

SINK OR SWIM: THE IMPACT OF HAVING A
CHILD WITH OLYMPIC POTENTIAL ON FAMILY
WELL-BEING

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

Behind every young successful athlete, there is always a passionate and supportive social network, most often called ‘family’. Whilst the importance of family on athletes’ development became established, limited effort has been put in exploring the role of sport on the family unit. The aim of this study was to explore the role of elite swimming on the well-being of Cypriot families, which have an adolescent swimmer with Olympic potential. Adopting the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis approach, this study explored through four rounds of interviews (during the pre-season, beginning and peak of the competition season and off-season) the experiences of the members of four Cypriot swimming families, that took place within a year. The findings provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of family well-being (FWB) in the context of elite swimming in Cyprus, and detail the complex influence that elite sport can have on FWB, through impacting the personal well-being of the individual members and the mutual sense of FWB. It highlights the unique characteristics of each family and discusses how they shape their experiences as well as how specific socio-cultural characteristics of the Cypriot society contribute to similar experiences. This study draws attention on the impact of swimming on individuals’ self-satisfaction and social well-being and highlights the significance of effective communication and members’ ‘togetherness’, as key factors in maintaining FWB during challenging moments in sport. This study offers a framework that can be used in future studies for examining the FWB of other Cypriot families, proposes topics for future studies and suggests potential implications for policy and the practice of sport practitioners, to safeguard FWB.

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Abbreviations

FLS: Family Life Satisfaction

FWB: Family Well-Being

FQOL: Family Quality of Life

FS: Flourish Scale

FST: Family Systems' Theory

IPA: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

LS: Life Satisfaction

MMFF: McMaster Model of Family Functioning

PWB: Psychological Well-Being

SDT: Self-Determination Theory

SWB: Subjective Well-Being

SWFL: Satisfaction With Family Life

1 Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Elite sport, Olympism and Well-being:

Historically the dominant ethos of the Olympics was about “*exalting and combining in a balanced whole the qualities of body, will and mind*” (Olympic Charter, 2017). In more recent years, along with the professionalization of sport, the ideals and values of elite sport have developed to fully embrace a performance sport ethic where high levels of achievement are the focus, and winning medals dominates for individuals and nations (Baimbridge, 1998; Overman, 1999). As a result, high performance is now more connected with challenges to well-being than a “balanced whole” (Baum, 2006; Doherty, Hannigan, & Campbell, 2016; McGannon & McMahon, 2019; J. McMahon & Penney, 2013; Newman, Howells, & Fletcher, 2016). Elite athletes work with a wide range of professionals including coaches, physiotherapists, masseurs, gym-trainers and doctors, who should be responsible for athletes’ performance and well-being (Dijkstra, Pollock, Chakraverty, & Alonso, 2014); yet, family remains a central unit for supporting the needs of athletes, especially through adolescence (Côté, 1999; Kay & Spaaij, 2012). In many countries, athletes reach a world level to be offered sufficient support by sporting federations and sponsors; yet it is surprising to see numerous media articles making stories on self-funded Olympians (BBC Sport, 2020; McGee, 2016; Tew, 2019).

1.2 Sporting Families

The predominant funders and emotional supporters of athletes hear to the names of “Mum” and “Dad” and the cost is not low; McGee, wrote in The Guardian: “*Want to compete in fencing? Congratulations: be prepared to fork out north of \$20,000 a year*” (McGee, 2016).

Kay accurately explained, that participation is a ‘family affair’ (Kay, 2000) but most studies around the topic of families in elite sport have focused on the impact of parents on athletes’ performance while the number of studies, which incorporated the voice of all the family members and explored the impact on their dynamics is very limited (Kay, 2000; Kirk et al., 1997; Knoetze-Raper, Myburgh, & Poggenpoel, 2016; Newhouse-Bailey, Dixon, &

Warner, 2015). The research conducted for this thesis joins this limited number of studies and contributes to developing an understanding of the impact of participating in elite sport on family well-being. This study allows readers to see how individual family member's personal well-being is impacted, and how subsequently participation influences the members' dynamics and FWB.

1.3 The Cypriot Sporting Culture

While Cyprus has had some significant appearances in the most important world events, including a second place in the London 2012 Olympic Games, the culture of sport has barely been studied. There is limited knowledge around the socio-cultural and psychological aspects that shape Cypriot athletes and other sport participants' experiences (Papaefstathiou, 2015). While the support that athletes are provided is not informed by any culture-specific research and at the same time there are no strategies to safeguard athletes from abuse or to promote their rights (Chroni & Papaefstathiou, 2015), the dropout rate of young athletes remains high and abuse incidents remain unheard and a secret of the insiders (Filathlos.gr, 2016).

