaline kick. A feeling of freedom and being in touch with the universe and nature. It seems to wash away the stresses and the worries and the adrenaline gives you a kick to feel like you can handle more after your surf." After surfing, Sarah feels empowered and optimistic; better prepared to pick up normal life with returned vigour. "It makes you feel happy," she states. "I recall surfs that I've felt like my heart was going to burst with happiness. I just can't get that kick or adrenaline from a run or the gym or biking."

At this point Sarah discovered competitive surfing and, more importantly to her, a connection to other female surfers. Her increase in engagement in surfing had progressed her proficiency. Primarily, she was surfing for her well-being: "I was surfing a lot, like just to help my mind." Her surfing caught the eye of another female surfer who encouraged her to join a local competition. Up until that point, surfing had been a personal journey for Sarah. She was used to being one of very few females at the breaks she surfed, but also used to the unfriendly male surfers. Here, she had an opportunity to connect and interact with other female surfers. It was a life changing moment: "that's where I first met some of my best friends."

Sarah established herself as a successful competitor and embraced the opportunity to take a leadership and advocate role for women's surfing. The positivity of connecting to a community made an immediate impact, she notes. "I love the social side of surfing and my surfing family. It's a real sense of belonging." She wanted to get more women surfing and grow the community further. She also wanted to ensure they had a more positive experience than she had herself. "I started getting more involved in the women's surf environment and pushing it more and fighting for it more . . . . [We] kind of really banded together and like we want equality." To this day, Sarah remains active in promoting women's surfing events and pushing for women's rights in competitions and board-riders clubs.

As her daughters grew older, Sarah started to teach them to surf and the family spent a lot of time at the beach. Her older daughter is passionate about surfing. Her youngest daughter is less keen and favoured swimming in the ocean. When I asked her what it is like to surf with your child, she said that, "it's the best thing in the entire world. Absolutely amazing. If I had known when I was pregnant with [oldest daughter] how awesome that was, I never would have been so upset with the baby." She loves early morning surfing sessions where the two of them share crowd-free surf breaks as an almost spiritual experience. "There's nothing better . . . we get up in summer and we'll go out for a before-work surf and the sun's rising and it glassy and you're just out there. Often, it's just the two of us at [local surf spot]; it's just epic!"

Four years prior to the time of interview, Sarah purchased a surf-related manufacturing business. This has allowed her to immerse herself in surfing and turn it into a career. She states "[It's] my passion, it is, yeah. Probably should have looked at the books a bit closer but I think I'd already decided that I was buying it regardless, just because it is my passion." She is not just the owner. She sees herself as a product innovator, reflecting on opportunities for products and adaptions while she surfs: "I'll sit out in the surf and I'll be like 'why don't we do it like this?' And I'll literally come in [to her workshop] in my soaking wet wetsuit and be like 'right, you've got to do this.' Many of her ideas have been progressed into production and are now popular additions to products.

> I keep forgetting to wear my ear plugs and I know I'm getting surfers' ear. And I was like "how can I remember to get my ear plugs?" So I got the girls to put a little dome on the back of the bib of my suit, which I can just... 'cos they have a string on them, and I just now leave my ear plugs on my suit. [And] the other day I put a hole in my [wetsuit] hood because I get really badly knotted hair in winter when I wear a hood. Like literally, it takes me two hours to brush it and I just pretty much end up with half my hair on the floor because it's broken. So, we put a hole in the hood so I put my hair up in a ponytail, put my hood on and then pulled my ponytail out of it. And it worked a treat.

Surfing is central to Sarah's life and she wants to surf into old age: "I'm actually determined to stay in the water for as long as I can... [to] keep me younger for longer really." She told me about an elderly customer who recently visited her shop: "We had that lady come in the other day, who's nearly 70, who's learning to surf. Lots of the longboarders are old." Her business is a central part of to her surfing life: "Ideally, you know, you'd retire as soon as possible but actually no, I really love what I do. I'd just like to go to surfing whenever I want."

Sarah is proud of the impact she has made on women's surfing. She hopes that she has helped create an environment that is more conducive to female involvement. She hopes that other women will not have to have the same misogynistic experiences she has struggled against. "I guess I'd be happy to have a legacy for the girls, [making] it so their pathway's a lot easier and less sexist and so there is more equality."

Section summary: The Surfers

The stories of the four surfers shows the powerful influence that the ocean has had on their lives. It is a place of security and safety, as much as it is a playground for recreation, self-expression, and adventure. To a non-participant, surfing can be viewed as an "extreme sport" in which daredevils take dangerous risks in a hostile, fluid environment within which a single mistake could result in serious injury or death. These surfers enjoy the thrill of surfing, but their motivations and the benefits it brings them go far beyond excitement. For them, the ocean provides a connection to nature and spirituality. It is also an opportunity for introspection, a retreat from modern-life stresses, and simplification through engaging in a completely immersive experience.

Understanding the significance of these early experiences at the beach aide our understanding of the ocean's continued importance in their adult life. Jamie, by way of illustration, told of his single mother taking him to the beach when he was young. While he explained that it was for cost-effective entertainment, the impact of those excursions were powerful for him and began a lifelong love of the beach. He distinctly remembers swimming in the shallow water and playing in the sand. His memories invoke feelings of security and family togetherness. Paul and Sarah told stories of instant wonderment, as Sarah exclaimed on her first ever ocean sighting: "Whoa, a beach!" This illustrates the impact that the ocean can have as a contrast to everyday life. It is place full of new possibilities and a safe-haven from structured life and expectation.

From those initial experiences at the beach, they were inspired to learn to surf. It was the next logical extension, to progress from sand to surf. So strong was their inspiration that all four surfers taught themselves to surf, initially without any help, coaching, or access to information. They had little knowledge of what they were doing and progression was slow but they were fuelled by excitement, challenge, adventure, and pleasure. They acquired whatever equipment they could, simply so they could be involved. Something inexplicable drew them to surfing and they drew confidence from progressing their skills, escaping into the niche past time and away from the expectant gaze of the general public. The ocean provided a critical location for personal growth.

It seems clear from the surfers' stories that surfing embodies significant emotional and spiritual benefits for them that have gained more significance as they age. The motivations for these surfers to surf went beyond the benefits of just physical exercise or a mere physical activity. In fact, they rarely mentioned the notion of surfing as exercise for good health. They regularly articulated their joy of surfing but their experiences of it went deeper than joy. Their accounts of surfing often approached description of moving from the profane to the scared with almost religious tones (see, Durkheim, 1915). They sought to communicate an experience that is elevated from normal activity.

Sarah described it as an other-worldly experience; "a high; an adrenaline kick. A feeling of freedom and being in touch with the universe and nature." Paul recalled one of his best surfing adventures in detail during his interview, with themes of nature featuring prominently: "I can still talk about this one day with a full moon when it was at [local surf spot] and…it was epic surf, and you know we can feel it and smell it and touch it; it was that good."

Surfing was seen as a unique activity in the lives of these surfers, delivering an experience unlike anything else. When they were young, surfing was an exciting adventure and form of self-expression. In adulthood, its significance took on a different meaning. It provided them with a sanctuary from the structure and responsibilities in their lives. This helps us understand why surfing remained so important during adulthood for them. They described surfing as being free, expressive, and creative. In particular, it was distinctly different from structured sports. Both Jamie and Paul had successful elite-level sporting careers but did not see surfing as just a competitive sport, with Jamie noting its lack of structure. Paul is naturally competitive, but described surfing as completely non-competitive for him. Eve and Sarah discussed surfing competitively, but focused far more on community connection with other female surfers, than on competitions they had won. They made significant reference to gender inequality in surfing. For them, surfing was often an isolating experience with males dominating the surfing community (Wheaton, 2017). In particular, Sarah resented the hazing she suffered at her local surf break but surfing competitions provided an opportunity and space for her where females could surf together, form friendships, and be free from the masculinised environment. The structure of competition, however, eventually spoilt the experience for Eve and she chose to stop competing. Sarah rarely competes now either, but does remain involved in the organisational space. It is clear that these surfers do not consider surfing to be a sport in the traditional sense. Instead, it is an uplifting, spiritual-like experience.

The four surfers' stories also reflect a strong relationship between surfing and well-being. One way in which surfing contributed to well-being was how it functioned for them as a coping mechanism for dealing with stress in life (see Matos, Santos, Fauvelet, Marta & Evangelista, 2017). A surfing session could inspire positive feelings during and after a surf with them all feeling post surfing "highs." Each of the surfers described times where they used surfing to improve their mental well-being. For example, surfing provided an escape from the stresses of everyday life for Jamie: "I can sit out there [in the ocean] and everywhere I look I can see industry and people and society but I can't hear them at all. It's like they've gone away." For him, the ocean was a place where he could escape, create distance from the stress and pressures of his daily life, and connect with nature and express himself. Connecting with nature has been shown to have a positive effect on health and well-being (Martin, *et al.,* 2020) and this was the case for these four surfers. Eve focused on the

euphoric and re-energising change she feels after a surfing session, stating, "you can go out there feeling stressed and shitty and cranky and unwell with a head full of snot and you get out and you feel a million dollars even if it's just for a short time." Similarly, Paul describes coming back from surfing in "the most amazing mood." In addition to this, they told of feeling unsettled when they went through periods of inactivity during times where they could not surf.

Surfing and connecting with the ocean shaped the lives of all four surfers and made a significant contribution to their well-being, but this was most dramatic with Sarah. She had struggled with a very strict and constraining upbringing, the breakdown of her marriage and her exile from her church community, with surfing acting as a type of therapy or coping mechanism for her to deal with these challenges. Sarah captured this in her own words when noting that the ocean can "wash away the stresses and the worries and the adrenaline gives you a kick to feel like you can handle more after your surf." Through surfing, she is able to create space, protect herself for the stressful elements of her life, recharge through the activity she loves, and then re-enter society renewed and refocused. It is a powerful endorsement of the positive impact surfing had on the lives of all four participants' lives.

Family responsibilities and employment commitments affect the availability of recreation time with surfing reliant on specific weather and tide conditions. These commitments and responsibilities resulted in a significant change of practice for these surfers. With all of the participants now over the age of forty, synchronising free time with conditions conducive to surfing was more difficult. Jamie, Paul, and Eve are all married, have careers and young families (as does Sarah, other than her children are adults). These commitments affect the available time for recreational activities. Surfing requires sacrifice and often that sacrifice feels too great. As Paul notes, "when you are time poor surfing's a bit of a 50:50 thing." It can be hard to justify a surfing escapade knowing the same free time could be better spent with the family after returning home from a full day of work. At the time of interview, Eve had a new baby, making it "definitely harder to just drop everything and get out." She added that her husband had more freedom to surf, as "he's not breastfeeding the baby." These surfers needed to be nimble with the opportunities they had. Jamie felt more comfortable short-changing his employer than affecting his family time. He told me "I surfed last night; I snuck away from work at 3 o'clock, headed down the coast."

Looking to the future, the participants see surfing as remaining important in their lives. Those with young children hoped that their kids would enjoy surfing as much as they did. The prospect of being in the ocean with their kids and sharing a meaningful experience, one that have made such powerful difference in their own lives, was inviting. Surfing has helped these surfers cope with some of the most demanding moments in their lives. Supporting their children to surf and passing on

those experiences and benefits speaks to the role of a parent being a protector and a teacher. It was something Sarah was experiencing now. She regularly surfs with her oldest daughter. I asked Sarah what it was like to surf with her daughter and she described early morning surfs where the two of them watch the waking sunrise and they are the only surfers in the water. For Sarah, "It's the best thing in the entire world. Absolutely amazing."

Drawing on Dewey's experiential learning theory (1938) provides useful insight into the surfers' collective experiences by highlighting the importance of the environment on the space where the interaction of the experience occurs. These surfers had a strong, spiritual-like connection to the ocean as a physical environment of challenge, adventure, and freedom, and moving into another world – another reality. Over their lifelong engagement in surfing they learned more than how to surf or even how to adapt to its physical demands as they matured. They came to understand this natural physical environment through interaction with it while learning about themselves, about life and developing a strong sense of meaning in their lives. This can be explained by drawing on the work of medical sociologist, Antonvosky's work on the social conditions that promote positive well-being.

Antonvosky (1987) identifies three main conditions in social life that are most prominent in the lives of people who enjoy positive well-being by giving them a sense of coherence. The conditions he suggest enhance having a sense of coherence and resilience are (1) comprehensibility, (2) manageability, and (3) meaningfulness, which were evident to different degrees among the four surfers. To varying individual degrees, surfing helped them understand the different challenges in their lives, helped them feel that they could manage them and, most significantly, brought meaning to their lives.

The freedom and escape from the structures of society that surfing facilitated for the four participants reflected the original values of surfing as part of the counter culture of the 1960s and its global challenge to the status quo (Booth, 2013). In doing so, it also highlights the huge change in surfing from the 1960s to now that is driven by its commodification and commercialisation (Arthur, 2003). These four surfers maintained what can be seen as the traditional values of surfing from when it emerged as a counter culture in the sixties and seventies. In particular, the search for freedom and meaning in life which involved rejecting social structure and seeking agency , as a reflection of its roots in the counter culture of the sixties and its wholesale rejection of the status quo (Booth, 2013).

Dewey identifies structure as a form of social control: the rules and expectations of the wider public that governs what is acceptable and what is not acceptable behaviour. This helps us recognise

how being a surfer for these four participants is not only about engaging in surfing. It is also intrinsically linked to the development of an identity as a "surfer" which is specifically linked to challenging social conformity and control. The stories of these four participants suggest the powerful influence of surfing on their values and beliefs about life, and how it should be lived. They suggest the resilient values of the 1960s and 1970s, and how they continue to have a lasting influence on the formation of the modern self. As Eve said best, surfing has been the "un-structure" of her life.

Section Two: The Skaters

Brian, 41, skateboarder

Brian and I work for the same large organisation. Sharing a love for music and fashion, we have always been friendly towards each other, but I did not initially realise he was a skateboarder. Once I did, we shared stories about being "older guys" in the skate park and how we negotiated that to continue to skate. He has a naturally mellow disposition, uninclined to boast about his experiences or imply his importance. As an example, he revealed to me that he used to be a skateboard photographer and his work had featured in skateboard magazines. I was surprised that he had not mentioned this before. Photographers and videographers have a special place in skateboarding culture, as they are the ones that capture the skaters breaking new ground and completing difficult manoeuvres.

Brian had worked with many skaters that I knew of, both nationally and even some internationally. While these stories were fascinating, what I truly found to be remarkable was his ingenuity to become a dedicated skate photographer in New Zealand at a time in the 1990s when very few others were doing the same. He saw an opportunity to combine two loves, skateboarding and photography, but also saw a need to capture something he felt was special. It means that now, in the present, he has detailed photographic references to a unique subculture that no one else has. This is especially interesting because many of the Canterbury locations where he photographed skaters no longer exist, due to the 2011 earthquakes.

Having started skateboarding in the late 1980s, Brian was influenced by the 1989 mainstream movie, Gleaming the Cube, the main character of which was a teenage skateboarder. Encouraged by the growing popularity of skateboards at his school, he decided to get one. He said that, "I just slowly sort of taught myself just over a couple of years. I think initially it was because my friends did it and I obviously loved doing it." Primarily, he was not completely committed, noting that his participation was "on and off."

His sister was a surfer and he lived by the ocean so soon his attention switched to surfing in the early 1990s. Around this time, skateboarding went through some significant design changes. Boards became much thinner and wheels much smaller to accommodate technical street-styled trick progression. These advancements spoke to Brian's favourite parts of skateboarding and he felt himself drawn back.

> I surfed more in the early 90s but then, I don't know, I guess, I just always preferred skateboarding. It was just such a transitional time in the early 90s. Just so much had changed, like boards and everything, even clothing, as silly as that might sound.

The image of skateboarding also appealed to Brian. He liked how skateboarding had a pronounced anti-establishment, law-less ethos. He also responded to the inclusion of art, music, and fashion to a skateboarding subculture. It resulted in a connection that went beyond the activity itself. Skateboarding was a way of living and an opportunity to rebel against structure.

It's the underground nature. Once I became a teenager, I went more towards counter-culture things [more] than commercial things, so grunge music, alternative music, a bit more of the punk side. I come from quite a straight-laced family. My dad's ex-military and, yeah, I don't know why I drifted that way but ever since then, even now I'm more into less commercial things. I like the things that are more underground.

After finishing high school, Brian studied photography. He remembers contemplating what type of photographer he should be and, soon, was strongly influenced after encountering a group of skaters in a local market square.

There were a whole bunch of skaters there and something clicked in my head. I thought "that's pretty cool what they're doing" and I thought "I'm going to be studying photography in another month or so and it would be nice to have something to photograph, like a subject that I can keep on going back to."

What greatly appealed to Brian, when photographing skateboarding, was the city environment and the way skaters adapted and interpreted that environment. It was a rich source of inspiration for him and he endeavoured to capture it in his photos, as this quote suggests:

From a photography point of view, there's so much texture. And just the dirtiness of everything, the random chairs, and everything. It was just a cool place to hang out [with] all these weird little nooks and crannies which I had never seen before. It's got character. That's what I liked about it.

His reputation grew and soon he attracted the attention of a local skate-shop owner, who asked if Brian would take photos for the shop promotions. It was the encouragement he needed, reinforcing to him that he was on to something important.

[Skate-shop owner] liked the look of my stuff and asked if I'd like to take photos for those guys, so I started doing adverts for them. It got me onto a couple of the magazines and one thing lead to another and it just became my life for probably a good five years of skating on the weekends, taking photos, studying.

As he approached his thirties, Brian found himself disconnecting from skateboarding. Partly, this was due to finding new passions, such as involvement in dance culture, but also felt conscious of

being an "older skateboarder." He accepted that people stop skateboarding in their thirties and did not see people his age skateboarding. The counter-cultural aspect of skateboarding had always appealed to him but he started to feel that he should adopt a more conventional way of life that suited his age and began to lose his identity.

> I sort of stopped skating when I was about 28, in the early 2000s, and I don't think it was a coincidence, but for about five or six years I kinda lost myself a little bit. I felt a little bit lost. We were all growing up and people were starting to have families and move away and it took me a little bit longer to grasp that late twenties early thirties thinking of what am I supposed to do now. Am I supposed to keep doing what I was doing or am I just trying to hang on to the past? That was my frame of mind.

Meeting his future wife was the most significant factor in rediscovering his direction and purpose for Brian, but the discovery of a video created by innovative skateboarders responding to the post-earthquake Christchurch CBD (covered academically by Thorpe, 2012) reignited his love of skateboarding. It reminded him of the uniquely creative way skateboarders adapt and interpret the urban environment. More powerfully, he recognised some of the skaters, showing him that it was possible to still skate at his age.

> Just after the earthquakes, I saw a video on Facebook of the post-quake skating. I thought "wow that's cool; man I used to love doing that stuff". And I recognised a lot of the faces. People were still doing it. . . . And I thought, oh shit, I sort of miss that.

Around a year later, Brian decided to post a number of his photos from the late 1990s on Facebook. While some were of skateboarders performing tricks, most were of groups of skaters simply hanging out at the local market spot, which no longer existed due to the rebuilding of the city. The photos stirred up nostalgia for him and he was interested to see if others would have a similar response: "I posted [the photos] on Facebook, around 2012 I think it was. And yeah, gosh. About 20 or 30 people were just commenting on these stories." The conversations that occurred from these photos reconnected Brian with old friends and, eventually, resulted in the photos being published in a New Zealand skateboarding magazine.

> A friend of mine emailed me and said "hey, *Manual Magazine* wants to do something on [market square], are you able to send through some photos?" Finally, they got published. So out of all the photos published they are probably the ones I'm most proud.

Eager to get him back into skateboarding, Brian's wife gave him a voucher to a skate shop for his birthday. Having purchased a board, it was time to venture to the skate park. He took his

daughter, as a way of spending quality time together. She would ride her scooter around on the concreate while he skated. Getting back on the board was a nerve-racking experience for him:

I was shaky the first time getting on it, really shaky. A little bit anxious, not so much anxious, but more out of practice. But slowly and surely over a course of a couple of weeks I got my confidence up about riding it and I took [daughter] to [local skate park], which we do now after her swimming lessons on Saturdays.

The biggest barrier for Brian was overcoming the risk of getting hurt, particularly in relation to his age and his responsibilities.

I look forward to Saturday mornings because I do really enjoy taking [daughter] to the skate park. But then during the week I'll be thinking about things and thinking about the consequences of what happens. What if something goes wrong? And [daughter] is there by herself and I'm injured? Then what would happen?

This is the significant difference between skateboarding as a single 20 year old and the experience of a married father skating in his forties. Mentally, he felt like he could push himself and find success through recapturing his ability, but his family and work responsibilities and the threat of injury concerned him.

It does scare me sometimes. When I was in my twenties or teens, if something happened to me, it wouldn't matter. Of course you'd go to hospital or whatever. We never thought about that stuff - you're young and bullet proof. But now I take it slower because if I get hurt I have to take time off work and if I get hurt [his wife] has to look after the kids. So while I'd find myself fighting against myself for wanting to do more but also I've got to be responsible as well.

At the time of the interview, Brian felt that the mental and physical benefits of skateboarding outweighed these risks. Initially, it was the physical benefits through exercise, as well as the fun of participating, that encouraged him to start skating again. He believed that skateboarding was "good for me [as] it's exercise, because going to the gym is just not something for me. [Skateboarding] is something I get a lot of enjoyment out of. When I do land something for the first time in years it feels like a real victory." For Brian, one of the big benefits of skateboarding is how it has helped him deal with stress and tension. His mother is terminally ill with Motor Neurone Disease. Her deteriorating condition has been understandably difficult to deal with. Yet, skateboarding provides him with temporary respite from his worries and stress.

In the past six months, it has ramped up to a fever pitch and I have found when I've been skating lately that my mind is completely blank of anything else. Because you can't think about anything other than what am I going to do when I get to the other side of the [halfpipe] . . . and for that half hour or 45 minutes it's just like therapy for me almost because my mind is totally free of all that stuff.

Brian was keen to keep skateboarding, with no plans to give it up. He enjoyed reconnecting to the skateboarding subculture through engaging media and connecting with other skaters. He noted that:

[Skateboarding] is really good both physically and mentally for me right now. Even if I don't skate every weekend, I definitely want to keep that up. It's just the distraction of watching skate videos and seeing what everyone's up to, it's just really good. I'm really enjoying that aspect.

He enjoys being on his board and the feeling of achievement he gets when performing tricks at the skate park.

Just enjoying that moment of going slowly. There is that grace and that slowness of when you are actually on the coping [metal lip of a transition feature], it feels like there's a confidence to it. You're not rushing it. Yeah, the rhythm is important.

Stacey and I are from the same North Island town. When skateboarding experienced a popularity boom in the mid-1980s and a small subculture of local skaters crossed paths in schools and carparks, I became aware of Stacey and her two sisters because they were the only female skaters. Stacey had undeniable talent and she had immense presence, which is why she stands out in my memory. I was intimidated by her. She embodied a punk-rock attitude, combative and aggressive. Reflecting on it now, I can understand that it was how she established herself in the masculinised skate community and proved her validity.

Over the years, Stacey has maintained her profile in skateboarding and I remember an article on her in a skateboarding magazine. One of the photos featured Stacey standing in front of her van. Emblazoned in giant, vinyl letters across the van was "No balls, just nuts." I have never forgotten it and I knew Stacey would be a perfect interviewee.

At 47, Stacey has lost none of her passion for skateboarding. During the interview, she reflected with enthusiasm on her experiences. She still looks imposing, with her jagged punk haircut dyed black and impressive tattoos. At one point, she showed me two prominent arm tattoos, copies of famous skateboard graphics designed by her favourite skateboard artists, Jim Philips and Andy Howell. She may look imposing, but throughout the interview she was warm and accommodating and I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation.

Stacey's earliest memory of skateboarding occurred towards the end of the 1970s. Several children at her primary school had skateboards and she remembers being mesmerised by them zooming around the concrete tennis courts during the lunchtime breaks. Inspired, she asked her mother if she could have one too:

> I remember asking Mum for a skateboard and she just refused to buy me a skateboard. She said "it's a phase, you'll grow out of it, you won't need one." And, so I used to sit on my school lunchbox and slide down the hill 'cos I never had a skateboard. I'd take my lunchbox home and it would have all these holes in the bottom.

Several years later, while in high school, Stacey still yearned to skate, yet her mother was unrelenting. She felt that skateboarding was too dangerous for a girl. In addition, like many working class families, money was simply not available to be wasted on fads. Stacey remembers asking the boys at her school if she could use their boards so she could follow her passion.

> I remember I used to sit outside [at school] and we used to watch the guys at lunchtime on the main field. A few of them used to bring their skateboards to school. I remember just going "oh, can I have a ride on your skateboard?" I remember just hopping on some

guy's skateboard, he was playing rugby on the field, and like, tic-tacking around and
then like acid dropping off the kerb.

Stacey gained more regular access to a skateboard when her parents purchased one for her
younger brother. They felt that a skateboard was a suitable gift for a boy, despite her regular
requests. It was a frustration for her, but at least she could skate.

My younger brother – he's four years younger than me – and he asked Mum for a
skateboard and she went and bought him one blimmin straight away. So, I was so like
gutted but then I was like, well now there's a skateboard in the house.

Stacey continued to develop as a skateboarder. She remembers learning tricks like 360 degree
turns and mimicking surfing style in her skating. Yet she remained frustrated at not having her own
board and decided she would need to buy her own. She sought an after-school job and began to
save her money.

I got an after-school job and the only way I could get my own skateboard was if I just
saved up bit by bit and bought it myself and so . . . I actually had a 10-speed bike. Mum
bought me a 10-speed bike and I sold it and used the money to buy a skateboard.

She befriended the small group of skateboarders in her town, noting that very few people
skateboarded at that time in the early to mid-1980s. She formed a particularly strong bond with one
male skater and notes that he was instrumental in her development. He had a detailed approach to
skateboarding, breaking down the mechanics of new tricks and learning them, before teaching
Stacey to do them too. Stacey remembers:

[He] basically showed me every trick. He used to get the videos and he'd stop-start the
videos and work out the tricks. And then he'd come up to my house and he would show
me, he'd break them down and show me how to do them.

Not only did her friend support her development, but he also motivated her. He challenged
her to get better, identifying how there were so few female skateboarders that she had the
opportunity to break new ground and lead the way for others. Stacey reflects: "[He] would always
say to me like 'imagine if you did this' cos there were no girls. I think I skateboarded for about eight
years before I saw another girl with a skateboard in New Zealand."

As skateboarding continued to grow, Stacey and her sister decided to travel to the second
national New Zealand skateboard competition. She remembers being excited to see other female
skaters there, something that was a particularly rare occurrence for her. Furthermore, the
competition organisers noticed the females in attendance and offered to include a women's division.

Stacey was overjoyed, seeing it as an opportunity to gain exposure for women's skating and connect the community. The other females, having noticed Stacey's ability, were intimidated, and decided they would not enter. Annoyed, but undeterred, Stacey entered the men's competition, keen to be a part of the event anyway.

> The organisers were like "let's have a girls comp" and I was like "fuck yeah, this is awesome." And then the girls were like "we don't want to enter if she's going to win." I was just like "come on girls, we can have our own comp" and then they just wouldn't. So I had to skate against the guys and I did terrible.

In her early twenties, Stacey decided to move to a large North Island city because she saw more opportunities there for her career in graphic design, but also to experience the skate-scene. To help make new friends, she joined a local soccer team but suffered a major injury:

> I dislocated my knee playing soccer. And I stuffed it well and truly. I got told I wouldn't be able to run again. I thought skateboarding was over, like totally game over.

Facing uncertainty while recovering from her injury, Stacey describes this period of her life as a low point. What made it worse for her was that just days after her injury she saw a group of females skaters. She longed to be skating with them.

> I swear to God, I was working downtown and I was sitting in the square having lunch one day and I saw some chicks rock up with skateboards. That was about the most gutted and most depressed I've ever been in my life, like, this is so dumb, this is so unfair. I'd blown out my knee, sitting in the square, I could have just cried and cried and cried.

Unable to skate, Stacey focused on her career and rehabilitating her knee. After about a year, her soccer friends encouraged her to play again. Her knee felt good and she regained confidence in it. Stacey remembers having these friends at her house, when one enquired about her skateboard. With no real expectation of success, Stacey decided to try a couple of tricks.

> My skateboard was in the bedroom against the wall and it had cobwebs on it, it was so shameful. And someone said something "oh, can you still ride it?" and I said "I don't think so, I think my leg's too stuffed to ride it." But I hopped on it and I did an ollie and I was like "oh, that didn't even hurt."

Immediately, her passion for skateboard was re-ignited and she immersed herself in skateboarding again. She adapted her approach to protect her knee by focusing on technical tricks, rather that high impact tricks involving height and speed: "I couldn't do anything too gnarly, like I

couldn't do the rails anymore. But I just used to do all the fucking weird tricks, man." With renewed confidence, she started entering competitions again, with success. To Stacey's surprise, female skateboarding had grown and new opportunities now existed. She gained the attention of an Australasian skateboarding production company, which resulted in sponsorship. Suddenly, she was receiving boxes of free skateboarding hardware, shoes, and apparel. Stacey notes that it was an incredible experience: "You just circle everything you want [in the sponsor's catalogue] and they're like 'yeah, you can come and get your stuff.'" It was a stark comparison from her humble beginnings, selling her bike and earning money on a milk run to buy skateboards.

Stacey spent many years competing across New Zealand and around the world, traveling to Australia, America, Canada, and Asia. She even won the New Zealand skateboard nationals at the age of 39. Reflecting on the growth in skateboarding over this time, in particular female skateboarding, she is immensely proud, yet also frustrated that it had taken so long to happen.

I had to go from being a scumbag you know. And not telling people I was a skateboarder because of fear of, you know. Like, that would be like saying "hey, by the way I'm a tagger and I'm going to graffiti your wall when I leave here tonight." That's what it felt like if anyone knew you were a skateboarder. To going into world cups and skating in front of 14,000 people. I just wish I was a decade younger. When girls finally took off, I was already like older and broken.

At the time of the interview Stacey was only skating on rare occasions. The cumulative damage to her knee created pain and a high chance of injury, coupled with a loss of fitness and conditioning:

I still want to go skating, [but] I don't. I've just got a bit too fat. It's a bit hard on my knee joint. I had it cleaned out a few years ago and I've got no stability left in the joint. I've had my cartilage taken out; I've got no ligaments holding it together and they can't reconstruct it now 'cos I'm a little bit too old apparently.

She may not be able to physically skate, but skateboarding still occupies her thoughts. Walking through the city streets, she still sees the surroundings as "skate-able" and she imagines how a skater would approach it, what trick they might do and what line that would take. She explains: "You still look at everything in architecture and think you can skate it. I still look at the concrete and go 'ooh that would be a good spot to skate' you know." She notes that she will stop and watch whenever she encounters other skaters, vicariously enjoying their experience and reflecting with nostalgia on her own memories; "if I hear a skateboard coming down the street I have to stop and

look." Seeing and hearing skateboarding triggers an emotional response, one laced with positivity and energy. The sounds of skateboarding are particularly evocative for her:

> I love the sound. I used to do the longest frontside nosegrinds on these marble ledges. That is the coolest sound, when you are going as fast as, like, deathly fast and the board slides on the wax, the front of the truck locks in and grinds and you can hear the wheels screeching all at the same time. That is the best sound I've ever heard in my life and if I could just hear that every day I would be so happy.

Reflecting on her life and the place skating had in it, Stacey misses being able to skate, despite the effect it had on her body. She realises what an integral tool it was for her in dealing with life's pressures. Through skating, she was able to "to thrash the shit out of things and . . . take stress out on, you know you can de-stress skateboarding." In many ways it provided her with a sense of agency and control over her life. She misses skating but knew the role it played in making her who she is and has no regrets.

> I'm 47 now and I don't like the cold. I sit here, if it's a sunny day and I put the heater on. I'm not looking forward to being old but I'm not ever going to regret what I did. I think, you have to live, man. And Jesus didn't we live 'cos I just think about people that did nothing with their life and I'm just like, I'm not that person, you know. And I'm still doing rad shit now, you know. It's not skateboarding but fuck it's still cool.

Tim, 46, skateboarder

Tim was recommended for this study through mutual friends. I had met him in London in 2002, while we were both on our overseas adventure. We connected through skateboarding and planned to go to a skate park together but this never eventuated. The next time we met was on a snowboarding trip in New Zealand about five years later. During the years after that, I started bumping into him at a local skate park and we would hang out. As a skater, he was always memorable due to his cavalier style. He never wanted to jump off or bail out. He would try to ride out every trick. He likes to go fast, especially down steep hills. I have always admired his fearless commitment.

Tim remembers starting skateboarding in the late-1980s around the age of ten. He and his neighbour both got skateboards at the same time. He remembers them both trying to master "ollies", a foundation trick where the skater simultaneously presses the board's tail down while dragging their foot up the board to produce lift off the ground. Soon after, they built a jump-ramp that they could ride off and practise aerial tricks. Tim learned that his town had a skate park, complete with a vert ramp half-pipe (a 'U' shaped wooden ramp) and some concrete facilities. Tim and his neighbour would travel an impressive distance on their skateboards just to practise: "It was about 5km down to the beach from where we were and they had a vert ramp there. It was a cool place to be back then." In between times, Tim found skating down hills exhilarating: "I was always interested in going fast and sliding and ollieing. The ultimate would be to bomb a hill and pop an ollie. I idolised that sort of thing." The feeling of control in the face of excessive speed and danger was particularly compelling for him.

Team sports had also played a significant part in Tim's life up until this time. He enjoyed playing soccer from the age of five. Around the age of 12 years, however, that changed as he felt the pressure of expectation. Skateboarding was different; it was something he could engage in without being under the watchful gaze of others.

> I got out of soccer. Because I was a bit of an introvert and, I don't know, I think I felt the pressure a bit with that sort of thing. Skating was less structured and I could do it whenever I wanted and, yeah, there wasn't so many people involved in a structured sense so then I skated.

Tim remained dedicated to skateboarding for the next three or four years until, after the age of 15, he felt the needed to conform to a more recognised New Zealand form of exemplary masculinity (see Connell, 2005). He said that: "I quite body conscious and I got into weights." Then, when 17, he felt obliged to play rugby.

I really felt compelled to play rugby just because I was finishing college. I just felt this internal, um, to be a Kiwi sort of man that I needed to play rugby and so I got into rugby and then rugby was my number one through my uni days and then for a couple of years after uni so maybe five/six years. So skating was always there but I probably did less of it.

It was during his time at university when he met a friend who used to skate. When Tim offered him his second board to use, the two of them went skateboarding together. They shared a mutual bond, both motivating each other to go out and skate. They both enjoyed going fast down hills and mimicking surfing on concrete surfaces.

He was a real surfer and he was always surfing sidewalks [on a skateboard] doing his cutbacks, looking for pops and stuff and he was into massive ollies and he actually liked downhill stuff. Me and him used to go find carpark buildings to skate down.

In his mid-twenties, having completed his university teaching programme, he ventured overseas, including London and Sydney, where he continued to skateboard. He also snowboarded with trips to Europe and Canada. During his trip to Canada, he broke his leg, which necessitated him moving back to New Zealand. With his recovery progressing, his thoughts focused on gaining employment. He started teaching at a local secondary school, but soon found himself wanting to change to a school with more progressive values similar to his own.

I came back and had to start teaching at [the local high school]. And I just remember at that time I just idolised [neighbouring high school] 'cos I knew the kids were allowed to skate at school and I knew they wore mufti and I thought oh, I could skate there as a teacher, that would be cool.

Motivated to combine his passion for skateboarding with employment, he pursued a vacant position. The school encouraged teachers to support student sports.

They like teachers to help out so I said, "listen, I'm going to organise some skate trips, we'll just go round the local skate parks in the region" and we ended up having weekend skate trips, stay at the campgrounds, that sort of thing.

The school responded to his enthusiasm and was supportive of his initiative. It encouraged Tim to progress his ideas into the classroom environment. He designed his classroom lessons to formally incorporate skateboarding for students.

PE has performance standards that you could get credits for if you can achieve to a certain level so I made sure I could assess kids in skating to a certain level. I wrote it up

and submitted it and got accepted. So skating was always part of my PE classes. I'd fit in as much as I could. I got funding through the school and went down to [local skate shop] and organised a deal and we got 15 boards.

The initiative was popular. This motivated Tim to build moveable skateboard features to give the student skaters more options within the school. Outside of school, Tim organised excursions to local skate parks to further their development, all the while skating with his students for his own enjoyment.

Me and a buddy, one of the workshop teachers, we built a box for the kids with nice steel rails down it. We ended up building a spine ramp. Whenever I could, I'd book the van out and at lunchtime I would rip over to [local skate parks]. I actually ended up having inter-school skate comps. [Local skate shop] put up prizes for one of them. Yeah, yeah, that was the scene. So there was probably about 50 skaters at school.

Tim has since left the teaching profession and after further travels, retrained as a builder. He was snowboarding and surfing occasionally, but skateboarding was still a major part of his life. He skates a local half-pipe ramp set up in a warehouse near to where he lives. Being indoors, the facility is unaffected by weather, meaning it is normally available to skate when he has time to go there. It is an environment he enjoys being in, with atmosphere and like-minded skaters he has connected with.

I'm skating a bit more than I used to 'cos there's a nice mini they've set up inside a warehouse. [The] people are drinking in there, people are smoking in there, they've got this raucous sound system you know it's . . . so it's a nice place to be. Someone will crank up some 80s rock and suddenly you're skating pretty hard.

In his mid-40s, Tim was excited to still be progressing his skating and learning new tricks. For example, he recently learned fakie 5-0 pivots (going backwards up the ramp, the skater performs a 90 degree on their back truck before re-entering the ramp). Adding a new trick to his repertoire was both exciting and confidence-building for him. Pushing his limits and continuingly learning helped to justify his place as a local and prove his validity. In the following quote he provides insight into how he feels landing a new trick:

I'm stoked! I think I've landed that twice now, right, and slammed on it about four times, but it's a nice feeling. It adds to my repertoire so I feel like I'm a better skater and I'm more inclined to tell people I skate. If there's some good guys ripping [the halfpipe], I'm more inclined to join in, you know, 'cos I've got another trick up my sleeve.

Progression in lifestyle sports would normally be accompanied by falls. A skater will normally encounter some "slams" while aiming to master a new trick, as Tim's previous example illustrates. Some slams can be minor, while others more painful and with longer lasting effects and injuries. When asked if he is more risk adverse than when he was younger, Tim agrees that he does think more about what can go wrong. One of the ways he counters this is by skating on ramps and terrain he feels are within his ability. He won't skate a park that he views as too dangerous, regardless of how inviting it might be: "I go to the States every couple of years and they've got some awesome [skate] parks there. They tend to be concrete and there's big bowls to drop into so . . . yeah, that freaks me out a bit. I'm scared; if I hang up then ooh, I'm worried about that consequence."

His memories of historic injuries also weigh on his mind. He told specifically of his Canadian snowboarding accident: "Yeah my snowboarding, I do worry – I've snapped a leg snowboarding so I . . . yeah, I worry about those things." These memories make him more considerate of what he does and how he keeps himself safe. "I guess there's always been a certain fear of pushing in all those [board] sports . . . as I'm getting older, I do think about the consequences maybe a little bit more." Yet, Tim is quick to remind me of the upside of these lifestyle sports and that very serious injuries are rare. He explained how falling is a part of sports like skateboarding and how skaters develop sharp reactions to protect themselves when things go wrong:

> I attribute a little bit of my agility to skating. I see it as a way to maintain 'cos I fall a lot and I've studied [in health and sports] a bit and I know it's good to fall; it's good to get these vibrations through your body, through the skeleton. It strengthens bones and continues to keep them dense. If you can handle decent falls, and you can fall well, then that skill – falling is a skill – if you fall well that's something good to carry into our prime years.

While Tim would like to surf and snowboard more, available time means this is not currently an option. Now operating his own building business, he is inclined to work hard and take the jobs that are available. Recreational time can be scarce. Tim acknowledges that this is why skateboarding is so convenient for him.

> Time is a little bit of a factor, but because it's not an organised sport you can do it anytime, anywhere. I've always got skateboards in the vehicles so, I'm happy with a five-minute skate or, you know, the sun's out and there's someone's got some music and then you can hang around for a couple of hours.

Being able to skate whenever he can is particularly important to Tim. He credits skateboarding for his positive disposition. "Whenever I travel, I take a skateboard or I buy a skateboard. Maybe that's why I don't get anxiety, it's like, I've always got a board. I've always got the outlet when I want it." Tim pauses, to reflect further on how skateboarding has positively affected his life. "Yeah mate, it's very good for my head, that's the answer to skating, right? It's really good for my head."

Josh, 40, skateboarder.

I met Josh when recruiting skateboarders to interview for this research project. I had been given a tip to approach a skate shop owner and had visited the shop to drop off an information pack. The interview with the owner never eventuated, but I struck up a conversation with Josh, who manages the shop. He was keen to be involved and we talked about his background. I was intrigued by what he told me and quickly realised that he would be a perfect participant for my project. He is a very gifted skateboarder with unique experiences. He is very eloquent and passionate about skating. We set up a time for an interview.

Josh is not only intensely passionate about skateboarding but also about the rights of skateboarders. He is active in his support for young, talented skateboarders as a mentor and is always happy to give advice to learners or parents in the skate park, or in the skate-shop. He is also fiercely protective of skateboarding with strong views on what he saw as a stigma attached to it and its commercialisation.

Josh was around the age of eight when he first tried skateboarding. He remembers his parents buying cheap, mass-produced skateboards with plastic wheels for his brother and him. They meant well, but the skateboards were low-quality and made by an opportunistic company cashing in on the rapid 1980s' rise in the popularity of skateboarding. As a result, his first experiences were not positive. He remembers: "It was awful because I couldn't, they basically didn't even move so, yeah, it just kinda put me off." Instead, he was drawn to rollerblading and, by the age of 12, was successful in local and regional competitions. However, by the time he turned 13, rollerblading had become dull for him. He then started looking for something that would provide more challenge: "It got a bit boring because it got a bit easy so the next thing we kinda gravitated to was skateboarding." It was the early 1990s by which time skateboarding had all but disappeared after the late 1980s' popularity boom. Josh liked that it was an underground activity, noting that:

Skateboarding wasn't really cool at that stage. It had kinda surpassed that Tony Hawk

era and Christian Hosoi and all those rock stars of the 80s to sort of, yeah. Well it wasn't

something that a lot of people did. Like, I was the only skateboarder at my high school.