Being an elite adolescent Cypriot swimmer requires combining school and swimming duties. Every year, swimmers have approximately one month to rest in summer, while their swimming duties begin around early September and include swimming and strength and conditioning training (three - six hours per day, except Sundays), as well as competing at national and international events, to which they need to qualify. The expenses of participation in elite swimming in Cyprus includes the costs of swimming gear, physiotherapists, massages, psychologists, doctors, club fees (for some) and transportation. Finally, depending on the swimmers' performances in the competitions they participate, they collect points and at the end of the year they receive funding from the national swimming federation; the rules and regulations regarding the funding procedures can be found online at: <http://koek.org.cy>.

Conducting an in-depth exploration of four elite Cypriot swimming families, this thesis enables developing an understanding of how the socio-political context of Cyprus, relates to the families' experiences in elite sport and to their well-being. The findings demonstrate the need for developing policies to safeguard the well-being of the families who participate in elite swimming, and provide significant insight that could be used by the federation.

1.4 The aim of this study:

Considering athlete welfare, is central to ensuring performance standards are balanced with well-being in sport and wider life (Lundqvist, 2011; Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014), this study seeks to contribute to the safeguarding actions taken by the International Olympic Committee, the Cyprus Olympic Committee, as well as other sporting organizations. The purpose is to provide an insight on how families' experience their participation and how their well-being may be impacted by taking part in elite swimming.

The aim of this study was to explore the role of elite sport in the well-being of Cypriot families, which have an adolescent swimmer with Olympic potential, and the objectives to: (i) to examine the sociopsychological dynamics of Cypriot families living with adolescent elite swimmers, and (ii) to critically explore the core well-being elements of Cypriot family life in the context of elite swimming.

1.5 The structure of this thesis

This thesis provides a review of the literature (Chapter 2), which provides an in-depth understanding on the concepts of well-being, FWB and discusses the existing knowledge around the topic of sport families. Chapter 3 offers a detailed account and justification for adopting the methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and for all the procedures followed for the conduct of this study. Chapters 4 and 5 present the findings; Chapter 4 presents a new conceptualisation of FWB in the context of Cyprus swimming and unravels the contributors of FWB, discussing the complexity between them. Chapter 5 discusses the findings on the exploration on the role of elite swimming on Cypriots' FWB. Chapter 6, concludes by summarising the findings and discussing the contribution and implications of this study, and its limitations.

2 Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This study is underpinned by three main topics: well-being, family well-being (FWB) and sporting families. Given the extensive knowledge that exists around these topics, this chapter explores each one of them in depth, in separate sections. Each section presents the various concepts and findings developed from previous studies, identifies the gaps in knowledge, argues for the need for further investigation and concludes by supporting the significance of this research.

The first section explores the concept of well-being; it provides a description of its historical development, a critical account of the most recognised psychological research approaches and discusses some of the sociocultural elements that influence well-being. The second section discusses existing theories on the terms ‘family’ and FWB, to provide an understanding of the focus of this thesis. Finally, the third section presents how previous studies have contributed to understanding the sporting experiences of families collectively and of the family members individually, and pinpoints the gaps in knowledge that this research explores.

2.2 Section A: Well-being

2.2.1 Well-being defined

Well-being is a term interpreted in different ways; yet fundamentally it refers to what is good for us, the best possible states of being (e.g. being happy), the ideal ways of living and ways of achieving it (Tiberius, 2006). Even though the use of the term, well-being and the research surrounding it have witnessed a take-off phase since 1960s, the matters that are underpinning well-being have been of interest since ancient times, dating back to the sixth century B.C. (Campbell, 2016). Beginning with the theories of philosophers, the following sections outline the different conceptualisations of well-being to a) provide an in-depth understanding of its development as a concept; b) to illustrate how different disciplines make use of the term, and apply it to policies and research, and most importantly c) to enable the reader understand the theoretical concepts on which the methodology of this study was based on. As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, these theories have informed the research design, the researcher's approach and the interview questions.

2.2.2 Philosophical views

Philosophy was arguably the first discipline that sought to answer well-being related questions. Historically, ideas about hedonism dominated philosophical thinking on well-being. Deriving from the Greek word *ἡδονή*, meaning pleasure; hedonism focuses on happiness, enjoyment and absence of discomfort (Huta & Waterman, 2014). This philosophy originates from the fourth century BC from the Greek philosopher Aristippus who believed that the goal of life should be to have as many pleasurable experiences as possible (Peterson, Park & Seligman, 2005). Similar 'hedonistic' perceptions were also found in even older philosophies (600 BC), yet remain not widely known. For instance, the Indian philosophy of Cārvāka ethics (Canavan, 1912; Sadhu, 2015), which originates in the sixth century B.C. suggested that wise men should focus on building wealth and in having pleasurable moments.