In addition to skateboarding Josh played soccer. He achieved success, by making the regional age-group representative side. He became disenfranchised, however, by structure, stress, and the focus on winning that competitive team sports presented him. He preferred the comradery, lack of expectation, and creativity of skateboarding.

I actually played rep football and I kinda just had gotten over the whole team sports

thing. I don't really understand the jock mentality. Whereas for [skaters] it was

something that we could all do together but you were only competing against yourself

and it's just, and you're not even competing against yourself. There's no pressure.

In addition to the physical act of skateboarding, the subcultural elements that surround the skateboarding community formed an immersive and influential environment for Josh. Skateboarding influenced many areas of his life, including how he dressed and what music he listened to. He had completely committed himself to being a skateboarder and to its subculture: "I mean the clothing, I'm a fiend for clothing and footwear and I always have been and I always will be. And it's the same with the music." Skateboarding formed a major part of Josh's identity, however, he became aware of the public's aversion and distrust for skateboarders.

That's something that's never ever changed with skateboarding, just the public

perception of us. Like, it's very black and white in New Zealand. It's kinda like if you're

not playing rugby or cricket, people just don't, people are scared of what they don't

understand.

Josh's commitment to skateboarding resulted in rapid progression. He soon attracted the attention of local skate shops that were eager to sponsor him as a shop representative. They offered him discounted skate gear and clothing that displayed the shop logo. He chose to represent a locally-owned shop that he felt represented skateboarding at the community level and shared his values. The storeowner also responded to the advice Josh would give him. Eventually, he started working in the shop and it became a hang-out for local skaters.

[The storeowner] was kinda open to us being able to express ourselves through the

store because he didn't have much knowledge of skateboarding, he was a snowboarder.

I was super young, probably like 15 or 16. I started working there on the weekends,

which was cool and then we kinda formed a skate team there. And that's when it

started blowing up for us. 'Cos everyone in [the city] saw us as the local emerging guys

and so kinda started coming to shop at that store.

Josh was happy at this time. He was fully immersed in the skateboarding culture, the skate shop had become a community hub for local skaters, and his abilities were continuing to develop. Over the next few years, he was sponsored by skateboard companies, received thousands of dollars' worth of free gear every year and was flown to different locations to skate. He notes that it was an amazing, if not overwhelming, experience: "I didn't come from money. I'd been on a plane twice and then all of a sudden it was like get flown around the country to go and do stuff." He decided that he no longer needed to work in the shop and resigned so he could skate more. He was following his instincts, even if others close to him did not understand his decision. "I'd kinda gotten over the work

thing. I'd got to the stage where I just wanted to skate. I was probably about 18 or 19. No one really understood it, especially not my parents."

For several years, Josh continued to progress as a skateboarder who was particularly well known in New Zealand through featuring in magazines and in videos. At this point his life changed. He met a girl and decided to follow her to her South Island hometown, a location popular for tourism, but with very few skate spots. While living there, Josh and his girlfriend had a child. He got a job to bring in income for his family. For the first time in over a decade, skateboarding took a backseat due to a lack of available time and a lack of skate locations. Josh struggled with his new lifestyle with a worrying response to the change in meaning of his life: "That's when it all slowed down for me 'cos I had a child, slash, I became a raging alcoholic."

Josh found the responsibilities of being a father demanding with work and family commitments reducing his free time and contributing to his stress. For Josh, life "just got really hard and having a child as well. I couldn't just go and do things when I wanted to and I found that quite frustrating." An undiagnosed foot bone fracture added more complication for him, as the few times he tried to skate was painful and unproductive. His addiction to alcohol took hold and he claims to have little memory of that period of his life, "[There is] 13 to 15 years where I don't remember much."

Two things were instrumental in giving Josh his life back: his son and skateboarding. At the time of interview, he had surpassed two years of sobriety and attributes this to his son: "The person who got me through it was my son because he was skating a lot." Josh loves his son and is a proud father. With his son having developed the same love for skateboarding, Josh was determined to change his life and reconnect with skateboarding so that he and his son could skate together. Initially, it was particularly difficult. Having neglected his body for so long, he was shocked at how badly his skills had deteriorated: "It was just like 'holy shit' like, I can't even ollie." It took over eight months before he felt he was skating well again, before "something just clicked in my head."

As part of his recovery, Josh made the difficult decision to return to live in his home city because he: "didn't want to go back to the party." This resulted in the end of his relationship and meant that he lived a several hours' drive from his son. They remain very close and speak every day, often focusing on skating. Every school holidays, Josh's son travels up to stay with him and they skate together as an experience they both cherish. It's an opportunity to bond closer and for Josh to pass on the benefits of his many years skateboarding. One frustration for Josh, however, is that the lingering image of skaters being societal misfits. Attitudes of the general public are something a skater has to deal with, as Josh illustrates with the following story.

I took my son [to a skate park] at Christmas time and it was covered in kids running up

and down the ramps and sliding down them on their bums. And I kept going up one

ramp to turn around and every time I turned around there would be a kid sliding. I just

couldn't, I didn't swear, I just kinda went "arrrrh" because it happened about 10 times

and it's a small park and there's a playground right next to the park. This woman says to

me, "excuse me, you're being a bit obnoxious. They're just kids." I said "okay, cool. Can

you watch your kids please?" And she goes, "what do you mean?" And I said, "well, this

is a skate park. I've come here to skate." She goes, "actually it's a public park." I said

"cool, okay. Bear in mind this. That my whole entire life that I've been skateboarding

I've been told that I can't do it here and I can do it here and I can't do it there and

labelled as a criminal by people like yourself. And now I'm at the skate park and I can't

even skate here because your kid is using it as a slide. There's a playground right over

there with a slide on it."

Now in his early 40s, Josh has changed his approach to skateboarding, concentrating on skating with style and control, rather than performing difficult tricks: "I don't do half the things that I may have done years ago but those tricks are just too time consuming. I don't have four days to spend on a manual pad. You have responsibilities when you're older. I just want to have fun." Along with time constraints, he is inhibited by his physical condition, which relates to age, his previous addiction, and the accumulation of injuries. Josh describes: "I think my body just took quite a beating from all the abuse that I put it through from going from actually being an athlete to kinda being a piece of shit and then picking it back up and trying to do it again." He takes his health and fitness seriously now. He is an avid cyclist, prepares his body with a stretching routine, and visits a physiotherapist. She, in particular, has influenced how he approaches skateboarding in his forties.

I went to my physio – she's amazing. I was getting a lot of lower back pain and she fixed

it all up for me. She said "well, how long are you going skating for?" And I was like,

"well, I dunno, four or five hours." She said "pardon?" And she said "two hours, Josh, is

what you're allowed to do."

After moving back to his home city and getting healthy, Josh next focused on employment. He learnt from his experiences through conventional employment that he really needed a job he was passionate about: "I did a lot of soul searching but I worked out that I'm a skateboarder and I always will be." He thought about being younger and working in a skate shop. He remembered how much he loved being at the centre of the subculture so he contacted a friend who owned a skate shop and asked for a job. It was exactly what he needed. Josh explains, "I enjoy it. I get to talk to people about

shit that I enjoy and stuff that I have a whole lot of knowledge up here about and it just kind of makes perfect sense. And it's not draining me."

Josh has noticed a lot of changes in how the skateboard stores are run currently. Once, they were boutique shops catering to a small bunch of dedicated skaters. Now, skateboard fashion has been commodified and is everywhere. He explains that 80 per cent of his customers are not skaters, which is the opposite of his experiences during the 1990s. He tells of luxury brands, such as Versace, making skateboards and skate shoes. Closer to home, he explains that shop assistants in stores that stock skateboards are not even skaters themselves:

> Most of the stores don't even have one person that skates working behind the counter and that's another sign of the times as well. "Oh skateboards? Yeah, we sell skateboards." It's like, "well, can you grip the skateboard for me?" "Oh, no, I don't know how to do it." "Are you a skate shop? You fucking sell skateboards." It's disgusting.

He aims to evolve his skate shop into a hub for the skating community, a place they can congregate, hang out, and feel at home. He also wants to ensure skaters, and the parents of skaters, get the right advice and are well looked after. It harks back to his own parents buying him and his brother a cheap, mass-produced skateboard when he was eight. He wishes to stop that happening to someone else.

> One of my main objectives here is to actually try and create a space where skateboarders can come and get a bit of knowledge and the right treatment from a skateboarder at a skate shop. A critical part of my upbringing was going to the skate shop, sitting on the couch and watching some videos.

Section summary: The Skaters

Skateboarding has been, and continues to be, a powerful influence in the lives of the participants, and not only as a physical outlet and source of adventure for them. It has helped them navigate life and negotiate its challenges. For them all, skateboarding has been a beacon of positivity that enabled them to cope with stress and pressure and their stories suggest that this has gained significance as they have grown older and their responsibilities have increased. Skateboarding has provided temporary reprieve from what they see as being structured environments to provide space for them to clear their heads and recharge. This is very similar to the surfers but the two physical environments were very different. Where the surfers formed a connection with the natural environment, the skaters connected to the human-made cityscape. Form them it was a concreate playground open to creative interpretation and personal expression as they perform tricks on concrete, stairs, ledges, concaves, and transitions. Skaters see a city's potential far beyond its original purpose and design.

To understand why skateboarding remains important in the lives of middle-aged participants, it is vital to understand the elements that attracted them to the lifestyle sport in the beginning. All of the skaters in the study were first attracted to skating by its anti-social, counter-cultural, rebellious nature and how it provided an escape from expectation and frustration. This fits Giddens (1989) definition of a rebel as someone who actively rejects existing values and attempts to reshape the social system. Being a skater is a defiant statement of independence, creativity, and a challenge to conformity. For the four skaters in this study, to be a skater was to be in control by rejecting conventional life and expectations. This was particularly evident when the skaters compared and contrasted skateboarding to traditional sports. Their experiences of structured sports are seen to be negative, whereas the freedom and creativity in skateboarding provide a positive experience. There is also a strong contrast between the structures of society that frustrate them and the agency they search for in skating.

Both Tim and Josh emphasised stark differences between structured competitive sport (both played soccer) and the freedom they found in skateboarding as something Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (2014) describe as an essential component for a quality human life. Josh was dismissive of jock culture and keen to distance himself from it. Tim acknowledged his introversion, preferring to throw himself into the exciting solo pursuit of skateboarding instead of the pressure and dependency of team sport environments.

Being a skateboarder shaped how these skaters saw the world and their place in it. This was evident in the way they described their environments. They had a special connection to the places

they skated in, which is consistent with O'Connor's research (2018, p. 1651). O'Connor found that skaters form emotional connections to places overlooked by the general public through their engagement with it:

> Skateboarding, unlike other sports, privileges places that are not legitimate sporting locations. For skateboarders, walking through a city opens up possibilities as they imagine performing tricks on the surroundings. They see almost endless opportunities. The stadiums of skateboarders are urban settings, handrails, curbs, and steps.

Dewey (1938) acknowledges the environment as crucial to the outcome of an experience and emphasises how environments only exist through the interaction of the organism and environment (Quay, 2014). This perspective on interaction between organism and environment applied through adulthood to middle age for these skaters. Their long-term engagement with cityscapes in particular areas gave meaning to them and almost made them live. Stacey described seeing architecture through a skater's perspective still, imagining herself performing tricks on the ledges and stairs that she sees. Brian and Josh told of strong connections to particular skate spots, their words steeped with nostalgia. Not only were these locations for skating, they were community congregation points. Simply viewing an image of these spots is enough to stir emotion. Brian captured this in his photography and, when these photos were recently published, the interest he received surprised him and he was proud to help reconnect a community. Social media platforms in particular stimulated reminiscent buzz between old friends.

Skateboarding continued to be an emotionally engaging and sensuous practice for all of the participants and triggered emotional responses in the interviews. Their comments during their interviews suggest that this has gained more significance in middle age, particularly as they acknowledge having less time to dedicate to skateboarding. For Stacey and Josh the mere sound of skateboarding was evocative. That sound is enough to stop them in their tracks, look and connect when they hear it. The screech of a skateboarder grinding across a marble ledge at pace brought Stacey great happiness. For all of the four participants skating is a wholly human experience. They now focus less on difficult tricks or risky terrain. This relates to what Dewey (1938) defines as purpose and desire in regard to learning experiences. In adulthood, these skaters have defined new purposes and desires as most relevant to their continued experiences. At the time of the interviews, their pursuit was more closely focused on control, grace, and mastery. Tim connected with his environment by finding flow and rhythm at his local halfpipe and Brian was in pursuit of "grace" as both an aesthetic and a wholly engaging human experience. Grace conjures images of spirituality, beauty, and flow. For him, skateboarding represents an opportunity for suspension from reality for an immersive moment. Stacey described skateboarding as if it was part of her soul. She grew from

the little girl sitting on her lunch box and sliding down hills pretending it was a skateboard to an international travelling skate competitor. She summarises her connection succinctly and with passion: "I didn't like being inside and sitting down . . . I was just not interested in school and just not interested in studying or being good at anything other than skateboarding."

Skateboarding has had a significant impact on the health and well-being of these skaters in adulthood. The skaters identified this as an important element towards their continued engagement. Skateboarding is a source of excitement and expression and, importantly, it enables them to cope with the stresses of life. Through skateboarding, they gain a sense of harmony. Lomasa and Ivtzana (2015, p. 6) describe harmony as "balancing opposite elements into a whole," noting that harmony is an important self-rated psychological component of happiness. We see this illustrated by examples of when these skateboarders had periods of inactivity and, as a result, experiencing disharmony. Reflecting on her serious knee injury, Stacey described the period of recovery as an emotional "low," compounded when she saw a group of female skateboarders. They were the community she had longed for, having felt isolated as the only female skater for so long, aside from occasionally seeing other females at national competitions. This time, when she saw a group of female skaters, she felt frustrated that she could not join them.

A year later, she started skating again. The reconnection was incredibly joyous for her. The activity she was so passionate about was back in her life and her life changed because of it. Reconnection was also a strong theme for Brian. Reflecting on the period of his life when he was not skateboarding, he said he felt "lost." Something was missing in his life. His wife recognised how he missed skating and encouraged him to buy a board. Re-engaging in skateboarding, and reconnecting to the skate community through his photography, filled the hole in his life. Brian's use of skateboarding as respite from the stress of his mother's terminal illness was poignant. It allowed him to break free of his stressful and consuming thoughts to focus on his board the tricks he performed. The break re-energised him, allowing him to better deal with his situation.

Josh's story forms a most harrowing example. After more than a decade battling alcoholism, he cited skateboarding and his son (who had developed his own passion for skateboarding) as being critical in turning his life around. He had to learn to skate again, all while under the shadow of his earlier reputation and subcultural standing. It was a humbling and transformational journey for him that led him to see his life with renewed vigour and passion.

Perception of risk and the consequences of injury have changed the way these skaters engage in skateboarding. When focusing on their situation at the time of the interviews, the skateboarders all considered their age and the risks associated with skateboarding. Indeed, risk was a feature of

skating and a big part of its original attraction for them. Facing and conquering risk in the pursuit of learning new tricks or mastering a domain is a source of excitement and achievement when they were young. It provided thrill and adventure. Yet, combining speed and hard surfaces means that there is always the threat of injury. Dewey (1938) links the consideration of risk with desire, claiming that a strong desire towards an experience can override the potential risks for negative consequences. As older participants, risk came to take on new meaning with the skaters all acknowledging that they were more considerate of consequences. This appreciation for risk and consequence captures a significant change in practice for middle-aged participants. Injuries were seen not only in terms of reducing personal well-being, but also as affecting their ability to complete responsibilities, such as work and family commitments. Tim did not skateboard as aggressively as he did when younger and he will not skate in a skate park that he views as being beyond his ability. He prefers to challenge himself within environments he is comfortable with, particularly the half-pipe he frequents. He is stoked on learning new tricks and connecting with the local ramp community. Brian, too, will only skate in an environment he feels comfortable in – his local skate park. Taking his daughter there has become a favourite weekend activity. He is conscious of risk and worries about what would happen if he has a serious fall. His responsibilities as a parent influence the risks he is prepared to take.

Stacey and Josh were both aware of their physical limitations. Serious injuries and cumulative wear on their bodies has affected their skateboarding. This has changed the frequency and duration of the skateboarding sessions. Stacey rarely skated anymore and, when she did, it was at an intermediate level. Considerate of her deteriorating knee, she no longer has the confidence to skate. Josh described dealing with an ongoing hip injury. Treatment is helping, but it has effected how he skates. He focuses less on progression through learning difficult or dangerous tricks, preferring to perfect his existing repertoire, with his skate sessions being shorter as well. In fact, his physiotherapist advised him to not skate for long periods any more, remarking: "you are getting old."

Some of the skaters incorporated skateboarding into a means for income as a way of adapting their practice as they aged. It was seen as a way to satisfy the need for income, compensate for a lack of recreational time, and remain connected to the skate industry and community. This is consistent with Snyder's (2012) research on skateboarding. Brian combined his love of skateboarding with his photography degree and eventually became a successful skateboarding photographer. His work continues to be relevant today, particularly due to him capturing a unique period of Canterbury's history, in both reflection of skateboarding and the city before the 2010 and 2011 earthquakes. Tim specifically sought employment as a teacher in a school where he knew he

could incorporate skateboarding into the physical education curriculum. His passion resulted in regional, interschool competitions with sponsored prizes. He was also able to introduce skateboarding to students who would not have otherwise had the opportunity to try it. To Tim, he was simply creating opportunities for others to enjoy something that had been so rewarding in his life. Josh's story was uniquely cyclical as he returned to working in a skate shop. He had found working in a regular job to be unrewarding. In the skate shop he can help skaters of all abilities and promote the sport that changed his life as a youngster and gave him his life back in middle age. This incorporation of skateboarding into their working lives shows adaptability, as well as a change in meaning for skateboarding, as they embed their passion into their adult responsibilities and need for income.

As with the surfers, examining the experiences of these skateboarders from the perspective of Dewey's experiential learning theory suggests strong reactions to social control. The participants responded negatively to structure and control, with them contrasting skating to structured sports and societal attitudes and expectations. They felt inspired by the creative and ungoverned experiences skateboarding offered them. This creativity provided them what Dewey (1938) describes as "individuality of experience" (p. 65). This is something more akin to free-play than structured sports. Freedom was a value that was important to them. We can also see a greater appreciation of risk. As the skaters grow older, their appreciation for the consequences of risk, coupled with their experiences of previous injuries (some of which had an on-going effect on their physical abilities), has resulted in a realignment of purpose. Purpose, Dewey states, is the identification of a goal or destination to aspire towards. In this respect, we see a change in the meaning of skateboarding for these participants

Section Three: The Snowboarders

Fiona, 43, snowboarder

Fiona (Fi) was recommended to me for this research project. I had met her in 2002, when I was working at a New Zealand ski resort. She was a dedicated and gifted snowboarder who focused on half-pipe riding. Halfpipe riders often walk back to the top of the pipe after each completed run so there is a lot of time to chat to those around you. The terrain park team (the team I worked in) was based at the halfpipe too, which gave us a lot of time to socialise with the locals. We had a tight and friendly community. Over the two seasons I worked there, I got to know Fi as a big character who is particularly funny.

I knew Fi had been overseas as a snowboard coach and tourism host and heard that she had become a mother, a Pilates instructor, and was surfing a lot. I had lost contact with her, but through mutual friends, I was able to reconnect and really enjoyed interviewing her. She had lost none of her wit, but was more reflective and considered in her responses that I was prepared for. It helped me understand more deeply who she was and why she loves life on a board.

Fi was introduced to snow through family skiing excursions to a North Island ski resort located close to where she grew up. Her family encouraged her to try things, seek experiences, and challenge herself. This philosophy led her overseas for an extended working holiday at the age of 21. While in Switzerland, she had the opportunity to try snowboarding and instantly connected with the experience: "[I] just loved it. Loved the freedom feeling." Fi also liked that snowboarding was different to skiing. It was 1997 and Switzerland ski resorts were dominated by skiers. Being involved in the emergence of snowboarding was new and exciting: "I guess [snowboarding] was cool, you know."

Fi connected with the other local snowboarders. One in particular was a snowboard instructor who alternated between winters in Switzerland and New Zealand. He encouraged her in following him and becoming an instructor herself.

> [He] gave me the idea of coming back to New Zealand and becoming an instructor 'cos I
> wanted to continue travelling and quite liked snowboarding. My visa for England had
> run out and so I couldn't really stay in Europe any longer under those circumstances so,
> yeah, I came back and did that rookie programme at [South Island ski resort].

Becoming a snowboard instructor opened new opportunities for Fi. After completing the New Zealand winter, she travelled to a ski resort in America. Being a female instructor helped her find employment opportunities. She became disenfranchised with the rigidity of instructing and

managed to switch to a coaching role. Coaching enabled her to mentor talented snowboarders to continue their progression.

> I didn't really like the instructor side of it. Like, the rigidity of how you should ride your snowboard and then you should do this and should do that and all, like, I'm not really a systems kind of person. I prefer to coach so luckily I was able to move more into coaching and that. And maybe because I was quite good for a female.

Through back-to-back winters, Fi's own snowboarding continued to advance. She started regularly entering competitions, predominantly halfpipe and slopestyle events. Competitions appealed to her, as it motivated her to push her own limits. The other women snowboarders also inspired her. Together, they formed a supportive community.

> I'm just probably quite a competitive person within myself. I like the idea of competition to push your own limits. Pushing yourself and your skills. I do think it's a motivator for other women. Yeah, because if women see other women doing it. It's the camaraderie.

Fi formed strong connections to the women she snowboarded with and against. They related to each other through their shared experiences, adventures, and travels. Through the fledgling lifestyle sport, they were breaking new ground for women's snowboarding in New Zealand.

> Some of those girls from back then are still some of my best friends. A lot of those friendships that were forged back in those days; they're friends forever. A lot of those people were people that I've met on those travels and things because I think you all share something in common. It's quite unique.

Reflecting on some of her most significant moments in her snowboarding career, Fi was proud to have been featured in a double page spread in a New Zealand snowboard magazine. At the time, males dominated media coverage. To feature so prominently was evidence that she, and by extension women's snowboarding, was gaining attention and validity.

> A really proud moment for me in snowboarding was my friend took a photo of me just snowboarding at the front face of [South Island ski resort]. It got a double page in [snowboarding magazine], which was a huge, huge thing because it was a beautiful photo and it was a girl.

At the age of 31, Fi suffered a serious knee injury that required surgery and a significant period of recovery. It was her second knee injury (having first had one when much younger). It resulted in an immediate halt to snowboarding and traveling, two things that had been the cornerstones for her life for so long. Snowboarding was her identity and her lifestyle and now she was facing considerable

disruption. Fi felt forced to re-join what she saw as conventional society, which was something she found difficult.

> If you've done this sort of travel and meeting these types of people - seasonal - and then to try and fit back into normal society in a place that is nine-to-five, Monday to Friday, just, like, I struggled.

This period was a reflective time in Fi's life. Immobilised by injury, she took time to address her life and her motivations towards her nomadic lifestyle. She realised her pursuit of freedom and adventure was also the avoidance of structure, connection, and commitment. Now anchored, she needed to acknowledge her feelings.

> When I was 20, I lost a significant person in my life to a tragic accident and that to me was one of the reasons why I fell more into this [snowboarding] lifestyle, I think. The seasonal thing, initially, just really appealed because I didn't want to stay in any one place for too long. I didn't want to get too close to anybody and I enjoyed the meditative concentration of snowboarding. And seasonal because your life was like 5-months long, you know? Who cares what was going to happen after the season until the snow dried? Then you're like "who gives a shit?" For me, when I did have my second knee injury and stopped at the age of 31 that's when I really had to face some personal issues I guess, that I had probably been putting off.

Additionally, Fi was now without a source of income. Her snowboarding ability and knowledge had always provided opportunities to earn money. Unable to snowboard, she was now unable to work. It was her recovery, however, that opened a new career opportunity. In her search for a fitness solution that would provide flexibility, strength, and balance, Fi discovered Pilates. Impressed by the results she was getting, Fi decided to retrain as a Pilates instructor. It became a new passion, which made good use of her experiences as a snowboard coach and instructor.

Having grown stronger, and regained confidence in her knee, Fi started surfing more. She had surfed in the past and enjoyed it. Now, with snowboarding no longer a current option, it gave her something with which to challenge herself. "I guess the energy I did channel into snowboarding, after my injury, I just channelled into surfing and I just like tried to get as good as I could as quick as I could." Surfing gave her access to a group of people to which she related. Fi recalls, "I found myself being more accepted in a similar community, which to me was surfing."

With her recovery complete, Fi was asked to work for an international snowboard tourism business. She would be a coach and guide on the female-only tours. She now had a partner, himself a serious surfer, which made travel more inconvenient, but the extra income was welcome. Fi

enjoyed being back on her snowboard. Her last trip (at the time of interview) had an unexpected complication. Fi discovered that she was pregnant. She was a long way from home and had responsibilities to ensure an organised, high-quality snowboarding experience for her tour group. It took all of her focus and strength to get through it.

> It was fucking horrible. I would never do that again. Honestly, I got up to the top of the mountain, because at that stage you don't know if you're going to have a baby at 8 weeks. I got to the top [of the mountain] one day and I had to like sit down and lie down. I had to say to the client, I was like "can you just like ... I think I feel just a bit sick." Snowboarding [during the] pregnant early stages, not ideal. I wouldn't recommend it.

Fi returned to Australia, where she and her partner welcomed their son into the world and settled into life in a beach community where they surfed as much as possible. She feels thankful that she made the most of her opportunities to travel the world snowboarding, recognising that it is no longer as easy. "What I feel really thankful for now is that I did all those travels back when I did because, now that I have a son and a partner, we want to do stuff together." She is making plans to coach and mentor with the snowboarding tour company again in the near future, which she is excited about. In the meantime, she is content to surf. Considering the future, she feels confident that she can continue to engage in board sports. Moreover, she is excited about doing so as a family with her partner and son: "With surfing, it's not like a young person's thing. It's an any age thing and it's an any board thing, it's a family-orientated sport and I think to some extent snowboarding is as well."

Having a child has not made Fi more fearful of board-sports, but she does have a considered approach and prefers to assess the risks involved before engaging. She feels that her experience is valuable in lowering the risks she faces. "I don't personally think that I've become more fearful since having my child. I think I'm just more calculated on the risks I will take because I know myself." In snowboarding, this involves what she rides on the mountain. For example, she now avoids jumps.

> I've seen stuff go wrong. I'm like more calculated; I don't want to really jump much because of the risk of injury. Oh I'll drop a steep powder field though, no worries, but as far as like getting up in the air. Yeah, and as far as surfing, I'm not really at that high enough level that I would really injure myself.

Experiencing board sports as a family is something Fi is looking forward to. Her young son has already shown keenness to get involved and loves accompanying his parents to the beach. Fi and her son regularly watch snowboarding media together: "We watch snowboarding at dinner time and he

loves it whenever they do big jumps." They are planning a family holiday to New Zealand during the following year. Fi still has many friends who are keen to support their trip, which will help to keep the costs down. "We'll come over and do like six days so yeah. I mean I'm lucky I still have quite a few friends that we can stay with." One concern she has, is about the popularity of ski resorts currently. The prospect of crowded fields is not inviting to her. She explains that the club-fields (smaller, rustic fields often run by club members) are more inviting to her and provide a more enjoyable experience for her.

> The last time I was at the inbound fields, like at [two large, South Island commercial ski resorts] and that, I was kinda like, I'm almost done with these sorts of fields. Like, they're so busy and so much traffic on the mountain. Skiers and snowboarders. Like, personally I would love rather go to the club fields.

Fi is looking forward to surfing and snowboarding well past middle age: "I want to try and surf and snowboard for as long as I can." If she maintains her health and fitness, she feels she can continue indefinitely. "Ageing with these sports, yeah, there shouldn't really be any restrictions around it and I think it's just about keeping yourself fit and able." Modern technologies are making is easier for people to stay involved in board-sports and Fi feels that these can be embraced to extend anyone's engagement. "With these sports, [you keep] adapting and changing with yourself. Skateboarding, you ride the long board, surfing you change boards, snowboarding you probably go more back country, split boarding." The health benefits are important to her, not just physically, but also mentally through the connection to nature. Fi notes, "[The] thing that I love about it is the health perspective, the cardio, being out in nature, you know, all that." She aims to maintain a healthy and positive lifestyle for as long as she can, feeling that board-sports add significantly to this aspiration.

Gav, 48, snowboarder

In 2002, while working at a South Island ski resort, I became friends with Gav. He was a regular at the halfpipe so I would see him most days. As well as being a remarkable snowboarder, he is naturally friendly. When I returned to work a second winter season the following year, Gav joined our terrain park team. I learned that he had snowboarded all over the world (predominantly Canada, USA, Europe, and Japan), completing numerous back-to-back winters. Eventually, he would complete 21 winters in a row.

Despite his jovial nature, Gav is a deep thinker, which was revealed during his interview. I appreciated his honesty and his frankness. I particularly connected with his feelings on changes in snowboarding. We both started snowboarding at a time in New Zealand when it had a do-it-yourself, community feel; a small group of punky innovators trying the new snowy "fad." A lot has changed.

Gav's earliest connection to board-sports was at the age of six when he was given a skateboard. His family home had a long, concrete driveway and he remembers carving up and down, while trying to go faster and faster. He grew up in a North Island town known for quality surf breaks and soon found himself learning to surf. His brother surfed and was a member of the surf lifesaving club, which provided a pathway to involvement and helped introduce Gav to beach culture. In surfing, he found an activity that he naturally excelled at and soon he preferred surfing to skating. At the same time, he played soccer, but he found the structure restrictive.

> The whole team sport [concept] probably didn't do much for me. So it was an individual sport that sort of struck me. Probably just so I could be in my own, you know, on my own, in my own head I guess maybe, or just getting away from people.

The anti-social ethos of surfing spoke more to Gav's rebellious side: "I was pretty anti-establishment back in my youth." The connection to nature and solitude were also strong attractors for him. He chose to dedicate himself to surfing, something that began effecting other areas of his life: "I spent a lot of time at the beach. Spent a lot of time not going to school; going to the beach." As his surfing improved, signing up for competitions seemed the next logical step for him. He excelled and spent several years travelling around the country on the New Zealand circuit. The routine of the tour and the competition structure, however, left Gav disenchanted and losing his passion for surfing.

> Just the whole competition side of surfing spoilt it for me, I think. It definitely changed the way I thought about it all, you know. Just half an hour at a time in the water when the surf's pumping [during a competition heat] and you want to go down to the beach

and go surfing all day with your buddies, but there's a surf comp on so you gotta hang

around and do that sort of thing.

Gav describes feeling lost through this period of his life. Surfing had been his primary focus, yet he no longer felt connected to it. He yearned to find some purpose or direction.

I was probably struggling in life, you know. I got kicked out of school when I was 16, sort

of drifted around [town] and just, fuck, what do you do? You know, smoke the pipe and

you go surfing and then the next thing you know is I'm 20 and I'm still there going "I've

got to do something with my life."

A local surfboard shaper, Ray, was pivotal in helping Gav turn his life around. Ray offered him a job helping in his shop, an opportunity that would become Gav's introduction to snowboarding. In 1992, Ray and Gav completed a New Zealand-wide sales trip. A South Island ski resort town was a stop on the trip and Gav felt an immediate connection, particularly with the natural beauty of the mountains, vowing to return as soon as possible.

I saw [ski resort town] and just thought "oh shit". It looked like a pretty rad place, I'll

come back. So then went back [home] after the trip, sold a bunch of shit and got some

money and hopped on the ferry and came back. Never left.

The individualistic nature of snowboarding provided an escape for Gav and he responded to the solitude he felt in the expansive, mountainous environments. It provided space between him and the constrictions he felt in normal society. In the mountains, he found a place where he could find space and reset.

On the outside, I'm pretty easy going and open to being able to talk to people, but, sort

of, internally, you know, there's probably a pretty big mental struggle going on there. So

I'm just trying to figure out how to make it work. But then there's times I just disappear

and go into the hills with a board and just that feeling of not having to talk to anyone.

During his interview, Gav found it difficult to describe how he felt when he is snowboarding. He used words such as "freedom," "feeling," and "spiritual" and found it hard to compare to other experiences and activities.

My work worries are gone, just there's nothing else that... your mind just shuts off and

you become singularly focused. Trying to describe riding knee deep powder to someone

who doesn't ski or snowboard, you know, trying to put that feeling or emotion into

words you'd be like "ummmm" it's, yeah, it's a feeling. It's probably a form of escapism.

Being a part of a new, growing community also appealed to Gav. Snowboarding was in its infancy when he immersed himself in it. He noted how, "it was a small industry" in the mid-1990s and how snowboarding was yet to be accepted by the skiing community. He described feeling unwelcome on ski resorts, something he and the other snowboarders defiantly took pride in. Gav responded positively to this anti-mainstream philosophy.

Snowboarding is sliding down a hill on a snowboard but then you've got this other [element]. It's a culture, I guess; it's like the whole punk rock scene, it's just like, yeah, dirt bags, skate rats, baggy clothes and just like anti mainstream. Yeah, anti-skiers.

Gav followed his passion for snowboarding all over the world, before returning each year for the New Zealand winter. In all, he completed 21 winter seasons in a row while basing himself at resorts throughout America, Canada, Europe, and Japan. He travelled on a tight budget with the aims of maximising his snowboarding, stretching his limited budget as far as he could, and scrimping enough money to travel back to New Zealand. This lifestyle required a remarkable level of opportunism, entrepreneurism, and hardy living, particularly as ski resort locations are often tourism focused and known to be expensive to live in.

[I] picked up some jobs shovelling, clearing snow, just cash work. Just do a couple of hours a day, or just [snowboard] when it was a powder day and once the powder was all gone go and work a couple of days to get some money to buy some food to keep going. I had a season's pass [to the resort ski field] and basically just rode. Lived on day old pizzas. You buy slices of day old pizzas for a dollar. I lived on couches and lived in hallways and under stairwells and just went snowboarding.

It is a lifestyle unlikely to appeal to everyone, yet Gav gained enormously from it. It has provided him with a sense of confidence that he can adapt to any situation. It has taught him that if he wants something in life he simply needs to chase it.

The growth I got out of it, basically, in snowboarding, but just in life in general is just huge. The ability to go somewhere and not know anyone and then a couple of months later just like "dude, you guys are awesome, I'll see you next year 'cos I'm coming back."

Injuries can be a consequence of snowboarding and Gav has had many. In particular, overcoming a serious back injury in 2002 provided a point for contemplation. He was attempting a trick on a handrail feature (a long, steel bar that snowboarders slide across) which went badly wrong. The injury caused to him assess what was important to him, not just in snowboarding but also in life.

I broke my back in three places, pretty close to being in a wheelchair. [It] just made me re-assess the whole thing. I guess that was probably the catalyst that made me sort of start changing my outlook on life in general. Probably, not just with snowboarding.

It was the first time Gav recognised the risks involved in snowboarding. He reflects: "You don't expect to be that broken from snowboarding. It didn't ever cross my mind that it could happen to me." His recovery in hospital, and then lengthy rehabilitation, gave Gav time to think. He was determined to snowboard again. Slowly, as his healing progressed and the medical outlook improved, he started to address how he would get back into snowboarding.

I didn't ever think I was never going to snowboard again. Once [the doctors] told me I was going to be fine, and I got rid of that walking frame and shit, it just was natural to go back there. Obviously, I did it with a different mind-set. I took it pretty easy for a while. Like I said, it probably changed the whole direction of where I was heading. Probably not just snowboarding but in life as well, I guess.

Two of the decisions Gav made were, firstly, to pursue "quality, not quantity" where he would seek good conditions and stay on the mountain only while he was enjoying it. The second decision was to pursue a pure form of snowboarding, placing importance of style and fluidity, as well as solitude. He felt inspired by Craig Kelly, a pioneering snowboarder of the 1990s and early 2000s. Known for his graceful style and power, Kelly turned his back on commercial success to pursue backcountry, freestyle snowboarding before tragically being killed in an avalanche in 2003, aged 36.

[The broken back] probably made me go back more towards doing the whole soul thing. Just going for a walk and trying to find powder pockets and just wandering off by myself. The whole Craig Kelly sort of thing. Just being alone I guess in the mountains.

A ski resort near where Gav lived while in New Zealand developed a new half pipe. It provided the opportunity for him to live his philosophy, as well as rebuild his snowboarding. He felt completely at home in that environment and found his snowboarding flourished.

I just discovered that big half pipe at [ski resort]. Bro, that was it for me. That was just the fucking bees' knees for me. It was just like, "oh my God." I rode that thing so many times by myself, like early morning. I'd start work at half past 10 in the snowboard shop so I'd be out there at fucking half past 7, waiting for it to get light and I'd just go up and I'd ride it for probably 2 hours by myself and then just go down and go to work. I was driving down the hill when most people were coming up.

Currently, Gav finds that he has less time and inclination to snowboard and his life has changed significantly from his days sleeping under stairs. Many elements of his life follow a more conventional approach. He has a young daughter, partner, mortgage, and job, resulting in a reduction in available time. He is a successful mountain bike coach, something that he is immensely passionate about.

> Priorities obviously shift. Family and housing and mortgages and partners and things like that. Shit, I dunno. I don't miss it to tell you the truth. But I've probably found another outlet for snowboarding [through] my bike. I can hop on my bike and I can go away for an hour and I'll be back home and I'll have re-set myself. As opposed to if I was going to get up on the snow. By the time you have a couple of hours up there you come back down, it's the day gone.

The growth in snowboarding sits uncomfortably with Gav. Being a part of a small, tight-knit, ragtag community was an enormous part of the appeal. He feels that snowboarding has lost touch with its punk rock, ant-social foundations. Popularity, mainstream acceptance, and commercialisation have diluted those foundations and made it less attractive to him.

> It's a profession now. It's cleaned up its act, or else the industry's just died a slow death. I dunno. It's the Olympics. I guess it became mainstream. It lost its edge because it isn't anti-establishment now. It's like any industry, it becomes about the money. It's about being seen wearing the right clothes.

When Gav snowboards now he remains committed to his pursuit of solitude. He prefers to avoid commercial ski resorts and the crowds that populate them. He would rather use his split board, which doubles as a snowboard and cross-country skis enabling the user to traverse into remote locations and access unoccupied natural slopes. It's a rare excursion, but a solo adventure where he can get away from everything, connect with nature, and clear his head.

> Just pack a bag and take a thermos of tea and go to the back country and get away from it; get away from the maddening crowds. And that probably relates back to the whole surfing thing, just being in [ocean] on a sunrise, just in the water by myself, just sitting there waiting for the sun to come up. Good for the soul.

Deb, 53, snowboarder

I knew of Deb during my time working on a South Island ski resort. She, and her husband, were talented snowboarders who would often stop when they saw us working and say "hi." Their friendliness made an impression on me and I enjoyed watching their success in snowboarding. They were also entrepreneurs, known in particular, for their snowboarding apparel business, which sponsored a number of up-and-coming riders.

After interviewing Gav, I asked if he knew of some female snowboarders that would be suitable to talk to. He mentioned that it would be good to interview Deb. Through Gav, I was able to make contact, introduce myself and explain the background of my project. Thankfully, Deb was just as friendly as I remembered and was keen to be involved. We scheduled a time to talk.

Deb's introduction to board sports came via the beach rather than the mountains. Through a friend, she received an opportunity for seasonal work in Hawaii. It was a great opportunity to avoid the New Zealand winder. While there, she learnt to windsurf. After four years, during the 1990s, Deb, and her boyfriend of the time, extended their travels to London, England. They connected with a couple who snowboarded and were about to travel to the South Island of New Zealand for the winter. They encouraged Deb and her boyfriend to come with them. Deb was not particularly keen, but her boyfriend was, so they decided on a whim to give it a go.

> [They] said "we're on our way back to New Zealand, we've just been snowboarding in Colorado. You should come with us." And I remember thinking "oh my God, no, I don't want to go near the snow. It's too cold; I can't cope." And I was with [boyfriend] at the time and he said "we've got to do it. Let's just go." And so, we did. And they taught us how to snowboard.

Deb remembers her first experiences on a snowboard as being both scary and exhilarating. "I was terrified actually. I remember just sliding down on my bum and freaking out, but it only took a day or two and then I was into it." They soon made connections and Deb felt increasingly part of the small community of snowboarders. Snowboarding was in its infancy in New Zealand during the early 1990s and Deb remembers the skiing community reacting negatively to the arrival of snowboarders on their ski fields.

> There was about maybe half a dozen of us [snowboarders] and skiers wouldn't ride the chair with us because they thought we were going to scratch their skis. Everyone was saying we were too noisy when we were coming up behind them, freaking them out. There was a real anti-snowboarding thing back then.

Deb and her boyfriend struggled to find suitable snowboard clothing for a sport that was just emerging. With snowboarders wanting to set themselves apart from skiers, there was also a reluctance among them to buy skiing apparel. Instead, there was a preference to adopt fashions more akin to the skateboarding community. Seeing an opportunity, Deb and her boyfriend started making their own gear. "We designed a pair of snowboarding pants and a jacket and we got [Deb's grandmother] to make them for us." Following on from that, they started producing apparel for sale, starting first with hats. It blossomed into a business that funded their snowboarding lifestyle.

> [Boyfriend] and I started making little fleece head socks to sell to [local shop] to make it all work for us. It was something that we could do rather than working in a bar. I got an old sewing machine off my Grandma and he would cut them out and I would sew them up at night. And we just sold thousands.

Their hats had strong appeal that reached beyond the tightknit snowboarding community. Deb and her boyfriend had tapped into something that was popular and met the demand of a market that was looking for edgy, unique, and boutique products. In 1992, they decided to expand their operation, both in range and area: "Everywhere we went people were just like 'well, we need jackets and pants, we need snowboarding gear.' So, we went back and came up with a design and got my Nana to start making snowboarding pants for us."

Snowboarding became Deb's passion and she was motivated to continue her improvement, which was helped by being part of a dedicated group of snowboarders who were all pushing to get better. She remembers that there were very few females snowboarding at that time, yet she did not feel as if this was a problem.

> I don't think that I honestly questioned it ever. I don't think it ever dawned on me that there wasn't a lot of women around. I guess I'd come from being in Hawaii, windsurfing, and I was wave sailing. [That] was definitely male dominated. So possibly I was just used to it. And slowly but surely every year there was a few more girls up there. I mean, it probably, riding with guys made me push myself a bit more. It was probably a good thing.

In the early 2000s, and after an amicable split with her boyfriend, Deb started a new relationship with a snowboarder, who she eventually married. He was completely dedicated to snowboarding and travelling and snowboarding became the foundation of their lives, with them growing ever closer through their shared experiences. Life progressed happily, but by the mid-2000s the stresses involving their snowboard apparel business were becoming difficult to manage. Deb found herself shouldering much of the burden to keep operations going. Snowboarding had grown

considerably and that growth brought increased competition, especially from international brands, which had well-known American snowboarders on their teams. After so much dedication, effort and passion, Deb had to face the difficult decision to close the business.

> It was just becoming very hard and I mean, it was so easy in those early days. We were really the only snowboarding company, exclusively, and it was just so easy for many years. Then it just became that, the Japanese [snowboarders] started only wanting to buy American labels, so [sales] dried up. We ended up that the [production] numbers were so small we were we were hardly reaching the minimums. I think we probably did it for a couple of years longer than we should have just because we couldn't let it go.

It was not long after this that Deb's life changed again. She and her now husband had their first child, a son. Both still very passionate about snowboarding, they continued to travel during the pregnancy and their son's first couple of years. Deb did not risk snowboarding herself, but enjoyed still being in the snowboarding environments, but as her son got a little older, she re-engaged with snowboarding.

> We were still travelling right up to when we had [son]. Definitely, still travelling a couple of times a year overseas. We'd do a couple of stints to Japan and then come back and go off to Whistler for spring. Actually, it wasn't until [son] was probably two and we got him up [on the mountain] so I probably had a couple of years where I didn't ride.

Her son is now in his early teens and has developed into a gifted snowboarder. They are based in a South island ski resort town, but regularly travel overseas, predominantly America, to snowboard. Sharing this adventure as a family is particularly rewarding: "It's just amazing. I mean, fantastic, and overseas especially, just really cool." Deb feels snowboarding has changed a lot and there is a bigger emphasis on sponsorship, competition points, and development programmes. By snowboarding as a family she and her husband can ensure their son enjoys it and is protected from the stress of expectation.

> The kids now that are coming up, all they want to do is get sponsors and compete and it just seems that they're in it for a different reason, you know. It just seems a little bit different I think now. And [son] competes too and he's on the national development team and he's got a bunch of sponsors. It's just totally different from when we did it. We just always constantly telling [son] he's just got to do it for himself and the second he's not enjoying competing he's just got to stop.

Deb sees young snowboarders having a remarkably different snowboarding experience to the one she experienced herself. For her, snowboarding was an emerging sport based on freedom,

creativity, adventure, and experience. She feels that now the meaning of snowboarding and its values seem to have changed. Gifted snowboarders are in structured, disciplined environments, where performance is measured by coaches and advisors. This lies in sharp contrast to her experiences and the meaning snowboarding holds for her. She finds it concerning.

> These kids have got to be accountable. They've got to be on the mountain ready for training at a certain time. They've got to be at the gym. [Coaches] keep a record of whether you've turned up or you didn't; it's really full on, and there's a lot of parents that are so desperate for these kids to do well that they are just pushing them and pushing them and it's, it's hard to watch really.

Deb, her husband and her son, love snowboarding as a family and stay true to their snowboarding values and the pursuit of fun and adventure. Their son's passion reignites that of Deb and her husband:

> I can see [son], whether he's competing or not, just extremely passionate about riding everywhere he can for a long time. And there's no way we want to get off the wheel either, it's just fantastic. Who knows what will happen when he leaves home. Sometimes, we talk about it and think we'd love to just be living on the beach somewhere and going to Japan to ride powder on holidays. But for now, it's a massive part of our life.

On a personal level, Deb still enjoys snowboarding, although she does not push herself as she once did. While she feels lucky not to have had a major injury, she does have some knee and shoulder issues. She feels that the risk of serious injury, or even the disruption of more minor injuries, would be an inconvenience in her busy life. It is reason enough for her to avoid risk, even though she misses riding the parts of the mountain with her husband and son.

> [I] just couldn't go up there and hit the tables. And even just a couple of years ago I could. [It was] so much fun to be up there with [son], hitting the same terrain, it was amazing. It bums me out a bit to think that I'm not up there doing it, but again you know I could get the surgery but I just, I don't know, time just flies by – we're flat out, we're trying to travel a bit and I just haven't slipped it in. But I certainly wouldn't be pushing myself like I was because, yeah, I don't want to hurt myself again. I want to be able to surf and wake board and do stuff in the summer and yeah, I'm definitely more careful, for sure.

Andrew was referred to me as a possible interviewee and, after informally chatting with him, I realised that we had commonality and shared many similar experiences. He talked about his group of friends, particularly in snowboarding, many of whom I knew of. The New Zealand snowboarding community in the late 1990s/early 2000s was tight-knit and there was normally not many degrees of separation between one rider and the next.

We organised a time to complete the interview. When I arrived, Andrew was wearing a t-shirt, which allowed me to notice a tattoo on his forearm. It was of the Keith Meek "Slasher" skateboard graphic from the mid-1980s and was an obvious signal that skateboarding meant a lot to him. When I asked him about it, he told me that he had contacted the artist, Jim Phillips, directly for permission to do so, which I thought was amazing and honourable. I was particularly touched in the cumulative effect of his injuries. In lifestyle sports, the impacts of the pursuit of progression can sometimes not be seen until decades later.

Andrew grew up in the South Island of New Zealand where he was introduced to skateboarding in the early to mid-1980s at the age of seven. His older brother had a skateboard and he remembers sibling rivalry being a motivator for him to learn to skate too: "Like any little brother does, he wants to follow in the footsteps of his big brother. Well, with us, it was more that I wanted to be better than my big brother." By the late 1980s, Andrew's brother had also started snowboarding. While he did not get the opportunity to try snowboarding at the same time, his brother's influence stayed with him, laying the initial seeds of curiosity towards the sport. Shortly afterwards, however, Andrew moved with his family to another town while his brother opted to stay. While he did not directly have his brother's influence any more, he still maintained a passion for skateboarding and an interest in snowboarding.

High school presented Andrew's with his first opportunity to snowboard. In his first year (1991), he went on a school skiing trip. He did some research and found a South Island ski resort that offered snowboarding gear for hire. He and a friend then signed up for the school ski trip, figuring they would exchange skiing for snowboarding at the last minute without the teacher's knowledge.

> [Snowboarding] wasn't an option for us at school. It was like, "no, you have to do skiing. Cause there's lessons available, blah, blah, blah." So we just went "Yes." The two of us went up there to [ski resort]. Once we got into the rental team and we were talking with them. We figured our teachers and stuff, they weren't monitoring us. So we were like, "Oh no, we want to jump on snowboards."

Together, Andrew and his friend tried to learn how to snowboard. Their wangling had provided access to gear, but there was no way for them to receive lessons. They did their best to teach themselves. The snowboarding gear presented the most immediate problem.

[The snowboards] had hard boots and they were really hard to get into the binding. But we figured we could snap our boots into them and pull our feet out. We were walking in our socks around the ski field [in the snow] and just leaving the boots strapped into the board.

Skateboarding continued to be an important part of Andrew's life. He had befriended a group of old boys and they bonded over a shared love of skateboarding and misbehaviour. Andrew's skateboarding skills gave him prominence and validity within the group.

So I'm kind of instantly in this group, this gang of guys. I'm the youngest, but I've brought kind of this new wave of skateboarding, which didn't really exist there. [I] felt like I was in a core group cause I was young and I was respected, but then also really heavily influenced by the older kids.

As well as skateboarding, and his first experience of snowboarding, Andrew also played structured, organised sport, including soccer and cricket. He then felt obligated to play rugby. This decision reflects a broad expectation in New Zealand, at that time, that males played rugby. Andrew felt inclined to get involved to "tick that box of normality." Initially, rugby went well for Andrew and he was invited to play in a provincial trial. For reasons not explained to him, however, he was asked to play prop, a position that placed him in the front row of the scrum. He had never played in that position previously. During the game, a scrum collapsed resulting in an injured back.

They put me into the prop position for their trial. I didn't know what that meant. Because I'd never practiced it before. [During the game] a scrum collapsed. I felt my neck go snap. It was just, just a silly thing, but yeah, that gave me a back injury at quite a young age. So I kind of just stopped doing it, just wrote it off as a sport.

The incident helped Andrew focus on what was important to him and to ignore conventional expectations. It solidified his rebellious nature and he found the anti-mainstream skateboarding subculture far more suited to him. It is important to note, however, that skateboarding was not Andrew's safer alternative to organised sport. He had also incurred injuries while skating. One in particular, a broken arm, stands out in his memory.

I was hanging out with the crew, the older teenagers, and we were doing a lot of down-hilling. And I came off. And I'm like "ah, my arms sore." They're like "harden up," like that whole mentality. When I got home to mum, she said "you're alright." I got over that initial pain barrier and continued on. Four weeks later I was playing basketball at school and fell over. The school rang my mom and told her to take me to hospital. The doctor was like, "you broke your arm four weeks ago and we're going to have to re-break it."

This experience was formative for Andrew. It shaped his philosophy towards dealing with pain, centralised on a masculinist approach that minimalised and dismissed what had occurred.

Not showing pain and not, not expressing pain and not showing emotion and that sort of thing. So that [broken arm injury] was the start to that, the hard-core side of dealing with pain or any situation, mentally or physically.

Snowboarding started to have more prominence in his life with trips to the ski resort becoming more frequent. The mountains represented an adventurous, natural playground. Like skateboarding, snowboarding provided the freedom to be creative and experience excitement. It was also an individual pursuit that provided distance from organised, structured society. Andrew reflects on what drew him to snowboarding:

It was the adventure. That was a part of the drive to get there, the lure of the mountain, up in the snow. You're away from the population. You're in this place where you could express yourself and it's all for you. It's not for anyone else. There was a freedom.

By the mid-1990s, Andrew finished high school and moved more permanently to a ski resort town. He enjoyed being surrounded by like-minded people sharing a common adventure. Living in a ski town also meant he could snowboard more and his own riding progressed: "[I was] exposed to people who pretty much lived constantly like this. These people would inspire you and that advances your level again." At the end of the winter season, many of his snowboarding friends followed the winter overseas. Andrew was not in a position to join them at the time, leaving him at a loose end. He turned to university study as a way of keeping him occupied, provide certainty for his future, and still allow him to snowboard.

Quite a pinnacle part of my snowboarding and my skateboarding was actually making the decision to go to university because I thought it was kind of pretty grown up and it's sort of like, "Oh, I've made the right decision," but then you didn't get as much riding time. You really had to work for it, which even made your enthusiasm for it go up even more. It took more to get there.

When Andrew returned to the New Zealand slopes the following year, he noticed that many riders, particularly those who had travelled overseas, had noticeably progressed.

When I did my first season, I was starting to compete at national level with these other people. But then going to university, I kind of lost that completely. I wasn't exposed to it the same as if I had stayed and kept doing these back to back seasons or whatever. Then I might've been competitive to that next point. So I might've missed out on something.

Upon completion of his degree, Andrew worked, saved, and then travelled with friends to Japan for a snowboarding trip. Now being a graphic designer, he was able to capture and edit video footage, a valuable set of skills within the snowboarding subculture. He describes his experience in Japan as "amazing." He maximised his saved money by living as frugally as possible: "I'd be sleeping in the back of the car. Yeah, it was rough, fuck! It was so hard. Again, just doing it for the love of it and riding."

After returning to New Zealand, Andrew decided to live in a South Island city, as he felt it would provide better employment opportunities. It allowed him to access some club ski fields. These rustic environments reminded him of his first snowboarding experiences, something he responded positively to: "[It was] going back to that kind of that more alpine, steep chutes and soul riding and stuff. That suited me more because that takes you back to the start of snowboarding. That feeling that you were alone, out there." Having a city base also represented a more stable period of his life. Having described much of his life as "nomadic," he was now able to establish a base for himself.

[City] was a place where I could have a job and sustain a balance between everything. I started to meet more people, people that were doing things more closely related to my creative outlet.

Andrew established his audio-visual career and settled into a stable life. Having grounded roots also enabled him to have relationships, something that had been more difficult during his more nomadic times.

Because of the transient nature, I never really had any solid personal relationships. So it was the chance to settle down and having a few relationships, meeting someone, [girlfriend] getting pregnant, and then having my first son. That put a completely different other perspective on everything, again.

Being a father made snowboarding more difficult for Andrew due to having less time to commit and concern with the cost and whether his money could be better used on family life:

"Snowboarding was kind of expensive and it was harder to get to." He refocused on his love of skateboarding. Over time, with diligent saving, he was able to travel overseas sporadically for snowboarding trips, returning twice to Japan and once to Colorado. His son is now eleven, and the two of them snowboard and skateboard together, something that Andrew cherishes, but he worries about the modern snowboarding environment and crowding on the ski fields.

There are more and more people that hit the slopes here. It's getting loaded with people and the problem with the people was all of a sudden, you've got an incremental amount of out of control people trying these sports.

Skate parks have also become busy, crowded environments, which impacted on Andrew's enjoyment. His solution has been to build his own mini-ramp halfpipe in his backyard. He now has private access anytime he wants to skateboard and particularly enjoys skating with his son.

Last year we build a skate ramp in the backyard. It's four foot high, three sheets wide mini ramp. So it's good sort of size to crank along. Cause, yeah, you get to the skate parks and it's just loaded with people. It's not like I'm antisocial, but I like the freedom at a skate park of rolling around. Not running into people all the time. So, you build a ramp at your home.

Managing the damage caused by injuries has become a concern for Andrew. He has accrued many injuries over the years and some were particularly serious, including a broken back and many concussions.

I had two wrist reconstructions, broken vertebras in my back, collarbones and bits and pieces. The body started to feel pretty sore. When I was at university, I was on about three concussions within about 18 months. Two from skateboarding and one from snowboarding. And that really affected me mentally. Mental health started to suffer quite a bit.

By the time of the interview, Andrew approached snowboarding and skateboarding differently. He was aware of his responsibilities and the consequences that further injuries could bring. He was more risk averse than he was when he was younger: "Having someone that's relying on you to be there makes [risk management] even more prevalent. It slowly became a mentality where you are aware of things. It pulls you back." The cumulative damage to his body through injury, and the associated pain, is something he lives with on a daily basis and has to manage: "I'm tending towards, do I have chronic pain? Just because of these injuries and things. Cause even resting here, I can feel pain, the injuries that I've put myself through." He wants to continue snowboarding and

skateboarding into the future and has taken steps to ensure he can. His solutions is to keep in the best shape possible so he can continue to lead an active lifestyle.

> I'm looking at how I can keep myself fit so I can keep doing it. Which is like the classic midlife crisis stuff; start jogging and I've been mountain biking for the last 10 years on and off. So even though I'm only trying to do [board-sports] for a lifestyle, I kind of have to treat it like it is a high-performance thing as well, and look after myself.

Section summary: The Snowboarders

Of all the three lifestyle sports featuring in this study, snowboarding has experienced the most rapid change with the participants starting snowboarding in the early to mid-1990s, when the New Zealand scene began to grow. They reminisced about being part of a small, tight-knit community and by the early 2000s, they were all living in ski resort towns, nationally and internationally, chasing winters and fully immersed in the snowboarding lifestyle. They formed close bonds with the other snowboarders on and off the ski field, often living together in shared accommodation and engaging in social activities. They taught each other to snowboard and manufactured their own gear while under the dismissive and critical glare of the dominant skiing community. Snowboarding has changed remarkably since those days with the growth in numbers, public acceptance, and commercialisation of snowboarding confronting the beliefs and values of the participants. In response, they adapted their practice to stay connected with those experiences and the meaning that snowboarding held for them.

As with the surfers and skaters in this study, the meaning snowboarding developed for these participants in their youth is of central importance. Snowboarding provided an outlet for frustrated creativity, expression, and adventure with non-conformity and rebellion part of the package. Through this rebellion, they gained a sense of control over their lives and a sense of agency. This can be seen through the interviewees' comparisons between organised, structured sports and snowboarding in which we see the tension between intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. Reiss (2012) defines intrinsic motivation as doing something for one's own sake and extrinsic motivation as the pursuit of an instrumental goal, such as pleasing someone else, and notes how pressure from extrinsic motivations can undermine intrinsic interests. This was illustrated through Andrew's reflections on playing rugby to satisfy what he perceived as the expectation of hegemonic masculinity for New Zealand males (Van Campenhout, & Van Hoven, 2014). A collapsed scrum placed him in peril, which provided a critical moment where he realised that he needed to pursue his own passions, not those of other people. For Gav, surfing became a structured sport, as he advanced to the regional and nation competition circuit, something that gained him external recognition. The travelling, pressure, routine, and structure left him feeling burnt out and disconnected. Growing up in a small beach town, he felt isolated and out of options. Snowboarding represented a new and exciting challenge and a form of escape. It combined the elements he loved in surfing with an absence of expectation and order. He spoke about feeling immediately at home when passing through a ski resort town on surfboard sales trip. It was enough for him to sell everything he could and return more permanently. It was the start of more than a decade of full immersion in snowboarding.

Being anti-mainstream was an essential part of the snowboarder identity and something they enjoyed. In particular, they enjoyed the less than welcoming response from the established skiing community. Snowboarders looked different, acted differently, and brought a contrasting attitude to that of the affluent skiers on the ski field. Gav captured this when stating how you could tell a skier from a snowboarder: "dirt bags, skate rats, baggy clothes and just like anti-mainstream, yeah, anti-skiers." Deb remembers that skiers refused to ride the chairlift with them, fearful that the snowboarders would scratch their skis. For Andrew, snowboarding was an extension of the skateboarding punk rock ethos, illustrated by his registering for the school ski team, but, once on the mountain, sneaking away to snowboard all day. To the snowboarders, the skiing community represented convention, expectation, and tradition. Upsetting the skiers acted as motivation. It was proof for them that the snowboarding provided agency, freedom, and non-conformity.

Despite their commitment to the snowboarding lifestyle, these snowboarders were not free from adult responsibilities. Of the 12 participants in this study, the snowboarders were by far the most transient. Where the surfers and skaters blended their lifestyle sports within normal adult lives, including fulltime work and fixed abodes, the snowboarders lived transient lives. All of them had spent extensive time temporarily living in ski resort towns for winters and all had experienced snowboarding-related international travel. This is consistent with Thorpe's (2012) research on snowboarder lifestyle migration and travel. The snowboarders had to balance the need for income, short-term housing, food, and self-sufficiency with the ability to snowboard as often as possible. Their commitment to chasing the snow by any means possible was remarkable. Sleeping in cars or under stairwells, eating day old food, cold-calling friends-of-friends for any chance of assistance, and seeking menial work for cash payments are examples of hardships these snowboarders were more than happy to endure so they could snowboard and keep their adventure going. As they aged, they had more responsibilities, which made it more difficult to live a transient lifestyle. Their lives converged towards something more recognised as normal with mortgages and children, which changed how frequently they snowboarded.

The snowboarders found ways of monetising their expertise to support their travels. This bears similarities to Snyder (2012), whose research illuminated the entrepreneurship skills of skateboarders. Fiona earned income through coaching and instructing, passing her expertise on to other snowboarders. Gav worked in snowboarding stores providing advice for customers and tuning and waxing snowboards. Andrew used his audio-visual expertise to film and edit snowboarding footage. Deb's entrepreneurship skills capitalised on the burgeoning industry by filling gaps in the market, both with the foundation of a snowboarding apparel brand and hosting international snowboarders on English-learning courses. These initiatives operated successfully for many years

and supported the snowboarding lifestyle for her and her husband. Here, we see the snowboarders adapting their practice to satisfy their adult responsibilities and a need for income.

Snowboarding operated as a medium for negotiating the stresses of life and a practice that shaped the lives of the participants. This has been a constant theme in this study, with the snowboarders using snowboarding to navigate life and deal with the transition into adult life as they increasingly assumed more responsibilities. Gav acknowledged having issues with mental health, noting that his affable demeanour hid his internal struggles. He used snowboarding to create a space from the pressures and expectations in his life. Ryff (1995) describes a sense of purpose, autonomy, and a connection to the environment as important components to well-being. While snowboarding, Gav created a physical and mental distance from those pressures: "Your mind just shuts off and you become singularly focused." It has been enormously beneficial to him and he credits snowboarding as being essential in his negotiation through life: "The growth I got out of it basically in snowboarding, but just in life in general is just huge."

Fiona used the snowboarding lifestyle to avoid dealing with her close friend's death. By travelling from winter to winter, she had a temporary lifestyle, one without the need for serious commitment or responsibility. At the end of the winter season, she was able to pack up in the pursuit of the next adventure: "I didn't want to stay in any one place for too long. I didn't want to get too close to anybody and I enjoyed the meditative concentration of snowboarding." Downtime while recovering from her knee injury forced her to deal with her past while also assimilating into normal society, something she found particularly difficult. Surfing and Pilates were particularly helpful in coping during this period of her life.

The snowboarders expressed discomfort with modern snowboarding because of how they felt that it diminished its founding principles. This effected their connection to snowboarding and to the younger snowboarding community. They all bemoaned the erosion of snowboarding's anti-mainstream foundations by commercialism and felt that it had become more mainstream and lost some of its early creativity and community focus. With snowboarding now common on New Zealand ski fields, Gav lamented that, "It's lost its edge." The participants told of their changed practice, as they attempted to evade crowds pursue a more meaningful experience for them. Andrew and Fiona expressed a keenness to avoid commercial ski fields, preferring the smaller club fields as a way to distance themselves from the crowds. Deb's discussion of her son's high-performance training provided the starkest comparison and illustrates the massive cultural and commercial changes in the sport. Her own experiences in snowboarding were of a small group of pioneering participants, homemade gear, and learning through trial and error. Her son's involves structured training,

coaches, fitness regimes with measured gains, and attendance registrations. She reflects: "It's hard to watch really."

An appreciation of risk and consequence has changed how these snowboarders approach snowboarding in middle age. Gav and Andrew have recovered from broken backs and Fiona has experienced two significant knee injuries, while Deb has ongoing issues from one knee injury. They are well aware of the disruption that these injuries cause and the commitment required to recover from them. They were keen to avoid experiencing similar injuries in middle age, illustrated by Fiona remarking: "I've seen stuff go wrong. I'm like more calculated [now]." All of the snowboarders described a reassessment of what is important to their snowboarding experience. Dewey (1938, p. 39) defines this as a change in the continuity of experience, which informs the learners "preference and aversion." A connection to nature and the pursuit of solitude are motivations for snowboarding currently for Gav and Andrew, rather than big airs, rail slides, or technical tricks. Both used the word "soul" to describe their snowboarding; a purist approach where the snowboarder connects to the mountain, interpreting its changing slopes and angles into their drawn out carving turns with style and control. Andrew in particular is reticent about risk-taking. The culmination of various injuries affects his life daily and has him concerned that he is suffering from chronic pain. When snowboarding, he acknowledges that it is tempting to try adventurous tricks, but the perceived negative consequences outweigh the benefits. He leaves his son to pursue progression, happier to catch up with him for a few mellower fun runs together. For Gav, after so many committed years, snowboarding has become an occasional excursion when he takes his split-board into remote environments and hikes to inaccessible spots for untracked riding in solitude: "Good for the soul." Similarly, Deb is also more cautious while snowboarding. She wishes she could ride all the terrain her son and husband do, something she could do only a few years earlier, but is content to still be on the mountain and immersed in the snowboarding culture. "It bums me out a bit to think that I'm not up there doing it."

For the surfing and skating participants the physical environment played a central part in shaping their experiences, learning, and development but with the snowboarder stories, it did not emerge with such importance. However, the snowboarding physical and social environment has undergone more change than that of the surfers and skaters. Growth in popularity has resulted in busy ski resorts, as well as greater public acceptance of snowboarding. The snowboarders noted that they struggled with overflowing numbers of skiers and snowboarders, something that was at odds from their experiences when they were younger and part of a small, fledgling community. They also felt that modern snowboarding placed higher value on competition and achievement and the cost of the founding, anti-social values. This has changed the individuality of experience, something that

leaves these snowboarders uneasy and disconnected. This, along with the cumulative effects of injuries and a greater consideration of risk has resulted in changes in desire and purpose.

From the perspective of Dewey's experiential learning theory, we can again observe strong themes of seeking freedom from structure and social control. The four snowboarders began a lifestyle sport in its infancy and experienced a unique moment in New Zealand's sporting history by being a part of the fledgling community. Snowboarding in the naturally beautiful mountainous terrain added to the environment of the experience, particularly as it was seen as a departure from normal structured life and the associated pressures.

Thesis Discussion

The purpose of this study was to answer the two-part research question: *Why do adults over the age of forty continue to participate in 'extreme' sports and how does their experience change?* The use of appreciative inquiry provided understanding of the place and development of lifestyle sports in people's lives, as they age. After the thorough examination and analysis of the experiences of 12 lifestyle sport participants, I identified three major themes:

1) Lifestyle sports formed a critical aspect of identity formation for the 12 participants. Surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding provided an opportunity for expression and creativity, and for taking a defiant stance against structure and social expectations.

2) The lifestyle sports provided a medium for negotiating the challenges of life and contributed to their positive mental well-being.

3) As the participants aged they adapted to the challenges of participating in activities typically associated with youth as middle age approached. This process involved changes in the practice and meaning of participation in their lifestyle sport.

 Each of these themes is discussed and developed within three individual sections. Dewey's experiential learning theory, along with other relevant literature, provides for a deep understanding of how these lifestyle sports have meaning well beyond the activity itself. This study suggests that lifestyle sports allowed the participants to escape from the constraints of structure and the pressure of social expectations. Although they adapted and modified the meaning of their engagement, lifestyle sports remained a foundation for their negotiation of life. The nature of the participants' experience changed over their lives but so did the nature of their sports and this is something that influenced engagement.

Theme 1. Carving a niche: Identity and self-expression through lifestyle sports

Key finding one: Lifestyle sports formed a critical component of identity. They provided a means of expression and creativity, and of defying structure and social expectation

To examine why adults over the age of forty continue to participate in "extreme" lifestyle sports, it is crucial to start with their early formative experiences. This allows us to understand the reasons for their initial engagement and to detail their growth and development, as well as the meanings they have derived from them. This study suggests that lifestyle sports held more meaning for the participants than simply engaging in the activity itself. For the 12 participants their lifestyle sports were central to their sense of personal identity, acted as an outlet for expression and

provided a source of creativity and adventure. For the individuals in this study, lifestyle sports were also a defiant response to the pressures of social structure and expectations to conform that are hallmarks of the subcultures associated with lifestyle sports. Hebdige (1991) describes subcultures as an expression against power and tension. Similarly, Woodman and Brace-Govan (2006) note that subcultures are a pro-active response to marginalisation. This illustrates the journey of the individuals in this study. Whether these activities are correctly termed as "sports" is worthy of consideration, particularly as the participants themselves hold them in such contrast to organised, structured sports. Understanding the participants' deep and meaningful connection to surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding, provided insight into how they made sense of their worlds and themselves, which is essential in answering the question of why they continued engagement into middle age. Lifestyle sports were not simply a source of thrills. They formed a foundation for the development of individual identity.

Purpose and desire was a key component to the initial attraction to lifestyle sports for these participants. According to Dewey (1938), purpose provides a goal or destination to aspire towards, and desire is crucial for continued learning. The magnetism for these activities transcended the need for formal introduction. They were attracted by the ideal of the lifestyle sport, an imagined concept of what it must feel like to surf, skate, and snowboard. Most often, the participants had no significant person to introduce them to the sport or provide guidance. Jamie, Eve, and Paul described standing on the sand, gazing at surfers carving the waves, spellbound. They were captivated by the grace, style, and supreme freedom of surfers and longed to join them. Similarly, upon Gav's first visit to a ski resort town, he described feeling an instant connection so powerful that he sold as many of his possessions as possible to move there permanently. Stacey longed to join the skaters gliding about her school. Without a skateboard of her own, she emulated them by sliding down hills on her lunchbox, hopeful of capturing a similar thrill, making do any way she could. It speaks to a primal urge, where instincts rule over sensibility. Drawing on Durkheim (1912) it could also be seen as a quasi-religious desire to move from the profane to the sacred. However they might be viewed, these early experiences formed an emotional connection that provided the foundation for further engagement. From Antonovosky's (1987) perspective, their sport provided meaningfulness. Engaging in these lifestyle sports added something fulfilling, essential, and positive to their lives and made them more meaningful. From a Deweyian view, their purpose was personal and unique. Beal and Weidman (2003, p. 340) identify how lifestyle sports, such as skateboarding, allow individuals to create their own "criteria regarding training procedures, goals and style." The solo nature of these lifestyle sports offered these participants what Dewey describes as the

individuality of experience, a situation where the learner creates and engages in an experience completely of their own making with their own goals and purpose.

For Dewey, there is a strong connection between experience and the environment. He defines the environment as not only the physical location that hosts the experience, but encompasses all of the conditions that affect the experience. He also sees the environment and the person (organism) and experience as being inseparable. The environment is essential to the lifestyle sport participants' experience. All of the participants in this study acknowledged a strong connection with the environment. On the surface, this seems obvious, as surfers need the oceans waves to surf; snowboarders need snowy mountains to ride. The relationship between rider and the environment was, however, much deeper. Wheaton (2017) identified how surfers connect to the ocean in spiritual terms. Similarly, Olive (2015, p. 503) defined the connection as "more-than-human-ness." This is consistent with the surfers in this study. Their environment is a place of comfort, excitement, and adventure. To them, it is a place of belonging and central to their identity. Jamie recalled forming a strong connection to the beach from a young age. His solo mother would take him there for a cost-effective activity. For him, it was an adventure. Sarah remembers her first look at a beach, after moving from an inland location, with joy: "wow, a beach!" Similarly, Andrew, Deb, Fiona, and Gav formed strong connections to the mountains. It was a location for an adventure, almost other-worldly. They too connected to nature, as it spoke to something primal within them. For both surfers and snowboarders, these natural environments represent a physical disconnection from structured society.

The skateboarders also formed a special connection to the places they skated in but it was not a case of escaping into nature. They connected with the hard concrete and asphalt, the steps, ledges, bench seats, and handrails. Woolley and Johns (2001, p. 214) suggest that skaters view a city differently than the general public: "The individual elements within the landscape become important to skateboarders, as they utilize the concrete, asphalt and stone that are the essential building blocks of all cities, and in doing so inhabit the urban environment in a unique and creative way." Skaters have a strong connection to the places they skate in with the places themselves forming an integral part of the narrative of people's lives (O'Connor, 2018). Cityscapes are their playground, as they reimagine the architecture for purposes never considered by the original designer. It is another illustration of skateboarding being a response to societal structure. Snyder (2012, p. 317) states, "skaters resist attempts at spatial control by playing with and in public space." Skateboarding is a direct response to the city environment, as skaters display defiance by rejecting the functional uses for city features by performing tricks and stunts unimagined by the original architects and designers. As skaters move through a city, their minds imagine performing tricks on the surroundings. Stacey

describes seeing architecture through a skater's perspective, jumping off ledges, grinding curbs, speeding down hills. It is a playground of thrills and possibilities. Brian and Josh told of strong connections to skate spots, in particular a city market. Not only was it a location for skating, it was a community congregation point, a home of sorts. Brian captured this in his photography, the grit and grime of both skater and city alike.

In this study, the attraction of surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding went beyond the activity itself with the anti-mainstream, anti-social public perception inviting for the participants during their youth. Dewey relates this internal motivation to the interaction of experiences. He (1938, p. 39) explains the interaction as "objective and internal conditions" of an experience, that gives prominence to the individual's drive in forming the direction of learning. For these participants, lifestyle sports represented an opportunity to push against society's authority, conventions, and expectations, giving them a sense of control over their lives. They gained a sense of freedom by rallying against submissiveness and championing agency, with the negative perceptions from the public serving to strengthen their resolve. Their participation in their sports was an act of defiance, a clear statement against tradition and conformity. This was illustrated in a range of ways. Andrew reflected on his early years in skateboarding in terms of delinquency, acting lawlessly with his skate friends and committing petty crimes. Gav enjoyed the punk rock nature of snowboarding in New Zealand in the 1990s and early 2000s, in his words "anti-mainstream [and] anti-skier," as did Deb when she recalled, with affection, skiers refusing to ride the chairlift with snowboarders.

While most of the participants relished this image of rebels standing in defiance against conservatism and mainstream society, it created tension with Sarah's religious parents. She felt compelled to underplay her surfing identity around them because of the view that surfing was a community of druggies and hippies. This conflict came to a head when Sarah announced her intention to remain in Australia where she was living her surfing dream. Her parents gave her the ultimatum of coming home straight away or being banished from the family. They held her to their religious expectations that she would marry young, start a family, and be a productive member of the community. The enormity of this expectation weighed heavily on Sarah because she was torn between her passion for surfing and wanting to please her parents. She felt compelled to return immediately.

The relationship between freedom and control is pertinent to the experiences of lifestyle sport participants. Lifestyle sports are an expression of individuality and creativity, an opportunity to be free from measurement and constraint. Dewey (1938) describes freedom as an intrinsic motivator for learner's growth, with the level of freedom required varying between individuals. The participants reflected on their contrasting experiences with structured team sports. These structured

sporting environments reflect social control. Dewey states that abiding citizens are subject to a "great deal of social control" (p. 55), and uses the example of structured games, where rules provide fairness and clarity. It is clear that these lifestyle sport participants place more value on freedom from structure and the ability to be expressive, creative, and unconfined. Reflecting on their experiences with structured sports, they remarked on feeling constrained and sensing the pressure of expectation. This speaks to the wider pressures of conformity and, more specifically, the tension between intrinsic (for one's own sake) and extrinsic (pursuit of an instrumental goal) motivation (see, Reiss, 2012). For example, Andrew and Tim spoke about playing rugby to fulfil the expectations for males in New Zealand, implying that to not to play rugby is viewed as unmanly. They felt obligated to play and, in Andrew's case, this almost resulted in a serious injury, which was motivation enough for him to pursue what was important to him, rather than to anyone else.

Josh was particularly dismissive of "jocks", referencing the stereotypical title for athletes. For him, they represented traditional sport values of competition, rules and structure, and recognised achievement. He was vocal in his disdain of traditional sports and distanced himself from them. Paul and Jamie, however, were both successful athletes, yet this strengthens the comparison. Paul describes himself as very competitive, however, for him surfing and, more recently, skateboarding, were the most uncompetitive activities in his life. For Jamie, his professional sports career required peak physical conditioning and total commitment. His retirement from professional sport gave him more time to focus on his surfing. This is a significant statement in the comparison of structured sports and lifestyle sport in that engagement in structured sport had a finite time period based on his ability to maintain physical performance, whereas surfing did not. For Jamie, surfing related to personal expression, connection with nature, and an opportunity for solitude.

The effect of gender on lifestyle sports experience

Gender has a specific effect on experiences in lifestyle sports. Critically, lifestyle sports are characterised as masculinised environments, due to the domination of male participants (Thorpe, 2010; Wheaton, 2017; Beal & Weidman, 2003). Thorpe, in particular, captures the plight of female participants as they attempt to gain validity and acknowledgement within a masculinised environment when she reflects on her time as an elite snowboarder attempting to gain recognition from the predominantly male snowboard community:

> The adrenaline rushes through me when I see the lines our crew takes; I grit my teeth and launch off the rock drop. I fill with relief as I stomp the landing and then flow out into the endless powder for a few more turns. I am buzzing when we meet at the

bottom of the run. We wear grins from ear to ear as we ride up the chair and chatter excitedly. It is only when my buddy exclaims, 'Hey, that was pretty good for a girl,' that I sink back to reality (p. 76).

Thorpe's example describes the issue of gender in lifestyle sports. Females were required to adopt male characteristics of power, aggression, and risk-taking to gain attention. Even then, it was defined by gender, as seen in Thorpe's example, where her snowboarding was worthy of comparison to that of a male. Beal and Weidman (2003, p. 345) state, "females are not accepted as legitimate participants until they become guys." This relates to Dewey's (1938) views on social control. Here, we see social control within the subculture environment, where rules, rituals, and accepted ways of being are applied and enforced by those in the majority. It seems that the females took up their sport to challenge and resist the constraints of mainstream society, but, even within the subculture of lifestyle sport, could not escape the gender constraints of society.

Gendered stereotypes see women as ornamental, which left the female participants feeling suppressed and devalued, and the female participants acknowledged the negative effects of marginalisation. Sarah described in detail the hazing she suffered from male surfers. They made fun of her and took pleasure in encouraging her to attempt to catch waves they knew she would get smashed by. It was a time in her development when Sarah needed guidance and teaching. She reflected that she was already hampered by only having access to a surfboard that was unsuitable to her body size and paddling strength. On top of this, she struggled to learn the fundamentals on her own, something not helped by the male surfers bullying, rather than helping, her. It has had a lasting effect on her and, to Sarah's credit, she turned that bullying into a burning motivation to improve and earn her place in the water. Fiona also remarked on feeling marginalised. She felt frustrated that she would send photos to New Zealand snowboarding magazines in the hope of publications. The photos showcased Fiona and her female friends pushing the advancement of women's snowboarding, but the magazines declined to use them. When Fiona finally had a photo of her published, featuring prominently as a double page spread, she was elated. Not only was she personally proud, but she felt she had broken through an invisible barrier. For Fiona, it was important to take a leadership role and break new ground for female snowboarders: "because if women see other women doing it . . . it's the camaraderie, like 'hey, if you do it, I'll do it.'"

Competitions were recognised as an opportunity for the female lifestyle participants to congregate as a community. They were key opportunities for women who were used to practising and engaging by themselves or in masculine environments to meet other women and make friends. For Fiona, the women she competed against in snowboarding remained some of her closest friends. All five of the women interviewed in this study engaged in competitions. For Stacey, Eve, and Sarah

competitions became an opportunity to connect women together and encourage each other's growth. They described competitions in terms less focused on achievement and far more on support and growth. Stacey would rarely see another female skateboarder outside of an organised competition. She reflected on early regional competitions where she would see other women skaters watching, but not entering. She worked hard to encourage them, as well as convincing the organisers to consider a women's division. She expressed frustration when the others were not comfortable enough to enter. For Stacey, it was an opportunity lost. They could have displayed women's skateboarding to the watching crowd and inspired more to try it for themselves.

Eve and Sarah discussed surfing competitions as opportunities for women to meet each other and have the sectioned-off beach to themselves. If they met another female surfer, they would promote the competition date and encourage them to come along. During the competition heats, they were the only ones surfing. They describe collegial environments where the competitors openly communicated with each other, complementing a successful wave or encouraging them to throw off nerves and catch the next wave. It is at odds with what we traditionally consider competitions to be where rivals scramble for opportunities for advantage, winning being the ultimate goal. Sarah especially discussed at length her efforts to grow women's surfing and her determination for acknowledgement and recognition.

This section strongly suggests how lifestyle sports for the 12 participants were more comment than just activities. Being a surfer, skater, or snowboarder is a key component of identity with anti-mainstream philosophies. It is a response against structure, organisation, and control, instead showing desire for creativity, expressionism, and freedom. These participants use lifestyle sports as an illustration of independency in response to social control. Within these lifestyle sport subcultures, gender played a major factor on the types of experiences with the female participants reflecting on feeling marginalised within the masculinised environments. The next section focuses on the participants as adults and summarises how lifestyle sports continue to have importance in their lives as they age.

Theme 2. Stoked in adulthood: Negotiating life through board sports

Key finding two: Lifestyle sports were used as a medium to negotiate the challenges of modern life.

This study suggests that lifestyle sports provided significant mental well-being benefits for the participants and acted as a medium for successfully negotiating a range of challenges in their lives. By engaging in surfing, skateboarding, and/or snowboarding, they were able to create a sanctuary to keep at bay the expectations, responsibilities, and structures of adult life. Dewey (1938)

describes this as freedom of movement, something that directly relates to physical and mental health. He explains how freedom of movement involves experiences in unstructured contexts where the learner has freedom to dictate the experience. For Dewey, reflective practice is crucial for learning through experience, as the participant needs to reflect on the experience to enable continued growth. He sees learning occurring through the experience and then reflection on it as a second experience (see, Dewey, 1938). Not only was reflection by the participants in my study important for learning but also for how it contributed to their positive well-being. Indeed, one of the strong themes to emerge from this study was the contribution that lifestyle sports made toward maintaining well-being under stress and how, over time, it lifted their positive well-being.

Ryff (1995) offers a multidimensional model of well-being comprising six components, including positive evaluations of one's self, continued growth and development, a sense of purpose and meaningfulness, relationships, connection to one's environment, and autonomy. We see these components feature throughout the interviews with the participants, with particular emphasis on autonomy (rejecting structure), connection to the environment, and self-identity; they all clearly articulated the positive benefits to their lives. Immediately after engaging in lifestyle sports, they described feelings of elation and rejuvenation. Wheaton (2017, p. 102) identified this characteristic in ageing surfers, who described "an overwhelming feeling of well-being" from surfing. Wheaton notes "few [ageing surfers] engaged in surfing either to get fit, or indeed stay healthy." Of the 12 participants in this study, only Brian noted physical health and fitness as a benefit, directly relating skateboarding to traditional methods of fitness (noting he has never been interested in joining a gym). All of the participants, however, acknowledged the benefits in terms of positive mental well-being.

Engagement in lifestyle sports had positive effects on the participants in this study. Belief in the benefits of their sport for well-being were evident both in literal and metaphorical terms. Jamie described the physical distance surfing provides for him from his structured, everyday life and his responsibilities within it. Paddling out into the ocean is not just about catching waves for him. He was creating distance between himself and modern life. From his position waiting for a wave, he could see industry and activity onshore, but felt disconnected from it. In his own words, he could "see all these people but I'm not a part of it any more, I'm just doing what I'm doing out there." Metaphorically, he had left the responsibilities and expectations in his life on the sand to be picked up when he paddles back in. During that moment, while he is surfing, he is free. It is just one example of many. Eve focused on the euphoric and re-energising change she felt after a surfing session: "You can go out there feeling stressed and shitty and cranky and unwell with a head full of snot and you get out and you feel a million dollars even if it's just for a short time." Similarly, Paul

described coming back from surfing in "the most amazing mood." Both Andrew and Gav explained that solitude in the mountains is an important element in their experience. It is a chance to break free from normality to find inner peace and personal space. Out in snowy terrain, they are reliant on only themselves as they use their experience to ride the mountain. There is no thought of mortgages, expenses, or responsibilities. Just space. They are fully immersed in the action of the activity. Snowboarding provides them with the opportunity to step out of modern life for a short period of time, recharge, connect with nature and then, once content, re-enter society ready to integrate with normality once again. It was clear from their stories that lifestyle sports provided more meaning to their lives, something that Antonovosky (1987), and others, propose contributes to health and well-being.

The positive impact lifestyle sports can have on well-being was highlighted by comparing periods of inactivity or absence that were followed by re-engagement. Some reflected on periods of their life when engagement was low or non-existent as being accompanied by poor mental well-being. Brian recalled the period in his 30s when he stopped skating and found himself lacking direction. He felt lost, as if something was missing in his life. Years later, through his wife's encouragement, he started again and his enjoyment flooded back and led him to realise what had caused his feelings of emptiness. What was particularly elucidating was how he was then able to use skateboarding to help deal with his mother's terminal illness. When he felt the build-up of stress and pressure, he would go skating, finding that the concentration on performing skate tricks focusing his thoughts and providing brief respite. It was not just something positive and fun, but instead took him into a scared space where action, thought, and awareness seemed to merge. This boosted his spirits so that afterwards he felt better placed to deal with the stressful situation and continue supporting his family. Similarly, rediscovering skateboarding helped Josh recover from more than a decade of alcoholism. It was a period of which he claimed to remember little. He was lost in a suffocating lifestyle of stressful work and late nights in bars and at parties. Skating lost significance for him until his son started getting serious about it. For Josh, it was a lifeline; a chance to clean up, start skating again, and become a more connected father. He stopped drinking, quit his job, moved back to his home town, and worked hard to get his board skills back, something he notes took an enormous amount of effort. Now, after two years of sobriety, he is happy, healthy, and living life.

Stacey also had a significant time out of skateboarding, due to a knee injury. It was a time that she describes as a low point in her life, compounded by seeing a group of female skaters ride by as she sat in town eating her lunch, her knee busted and feeling dejected. Skateboarding was at the very core of her identity and gave it meaning, yet suddenly she was unable to engage in it. It was a demoralising experience for her. She had all but given up on skating again until her friends

challenged her to show them some tricks. It became a pivotal moment that would lead to world travel and a national women's title in her late 30s. Now in her late 40s, as she regaled her life's experience to me, her pride and appreciation for the opportunities she has received burst forward from her.

Surfing was essential in helping Sarah regain her mental well-being. She grew up in a highly controlled environment with her strict religious upbringing. She was expected to marry young and become a dedicated wife, mother, and member of the church community. Surfing held no importance to anyone but her in her family and community. After the breakdown of her marriage, she was exiled from her church community. Alone, other than her two children, who she felt enormous responsibility for, Sarah struggled with feelings of shame. Through surfing, she rebuilt her life. Surfing gave her a sense of freedom through those difficult times. Success in the ocean gave her a sense of empowerment, something she could take back onto dry land and into her life. Sarah captured this when noting that the ocean can "wash away the stresses and the worries and the adrenaline gives you a kick to feel like you can handle more after your surf." Through surfing, she is able to create space, protect herself from the stressful elements of her life, recharge through the activity she loves, and then re-enter society renewed and refocused.

The commitment to lifestyle sports is evident not only in a recreational sense but also in an employment sense, with many of the participants incorporating their chosen board sport into their occupations. As these participants have aged, the need for a steady source of income becomes vital. This relates to social control and the structures of modern society and consumerism. In this research, there were many innovative examples of the participants' monetising their knowledge and skills, or incorporating their lifestyle sport into their employment. Snyder (2012) identifies an under-researched entrepreneurship infrastructure exists within subcultures that plays a crucial sustaining role. Long-term engagement in lifestyle sports allows older participants to develop a detailed expertise (Wheaton, 2019). This knowledge can have value to others subcultural members in a variety of ways. Snyder states that some subcultural members pursue entrepreneurial opportunities as affirmation and validation of their identity within a subculture and in response to "the boring career choices many young people face" (p. 318).

This research has given prominence to the creativity and industriousness of the participants, as they combined their passion and ingenuity to negotiate the financial demands of adult life. It is a key component of them adapting to their changing life and responding to their growing adult responsibilities. Snyder's research focuses on the role of skateboard photographers and videographers, whose expertise captures and documents skateboarding progression. This was observed directly in this research through the experiences of Brian, who became a prominent New

Zealand skateboard photographer. Similarly, Andrew used his videography skills to help snowboarders film and edit action footage. These skills, as Snyder notes, provided an essential service to these communities. In the case of Brian, this research was able to show this in detail, particularly in light of Brian's age and the 2011 Canterbury earthquakes. Being one of the few photographers based in the South Island throughout the 1990s Brian had a collection of unique photos that documented New Zealand's skateboarding history and, in many cases, iconic skate spots that no longer exist. He discussed his recent publication of these photos both on social media and through a skateboard magazine. The positive response to the photos was overwhelming for him. Both Brian and Andrew transferred these skills into mainstream careers. Brian now works as a graphic designer and Andrew as an audio-visual engineer. As observed in Snyder's study, they transitioned the expertise honed within their subcultural entrepreneurship into stable careers in middle age.

Tim and Josh incorporated skateboarding into their employment. In Tim's case, he pursued an opportunity to teach at a school where he felt sure his innovative ideas would be supported. He was able to incorporate skateboarding into his physical education classes so that his students could achieve national standards through their love of skateboarding. This blossomed into a school skateboarding team that Tim would drive to skate parks during class and lunchtime, and also away on weekend trips to nearby towns and cities. He was able to develop inter-school competitions and sourced prizes from skate shop sponsors. Tim and a hard-materials teacher also built ramps and rails for the students to skate on school property. The obvious benefit for Tim is that he could skateboard during his employment hours; however, a bigger benefit for him was the chance to develop other young skaters, giving them opportunities not previously available to them, and passing on his passion and knowledge to the next generation. Likewise, Josh is employed more directly in the skateboard industry through managing a store. He enjoys being immersed in skateboarding far more than his experiences with more conventional employment. For him, being able to help young skateboarders access the correct equipment and provide insights to help them develop is immensely rewarding. He has aspirations to develop his store into a skateboarding community hub, similar to those he frequented when he was young. He is concerned that so many stores that stock skateboarding equipment have shop assistants that do not have a thorough understanding of skateboarding and could be selling customers the wrong equipment.

Sarah and Deb displayed entrepreneurship skills, along with their considerable knowledge that allowed them to pursue lifestyle sport businesses that addressed gaps in the market. Sarah now owns her own surf-related business and has her daughter as an employee. She finds running the business invigorating and regularly has creative ideas while out surfing that she can put into

production, such as the hole in the wetsuit hood that allows her to push her pony-tail through to stop her hair getting knotted. Deb and her former partner developed a snowboard apparel business that ran successfully for many years. They recognised that New Zealand snowboarders could not access snowboarding apparel and had a strong aversion to the skiing options available. Both Deb and Sarah have used their businesses to support their boarding communities by sponsoring local talented riders and supplying prizes for local competitions. This is something that is important to them, not only as a chance to give back to their communities and support growth, but also as an opportunity to give back to the lifestyle sports that have had such a meaningful impact on their lives.

Fiona and Gav used snowboarding related employment and opportunities to travel around the world chasing the snow. They found innovative ways to use their specialised knowledge and community connections to gain employment opportunities. Fiona's quick progression as a snowboarder in a male dominated environment created opportunities for her to be a leader for other female snowboarders. This began with becoming a snowboard instructor, then progressed to being a coach for advanced snowboarders and an international tour and mountain guide for female focused snow packages. Gav has shown remarkable adaptability having worked as a terrain park ranger, snowboard technician, and snow shop worker. Both Gav and Fiona have used their knowledge and skills to travel the world, widen their community contacts, and follow the winter seasons. It provides snowboarding-related income that supports their lifestyle, enables them to immerse themselves in the community, and broaden their contacts. When the snow season is over, they leave for the next location with the knowledge they can return next year and be set up.

As these lifestyle sport participants have aged, their engagement has changed. Some continue to incorporate their chosen sport into their careers and businesses, while others have moved into more mainstream careers. Lifestyle sports remain important to them; however, the conditions for which they can engage have resulted in adaptation. The next section captures how they have modified to their changing responsibilities and mobility.

Theme 3. Waxing for the future: Continued participation through adaptation and changes in meaning

This theme directly addresses the research question for this study by illustrating how the people in this study have adapted their lifestyle sport practice in middle age and how these activities have changed in meaning for them. Here I specifically examine the participants' experiences in middle age as they reflect on the impact these lifestyle sports currently play in their lives.

How the participants adapted practice to middle age

All of the participants had significantly changed the way they engage in lifestyle sports in, or approaching, middle age. Employment, marriage, and children required a significant commitment for them all. Of course, they all varied in detail but across all 12 participants there were two key factors that allowed them to stay with their sport. These were, (1) a reduction of recreational activity time, and (2) a greater focus on safety through the mitigation of risk.

Lifestyle sport participants over the age of 40 have less available recreation time (O'Conner, 2017; Wheaton, 2016) and this was the case for the participants in this study. Reflecting on when they were younger, they told stories of all-day surfing sessions, skateboarding for seven hours at a time, and traveling to ski resort towns to live in caravans during the school holidays. Now their lives involved many more responsibilities, which required them to be nimble and adaptable with the available time they had. Thorpe's (2010) research on snowboarding illustrates how, as participants age, it is inevitable that their experiences also change, with growing responsibilities and aspirations (such as saving for a house deposit) affecting available time and consideration of spending. In this study, almost all of the participants were parents (only Tim and Stacey were not), some of particularly young children, and most were in fulltime employment. Their available time for recreation was much less than when they were younger, and the participants reflected on the need to be considerate of the opportunity costs. Spending time engaging in lifestyle sports detracted from other responsibilities (O'Conner, 2017). Dewey (1938) would identify this as a change in environment, where the conditions for experiences has changed. This interrupts the continuity of experience and Paul captured this dilemma: "When you're time poor, surfing is a 50-50 thing." Surfing may not be as beneficial to the family as cleaning the house or taking their children to the playground.

Continued engagement in lifestyle sports in middle age required flexibility and they described having different criteria for engagement. In fact, being able to take part was beneficial on its own. Jamie was content to surf in poor waves just to get in the water. With limited available time,

he needed to be adaptable to the available ocean conditions during the times when he could surf. He told of leaving early from work, surfing a near-by break, and then being home in time to help with domestic and family tasks. Similarly, Tim had noted that he always carried his skateboard in his vehicle, just in case he has a brief moment for a skate. He would pull over as he passed a skate spot and engage in a quick session with whatever available time he had. Paul had found a new passion in skateboarding, which was less dependent on conditions and time compared with surfing. He told of times when he rushed to the nearby skate park for a quick skate after his children were in bed. These behaviours are consistent with O'Conner's (2017) research, where middle-age skateboarders fit skateboarding in where they can around routines and commitments. The participants in this study felt satisfied by continued engagement, rather than the quality of experience, as they accepted they do not have the available time for longer escapades or the flexibility to be ready when conditions are perfect.

Family responsibilities were noted as directly affecting the recreational time available to the participants in this study. This was contingent on the age of the children. The dependency of the children influences the amount of available time and responsibility. The participants in this research had children ranging from new-born (Eve), pre-schoolers (Fiona, Gav, Brian, Eve), primary school aged (Jamie, Paul), pre-teen/teenagers (Deb, Josh, Andrew) and adults (Sarah). The age of the children had different effects on the participants. This is particularly relevant to the women in this study, as they bore the majority of the responsibility for nurturing the young children. At the time of interview, Eve had the least available time for board sports. Having a new baby tied her to a regimented timetable of sleep and feeding times, something that was less burdensome for her husband, who she noted did not have to breastfeed. There was also the physical impacts of pregnancy, which left Eve concerned about her fitness levels for surfing. Pregnancy and rearing young children has an impact on females and their ability to engage in lifestyle sports. Sarah reflected on how pregnancy affected her ability to surf: "I thought I was the fattest person in the world and I didn't want a baby and I couldn't surf." Similarly, Deb's snowboarding was affected over a two-year period following the birth of her son. Nurturing him meant she could not go snowboarding as often as her husband could. She described times where they would put their son in the ski resort children's daycare for just an hour, due to the expense, and get as many laps in of the ski field as they could.

Physical limitations and perception of risk were drivers for changed engagement for the middle-aged participants in this study. This is consistent with other research focused on middle age participation in sports. A skateboarder in O'Conner's (2017) research claimed to be one significant fall away from quitting, illustrating a greater appreciation of consequence. The participants in this

study described the disruption a serious injury would have on their ability to satisfy their responsibilities, for example being able to work. They described being more thoughtful in their approach, compared with when they were younger, to lower the chances of injury.

When they were very young, their lifestyle sport took priority in their lives but as they matured, life became so much more complex and they found themselves with responsibilities that took precedence over their sports. They had to adapt the practices of their sports to fit in with their changing lives. Before performing a trick on challenging terrain on his snowboard, Jamie would consider the conditions, in terms of whether or not they were conducive to success. He visualised how he would do the trick and where he would land. He weighed up the risks and evaluated whether or not it was worth the attempt. Then he decided whether it was worth trying or not, acknowledging that this was far different from his youth, where he would have been much more cavalier. Tim used to enjoy riding his skateboard down hills as fast as he could, but in his 40s, he no longer does so. The consequence of falling at that speed were too frightening for him, especially when he considered the potential for a head injury. He prefers to skate in his favourite, more familiar, environments (with particular reference to a local mini-ramp halfpipe) that allowed him safer, yet still exciting, thrills. Brian cherished his time in the skate park with his daughter, but was considerate of what terrain he rides and what tricks he performs. In his 40s, he was conscious of the risk of injury and worries what would happen to him and his daughter if he had a bad fall. Paul was particularly cautious in his approach to skating and would wear all of the protective padding he could to limit risk of injury. He was aware that this was unusual, as most skaters wear little or no protective padding, and jokes that he looks like the Michelin Man, the puffy, spongy mascot of the Michelin tyre company.

Serious injuries incurred in the past influenced risk mitigation. Many of the participants in this study were hampered by the cumulative physical damage they incurred over their years involved in lifestyle sports. This related to their consideration of risk, in that they know how debilitating a serious injury is and how arduous, or at best inconvenient, the recovery period could be. O'Conner (2018) identifies how middle-aged lifestyle sports enthusiasts can develop more sensitivity to risk of injury, as illustrated by a 42 year old acknowledging that: "I'm one injury away from being done forever" (p. 937). The participants in my study acknowledged a greater appreciation of risk approaching or during middle age than when they were younger, as is the case in other studies (see, Thorpe, 2010). Aging in lifestyle sports typically involves seeking environments that they feel have a "greater degree of control, and less chance of injury" (Wheaton, 2019, p. 397).

Some of the participants were effected by past injuries, which changed the way they engaged in lifestyle sports. Serious knee injuries were most common, with Fiona, Deb, and Stacey discussing

similar experiences. Deb acknowledged that her knee injury has made her more risk averse. At the time of the study, she did not have full confidence in her knee and adjusted her approach to snowboarding to suit. For example, she no longer attempted big jumps, as the landing might have had too much impact for her knee to absorb. She was more risk averse, but still relished the opportunity to be on the mountain and snowboard with her husband and son, grateful that they could share adventure together. Fiona sustained a similar knee injury, which stopped her snowboarding for an extended period, but she took a more calculated approach to recovery, researching many options and settling on Pilates. A significant element of her recovery involved surfing. It presented a new challenge, one which related to her skills as a snowboarder, but was more convenient to engage in due to the location of a nearby beach.

Middle-aged lifestyle sports participants can adopt fitness regimes to improve their fitness in order to continue to surf, skate, and snowboard. Many of the participants in this study adopted physical fitness practices to aide their continued participation in lifestyle sports. Josh, for example, regularly visited the physiotherapist. Years of skateboarding had affected his body's symmetry, in particular his hips. It causes him to feel a constant, dull, grinding ache. He visited a physiotherapist to help him recover and improve his mobility. He changed the duration of his engagement after the physiotherapist strongly suggested that Josh cut his skate sessions back to no more than two hours. In addition, Josh now regularly rides a bicycle to maintain his fitness and aid his recovery. Biking has become an activity for many of the participants, with Jamie, Paul, Gav, and Andrew all regularly bike riding for fitness and fun. Andrew, in particular, discussed his use of cycling to improve his fitness so that he can skate and snowboard better throughout middle age. Andrew and Gav have both broken their backs, arguably the most serious injuries of any of the participants in this research. It has left Andrew considering whether he suffers from chronic pain. Cycling, he hoped, will give him a better chance at a healthy future. It is a structured approach, much like structured sports, an irony not lost on Andrew. He felt that he is now engaging an elite athlete approach to remain involved in anti-structured lifestyle sports.

Change in the meaning of lifestyle sports

The reflections from the participants in this study told of histories in individualistic and hedonistic lifestyle sport pursuits where they had been the centre of their own experiences. For a large part of their life, surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding provided freedom and a sanctuary from life's structures and responsibilities. It is in reflection of this that we observe the most significant change in the meaning of lifestyle sports in middle age, as the incorporation of others in

their pursuit, and most commonly, their children. What was once an individual experience, albeit in the company of a small group of committed others, had now become an inclusive family experience.

While parenthood demands a more selfless perspective on life, and the devotion of significant time and emotions for most people, there was an extra dimension for the participants who had children. They were excited by the prospect of teaching them to surf, skate, or snowboard, or already did so. This was viewed positively as a fun way to spend time together as a family, with the participants excited to impart their accumulated knowledge from decades of involvement to their children. This is consistent with O'Conner's (2017) research, where skateboarders cited the opportunity to skate with their children as a rewarding experience. It is an example of adapting to the challenges of a new aspect of life. Brian combined time with his daughter with his skateboarding by taking her with him to the skate park. He skated while she rode her scooter around the smaller features and these Saturday morning escapades became something he cherished. Jamie and Fiona were teaching their children to surf by placing them on surfboards and pushing them into tiny waves. While the waves are too small for them to surf too, they enjoyed passing on their knowledge to their children and look forward to a future when they can all surf together. For Jamie, it harks back to his own childhood spent on the beach with his mother and brother. Being able to support their children's learning and experience was a rewarding experience for them, in particular as it gives value to their own accumulated knowledge. Wheaton (2019) states that older surfers have a sense of pride and value in their accumulated knowledge: "Particular knowledges gained over time were important aspects of surfing capital" (p. 397).

The parents of older children relished the opportunity to engage in lifestyle sport as a family. As the children get older, they gained more independence and experience. They became less of a responsibility and more of a companion. This provided the opportunity for parents and children to participate in lifestyle sports together. It is also evidence of different motivations of engagement. This, the participants noted, changed the meaningfulness of lifestyle sport engagement with particularly positive results. Rather than their approach when younger, which focused on personal achievement and progression, their motivation focuses on family togetherness and shared experiences. Deb, Josh, Sarah, and Andrew have older children and described surfing, skating, or snowboarding with them as a rewarding experience. Sarah discussed going on early morning surfs with her daughter before they both went to work. They were often the only surfers out at their surf spot. They watched the sun rising, shared waves together and basked in the tranquillity. She described it as "the best thing in the entire world." Deb, her husband and son, regularly snowboard together and she identified her son's enthusiasm for snowboarding as a driving factor for the family's snowboarding commitment. In fact, her son's talent for snowboarding resulted in the whole

family committing to a snowboarding-centric lifestyle. Her son was home-schooled, in part, so he could spend more time on the ski fields. They live in a ski resort town and regularly travel overseas to follow the winter season. For her, to share these experiences as a family was particularly special. Likewise, Andrew enjoyed snowboarding and skateboarding with his son, even building a halfpipe in his backyard for them both to ride. He is committed to supporting his son's development, using his own experiences to help him learn, and they enjoy the time they spend together, joined by a shared love of lifestyle sports. A shared passion for skateboarding has helped to develop the relationship between Josh and his son. The previous section discussed how this passion helped Josh battle his alcoholism and become sober. For him, skateboarding is also something special that he shares with his son. When he stays with Josh during school holidays, they go skating as often as possible. When they are apart, it is something they regularly talk about on their daily phone conversations. During our interview time, Josh showed me skating footage of his son he had recorded on his phone. His pride was obvious and I felt touched that I could share the moment.

Reflecting more generally, lifestyle sports remain critically important to the middle-aged participants in this study. What remained resolute is their core identity as a surfer, skater, and/or snowboarder and the significance of lifestyle sports in their lives. The meaning and practice has changed, but it still meant so much to them. A participant in O'Conner's (2017) research stated that he would melt down a skateboard and inject it in his veins if he could. It is a powerful illustration of commitment and connection, one that is consistent with my experiences during this study. Their commitment is unquestionable, even defiant, and their pride is obvious. My mind is drawn to Stacey. Only moments after describing the extent of her knee issues, how she can barely skate these days, her loss of confidence and her frustrations of gaining weight, she leans back, lifts her head, her smile beaming. She proclaims, "I wouldn't change a thing."

Conclusion: The "Un-structure" of Our Lives

This study aimed to answer the research question: *Why do adults over the age of forty continue to participate in 'extreme' sports and how does their experience change?* The concise answer to the question is that lifestyle sports are much more than thrilling adventures, activities, or pastimes for these participants. For all of them, lifestyle sports began as an escape from the pressures of life in the form of social structure and expectations. They began their sports as young people but as they grew older their lives became more complex and involved more responsibilities. Surfing, skating, and snowboarding became essential tools for navigating and negotiating the pressures of adult life. No matter how stressful their lives had become, they could rely on lifestyle sports engagement for respite and a chance to re-energise and gain clarity. Crucially, the environments where they engaged in these activities became sanctuaries that enabled the participants to step out of "normal" life and find the freedom they enjoyed when younger. The participants were protective of their chosen lifestyle sport(s) and adapted their adult lives to accommodate engagement. As Eve said in her interview, surfing became the "un-structure of our life."

The use of Dewey's (1938) experiential learning theory was central to the development of understanding that emerged in this study, which was facilitated by looking at the participants' life development through learning. It provided valuable insights into self-governed learning where the participant drives the learning experience for their personal goals. To this end, my study gave prominence to Dewey's use of the terms desire and purpose, as I explored the participants' motivations for learning a lifestyle sport and both setting and achieving their goals. Within the themes of desire and purpose, Dewey's concepts of the continuity of experience and the interaction (with particular focus on the environment) become crucial points of focus in the analysis and exposed how these participants continued to learn and adapt over their lives. This was particularly important as I explored the change in meaning and practice for these participants as they aged. For some, aspects of their desires and purposes changed, while others did not. These considerations and contexts allowed Dewey's work to be given prominence in a new way, which acknowledges the adaptability of his work. His concept of an experiential continuum also provided a useful way of looking at how early experiences of lifestyle sports laid foundations that shaped consequent experiences of not only their sport, but also how they lived their lives and their life trajectories. The concept of an experiential continuum is one in which all learning is shaped by previous experience and, in turn, shapes the learning that follows.

My study illustrated the powerful connection the participants had with their lifestyle sports of choice and of the key elements that provided the foundations for their continuation in adulthood. Lifestyle sports represented an escape; a sanctuary from expectation, authority, and control. By going surfing, skating, or snowboarding, the participants experienced freedom, a sense of agency, and a means of self-expression that empowered them and gave life meaning. As beginners, few of them had a significant connection to the sport or to anyone encouraging or coaching them. Rather, they experienced a strong intrinsic motivation to engage in lifestyle sports. The image of their sport as a counter-cultural activity gave it significant meaning while the sensuous pleasures that arose from it combined to make it almost addictive. When they were young, lifestyle sports represented a rebellion from conventional, rule bound sports, and the expectation from adults that children should play them. It provided them with an opportunity to challenge what they perceived to be society's authority, conventions, expectations, and control over them. They gained the perception of greater control over their lives through a sense of agency provided by their sports and subcultures.

Adulthood brought more responsibilities for the participants in this study. Employment, marriage, and children, resulted in them all having far less recreation time. Yet, lifestyle sports remained a pivotal means for negotiating the pressures and structures of their life. The ability to go surfing, skateboarding, or snowboarding, even for a short period of time, allowed the participants to remove themselves from their responsibilities, refresh, and recharge, before re-entering society. In this sense, lifestyle sports remained a tool of defiance, in that engagement involved leaving work early, being late to pick up children from school, or refusing to commit to social events. At the same time, lifestyle sports took on new significance and meaning in their lives by making significant contributions to their positive well-being. The impact lifestyle sports can have on well-being is further highlighted by narratives of periods of disengagement, followed by re-engagement. For some, periods of their life when engagement was low or non-existent were accompanied by low mental well-being. Once they reconnected, the participants told stories of instant elation, a rediscovery of inspiration, and a feeling of wholeness, as if they had filled a spiritual void.

Middle-aged engagement in lifestyle sports brought change to both the practice and meaning for the participants as they adapted to remain engaged in surfing, skating, and snowboarding. Consideration of safety was a strong theme in regards to changed practices with all of the participants acknowledging a greater appreciation of risk during middle age. They were conscious that a serious injury could have an impact on not only their physical health, but also on their employment and family responsibilities. Mitigating risk was an illustration of addressing and managing ageing in lifestyle sports. The perception of risk was directly linked to previous injuries. Most of the participants in this study had experienced significant injuries, with some hampered by

the cumulative physical damage they had incurred over their years of involvement. Some of the participants were sceptical on whether they could recover from another serious injury and remain involved in lifestyle sports. While these considerations have changed the way they engage in lifestyle sports, what remained resolute was their identity as a surfer, skater, and/or snowboarder and the significance of lifestyle sports in their lives. The meaning and practice changed, but the significance of lifestyle sports in their lives remained. They remained passionately connected to surfing, skating, and snowboarding and often considered their "scars" as badges of honour.

Gender effected the experiences throughout all ages for the female participants in this study with lifestyle sports practised within masculinised environments. This intensified their desire to rebel against control and social constraints. Ironically, it saw them challenging some of the social constraints and control that their subculture resisted within it. Essentially, they were outsiders within an outsider subculture, something that created feelings of isolation. Some of the women in this study received hazing, even bullying, by males. These males were exerting masculine dominance and enforcing gendered hierarchies, suggesting that lifestyle sports were the territory of males. In response, the women were required to adopt markings of what Connell (2005) calls "hegemonic masculinity" such as the display and use of power, aggression, and risk-taking to gain validity and attention that is not uncommon is lifestyle sports (Thorpe, 2011). They noted that meeting other females was a rare, and often exciting, experience. To this end, competitions became a concentration point for female lifestyle sports enthusiasts to meet and interact. Competitions were key opportunities for women, who were used to practising and engaging by themselves or in masculine environments, to meet other women and make friends.

This study illustrated that the key change in the meaning of lifestyle sports in middle age involved the incorporation of others into their experience. The stability it provided, and the ways in which it often held their lives together, gave it new meaning as they integrated it into their complex lives and the responsibilities they now had. Lifestyle sports had always been a solo experience for these participants who saw surfing, skateboarding, and snowboarding as activities that created distance from others and freedom from structure, rules, and expectations, and, ultimately, other people. Yet, in middle age, they reflected with excitement about the ability to include their children into their activities, to impart knowledge to aid their development, and to share the thrills of experience. Many of the participants had young children and made reference to being hopeful of a future when they could engage in lifestyle sports as a family. Essentially, this was another act of lifestyle sport rebellion, as the participants took the opposite approach of the parents and adults in their own youth. Rather than pushing their children into traditional sports in order to satisfy convention and external expectation, the participants in this study supported their children to

experiment with alternative activities. They wanted their children to experience the fun, thrills, creativity, and spirituality that has been so rewarding for them over several decades of lifestyle sports engagement. They removed the barriers that they experienced in their youth, such as a lack of quality equipment and coaching, so that their children could have a high-quality experience, something they saw as an investment in their family's future. On this, I reflected on the words of Sarah, who captured it best, when she told of early morning surfing escapades with her daughter. She claimed that sharing her love for surfing with her daughter, and seeing the same passion reflected back, was simply for her "the best thing in the entire world."

Implications

Before discussing the contribution my research has made to knowledge in the discipline of sociology of sport, I first refer to this quote in my literature review by Coan (2014):

> Skating when you're old enough to have a mortgage or haemorrhoids is not a good look. . . So by all means skateboard, just know that you look ridiculous, and remember that you'll probably end up at some point sobbing in some filthy A&E department.

This quote shows the dismissive attitude shared by some, that lifestyle sports are activities for youth only: no more than silly little kids' games and the idea that adults who remain connected to these sports "look ridiculous". This study contradicts Coan's statement to show that some members of society suffer under the weight of conventionality and yearn for the freedom of self-expression. Through lifestyle sports, they have found a medium for that self-expression, but rather than hide away from fear of public scorn, they wear their defiance proudly as a badge of honour. As adults, they remain staunchly proud to be skaters, surfers, and snowboarders.

Wheaton (2017) identified how the experiences of middle-aged lifestyle sport participants is an under-researched area, which inspired my study as both a doctoral student and an ageing skater and snowboarder myself. My own experiences compelled me to make a robust inquiry into the experiences of middle-aged New Zealand surfers, snowboarders, and skateboarders. I suggest that my contribution to knowledge in the field is how this study gives prominence to this unique community. In doing so, my research made a valuable contribution to the sociology of sport, education, and physical education, as it provided a deeper understanding of the importance of sport, and more specifically unconventional sport, for middle-aged participants. I use the term "unconventional sport" in reference to the participants' age in this study, as they represented a

group outside of the typical stereotyped image of a surfer, skateboarder, or snowboarder. Despite that stereotype, and the isolation of being one of a small, outsider group, these participants remained active in these sports for strongly personal reasons.

This study placed particular emphasis on the individual at the centre of unstructured, self-governed learning contexts, which provided insights into purpose and desire as factors towards educative motivation and success. This study also included the strong connection between lifestyle sports and positive mental well-being for them. This makes a useful contribution to knowledge in the area of health and well-being, where there is a tendency to see sport merely as a tool in the fight against obesity and other lifestyle diseases. Despite the important contribution lifestyle sports made to the participants lives, there was far more to these sports than being tools in the fight against stress and poor well-being. It promoted how remaining active in lifestyle sports was an essential element for negotiating, and prospering, through life in middle age.

Recommendations for further research

The stimulation of this study has encouraged me to think about possibilities for further research within the lifestyle sport subcultures. Through my study, I have been fortunate to share in the life histories of 12 generous people and the experience has promoted some deep reflection on my part as a person in a similar situation. I am fascinated by what their future may hold for them and, in fact, what the future holds for me, as I face the same challenges. In 10 years, will they still be engaging in lifestyle sports? How will their participation have changed? What contribution will it be making to their well-being? How is their physical health in the wake of their previous injuries and how might this affect participation? Are they still involving lifestyle sports in their businesses and employment? I suggest a study 10 years on would make a meaningful contribution to sport and health research.

Having completed this research, I believe there is value in continuing to investigate the area of middle-aged participation in lifestyle sports. I would recommend that similar studies be conducted, but focus on a single lifestyle sport, such as surfing, to further concentrate on the themes in this study, in particular the link with mental well-being. There is also a potential benefit in studies similar to my own across different locations, such as Australia, Hawaii, and/or Brazil, to gain an insight into how different cultures can influence experiences and meanings.

I would also recommend a study of women's lifestyle sport participation and competitions in regards to building communities and connections. Reflecting on the interviews in my study, the way the female participants used competitions as community hubs was a revelation to me. They made it

sound like the most enjoyable, supportive, and rewarding experience. It is totally at odds with my own experiences of competitive sport. I believe there would be great merit in further research in this area. It could have the benefit of welcoming so many more females into a variety of sports.

Closing Reflections

My research finishes as it started, with me. As is with many part-time doctoral students, my study has taken many years to complete and, unsurprisingly, I have changed. More specifically, I have been changed by the people who I have interviewed and come to understand. To provide some brief examples, Jamie's reflections on fitness in middle age changed how I look at my own limitations. Paul's enthusiasm for learning to skateboard in his40s, and particularly his insistence on using protective padding, has influenced my own skating habits. I have been skating more regularly and now wear a helmet for safety. Andrew and Stacey's battles with ongoing issues resulting from old injuries helped me realise that there are consequences to participation. I am lucky to be able to ride skateboards and snowboards so I should continue while I can because one day I may not be able to. More generally, reflecting on all of the interviews, I understand how these lifestyle sports are an intrinsic part of who I am and play an important role in my positive well-being. For these reflections, I owe the people I interviewed a great deal.

Last year, I took my family to Australia to visit my brother and his family. After a Google search into skate parks, I found an amazing indoor facility with numerous ramps only 30 minutes from his house. We drove to the facility, paid the entry fee, signed the legal indemnity wavers (always a confronting experience), and entered. The facility was full of skaters varying in age from around 10 to mid/late teens, as we expected. I was surprised to see skateboarding coaches, themselves only in their late teens/early 20s, but obviously hired to give one-on-one tuition to kids who paid the extra cost. My brother and I exchanged frowns. "Not sure about that," my brother said, disapprovingly. It was very different when we learnt to skate in the late 1980s.

What we marvelled at most was the number of parents at the facility. When we learnt to skate, there were never parents around. The only adults were the caretakers kicking us off school property, shopkeepers yelling at us to move away from outside their stores, or police trying to confiscate our boards. Here, the parents at this skate park were mostly on their phones, patiently waiting for their kids to exhaust themselves. Others were more active, filming their kids skating and showing them the footage so that they could continue their progression. The looks they gave my brother and I when we started skating; it was as if it had never occurred to them that they too could skate. They seemed totally baffled. When we finished our session and made our way back through

reception, the shop owner said "oh, guys, just to let you know, old man night is on Tuesday's." This was far from an insult. She was letting us know that there were others just like us and the owners saw it as important enough to schedule time when we could have the whole place to ourselves.

Recently, I was skateboarding at a bowl (a concrete pool-like structure with transitioned walls) not far from my house. I had taken a day off work to write (again, the plight of a part-time student) and on these days I made a point of going to the skate park. It has become important to me to combine the physical with the theoretical and I find it to be the perfect way to give my brain a rest. When I arrived, I noticed two high school students, one on a skateboard and one on a scooter. They seemed wary of me and stayed on the other side of the skate park. They may have thought I was a teacher, potentially rumbling their truancy. After a while, and seeing me skate, they approached the bowl and we talked a little, before the skater took a run in the bowl. He was trying a rudimentary trick called a 50-50. I gave him some tips about approach lines, speed, and his shoulder position. It took him a while, but he completed the trick. He was stoked and I was stoked for him. "Landing" a trick for the first time is always an incredible feeling.

As the teenagers left, a middle-aged BMX rider arrived. We nodded, smiled, and took turns in the bowl. Becoming more comfortable in each other's presence, we started "hooting" when we could see the other was pushing that bit harder or showing style; a guttural acknowledgement towards the effort. While both resting, the BMXer said "not many our age left, aye?" "Don't I know it," I replied, with a laugh. In that brief moment, we had created a community of two; just a couple of old guys taking momentary leave of the structured world by doing something we loved. Real life, and its associated responsibilities, would be a consideration once more in next to no time. But for now, we were free. Meeting someone else who was doing the same thing only heightened the experience, proof of the value in continuing what feels right even if no one else your age seems to do it. Then it was time for me to go. The afternoon's writing had to be productive, as I would not have the same opportunity for the rest of the month. Back to writing at nights and weekends in small clumps. I said goodbye to the BMXer. "Hey, you should ride the bowl in Leeston. It would really suit your style," he said. I thanked him and said I would check it out. "Otherwise, I come here in my lunch hour most days. See you next time, bro." I sincerely hope I see him there again.

I skateboard more now at 45 than I did when I was 40, but I snowboard less. One of the walls in my house is covered in classic skateboard decks. It is the first thing I show new visitors. I love that wall. I would love to get another surfboard and start up again, particularly as one of my daughters expressed an interest. It would be great fun to be in the water together. Maybe the whole family could get into it. What an amazing time we would have.

Like the skater in O'Conner's (2018) research, I wonder if I am one slam away from quitting. Falls are inevitable. Mostly, I can handle the bumps and bruises, but something more serious would be confronting. I wonder how I might take it. I have been skating for over 30 years. So why stop? Surely, I can simply continue to adapt. If, like Coan described, I end up in some "filthy A&E Department" it may not be so bad. Between the moments of pain, as I fill in the prerequisite ACC form, when I get to the question asking how my injury was sustained, I can write with pride:

Skateboarding.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Information Sheet

College of Education, Health and Human Development

Telephone: +64 3 369 3484

Email: nick.maitland@canterbury.ac.nz

16 Aug 2019
HEC Ref: HEC 2019/11/LR-PS

Growing older in a youth subculture:

Learning from the experiences of lifestyle sports participants aged in their forties.

Information Sheet

My name is Nick Maitland and I am a Doctor of Education candidate undertaking research at the University of Canterbury. My research inquires into the experiences of lifestyle sports participants who are between 40 and 50 years of age and focuses on the lifestyle sports of surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding. This study will explore how these participants learnt both the physical practice of their sport and the intricacies and values of their youth-based subculture. The focus will be on why the participants continue to engage in sports that are more commonly associated with younger participants and how the nature of their participation, and the meanings it holds for them, changes as they mature.

You have been recommended for this research based on your history with one/some/all of these lifestyle sports. Because of this, I am sending you this information sheet.

If you choose to take part in this study, your involvement in this project will be as an interviewee. Interviews will take between 1 and 1.5 hours at time and date that is most convenient to you. This interview will be open and unstructured and cover your experiences as a lifestyle sport participant. I would like to encourage you to bring 5 to 10 photos as a way to illustrate and stimulate further conversation. These photos can be of anything that means something to you and relates to your chosen lifestyle sport(s).

Please note that this interview will be recorded as an audio file and professionally transcribed. The transcriber will sign a confidentiality agreement and your full name will not be included to protect your identity.

As a follow-up to this investigation, you will be asked to review a written copy of the interview transcript. At this point, you are welcome to make any changes, or add any additional comments, that you like. A second, shorter interview (up to 30 minutes) may be requested for any further information.

Participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. You may ask for your raw data to be returned to you or destroyed at any point. If you withdraw, I will remove information relating to you. However, once analysis of raw data starts on 1 June 2019, it will become increasingly difficult to remove the influence of your data on the results.

The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation: your identity will not be made public without your prior consent. To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, all interviewees will be identified by a pseudonym, unless otherwise negotiated with the researcher. All data, including interview transcripts and recordings, photos, and notes will be stored securely at the University of Canterbury. Only I, and my supervisors, Professor Richard Light and Associate Professor Annelies Kamp, will have access to this data. Please understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

Please indicate to the researcher on the consent form if you would like to receive a copy of the summary of results of the project.

The project is being carried out *as a requirement for the Doctor of Education degree* by Nick Maitland under the supervision of Professor Richard Light who can be contacted at richard.light@canterbury.ac.nz. He will be pleased to discuss any concerns you may have about participation in the project.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, and participants should address any complaints to The Chair, Human Ethics Committee, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz).

If you agree to participate in the study, you are asked to complete the consent form and return to me, Nick Maitland, at the time of interview, or following approval of the written transcription by email to nick.maitland@canterbury.ac.nz

College of Education, Health and Human Development
Telephone: +64 3 369 3484

Email: nick.maitland@canterbury.ac.nz

16 Aug 2019
HEC Ref: HEC 2019/11/LR-PS

Growing older in a youth subculture:

Learning from the experiences of lifestyle sports participants aged in their forties.

Consent Form for Deb Jamieson

☐ I have been given a full explanation of this project and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

☐ I understand what is required of me if I agree to take part in the research.

☐ I understand that participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time without penalty. Withdrawal of participation will also include the withdrawal of any information I have provided should this remain practically achievable.

☐ I understand that any information or opinions I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher, his two academic supervisors and a transcriber (who has signed a confidentiality agreement) and that any published or reported results will not identify the participants other than by a first name. I understand that a thesis is a public document and will be available through the UC Library.

☐ I understand that all data collected for the study will be kept in locked and secure facilities and/or in password protected electronic form and will be destroyed after ten years.

☐ I understand the risks associated with taking part and how they will be managed.

☐ I understand that I can contact the researcher [*Nick Maitland at nick.maitland@canterbury.ac.nz*] or supervisor [*Professor Richard Light at richard.light@canterbury.ac.nz*] for further information. If I have any complaints, I can contact the Chair of the University of Canterbury Human Ethics Committee, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch (human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz)

☐ I would like a summary of the results of the project.

☐ I give permission for my first name to be used in relation to my interview quotes. If this box is not ticked, you will be identified by a pseudonym.

☐ By signing below, I agree to participate in this research project.

Name:_____Signed:_____Date:

_____

Email address:

_____

This form can be sent electronically to nick.maitland@canterbury.ac.nz as a scanned document or a jpeg file. Physical copies can be given at the conclusion of the interview or mailed to Nick Maitland, Level 2 Rehua Building, College of Education, Health and Human Development, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140

Appendix 3: Ethics Approval

UC
UNIVERSITY OF
CANTERBURY
Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha
CHRISTCHURCH NEW ZEALAND

HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Secretary, Rebecca Robinson
Telephone: +64 03 369 4588, Extn 94588
Email: human-ethics@canterbury.ac.nz

Ref: HEC 2019/11/LR-PS

13 May 2019

Nicholas Maitland
Health Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY

Dear Nicholas

Thank you for submitting your low risk application to the Human Ethics Committee for the research proposal titled "Growing Older in a Youth Subculture: Learning from the Experiences of Lifestyle Sports Participants Aged in Their Forties".

I am pleased to advise that this application has been reviewed and approved.

Please note that this approval is subject to the incorporation of the amendments you have provided in your email of 2nd May 2019.

With best wishes for your project.

Yours sincerely

Dr Dean Sutherland
Chair, Human Ethics Committee