Developing Aristippus' view, Epicurus (342-366 BC) suggested that hedonism is about the lack of body pain and soul disturbance and not about consumption or profligate pleasures (Feldman, 2004). He supported that people should make the most out of every day

and that it is a moral obligation to maximise pleasure, as also none has control of death and a new day may not dawn (Canavan, 1912; Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005); such thinking is reflected in colloquial expressions such as ‘live as if it’s your last day’ or ‘carpe diem’. Early Christian philosophers raised criticisms towards hedonism for encouraging sin and have dominated the religion up to today; yet later, Renaissance philosophers such as Moore and Erasmus, in response to those criticisms, suggested that it was God’s wish that people live a happy life as long as they do not achieve it through artificial ways (Copleston, 1993; Peterson et al., 2005). The doctrine of hedonism has been an inspiration and laid the foundations for many other theories and contemporary approaches to the study of well-being (Peterson et al., 2005), some include: Bentham’s utilitarianism, where he supported that pleasure is the ultimate good as it is utility and suggested that as long as one’s happiness does not disrupt others, it can increase mass happiness (Burns, 2005), Freud’s psychoanalysis and Kahneman’s hedonic psychology (Moccia, Mazza, Nicola, & Janiri, 2018; Peterson et al., 2005).

Seeking to answer what is the greatest achievable good and how we should live, Aristotle (384-322 BC) developed the ‘Eudaimonic view’. He criticised the hedonic view for being vulgar and encouraging humans to be slavish followers of their desires (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Aristotle argued that the greatest attainment that humans could achieve was “eudaimonia”, which he described as the striving towards personal excellence. He believed that people should be sensing worthwhileness and that it is found in virtue, while virtue should be pleasant in itself. He viewed happiness as the outcome of an action, which is achieved through good life and good action; a virtuous activity of the soul (Ross, 2005). Aristotle believed in intermediate states, meaning actions that would not cause excessiveness or deficiency and at the same time that people should aim to use their talents fully and to develop to their maximum potential. To achieve that, the body must be taken care of and be healthy (Rueve, 1936; Ryff & Singer, 2008).

The core assessment of the eudaimonic view was embraced by religious philosophies too. Despite their aim to teach religion, early Christian philosophers such as Lactantius (240-320 A.C.) explained that hedonism leads to a sinful life (Wilson, 2008); Islam also suggests that happiness is achieved through living a purified and complete life filled with meaning and purpose (Joshnloo, 2013). The notion of happiness as the ultimate state and its importance was later discussed in all eras, and it still is. What is noteworthy is how cultural and social factors impacted the perception of it. In the Middle ages happiness was God’s gift whereas in the Enlightenment era when there was a scientific revolution and a separation of the church

and the state, happiness was characterised by Thomas Jefferson as a “self-evident truth”; happiness was then attainable and in each person’s hands to achieve (D. M. McMahon, 2006).

Moving into the postmodern era (20th and 21st century), well-being related literature seems to be merging the hedonic and eudaimonic views. Well-being research took off in the 1960’s and since then different disciplines have sought to uncover the existential questions (Kesebir & Diener, 2008). Maybe one of the last pure philosophical perspectives is found in Bertrand Russell’s book ‘*What I believe*’; “*The good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge. Neither love without knowledge, nor knowledge without love can produce a good life.*” (Russell, 1925, p. 28). The emotion of love has a hedonic nature and is subjective, while knowledge relates to cognitive and developmental processes aligned with the eudaimonic view.

2.2.3 Psychological approaches and views

Psychology was one of the first disciplines, after philosophy, which paid particular attention to well-being. Most of the theories developed in psychology were inspired either by the hedonic or eudaimonic view; yet as in philosophy, different psychological theories appear to be contesting one another, especially in efforts towards establishing effective measurement of wellbeing (Vittersø & Sørholt, 2011). This section provides an insight into some of the most established psychological approaches to well-being.

2.2.3.1 Subjective Well-being

Continuing from the notion of happiness, psychologists have suggested the term Subjective Well-being (SWB) as a way to capture what many people mean by happiness (Kesebir & Diener, 2008). SWB stresses the importance of each person’s uniqueness, suggesting that what well-being means varies between people and that no standard dimensions exist (Dolan, 2014; Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014); therefore, well-being depends on how satisfied each person is with his/her life based on their own values. It is important to note that, although “*much of the current literature on well-being uses terms like happiness, life satisfaction and subjective well-being interchangeably, if well-being is defined or assessed by individuals themselves, it is termed subjective well-being*” (Prasoon & Chaturvedi, 2016, p. 26).

The need for incorporating more subjective tools in the examination of people's well-being was raised by Kuznets (Kuznets, 1948), and as discussed in more detail in 2.2.4, the epistemology of SWB, grew out of neoliberal views; nonetheless, the concept of SWB appeared first in some psychological and psychiatry research before 1960 (e.g. Scott, 1958), when researchers were testing the impact of various drugs such as Benzedrine (Bradley, 1937) and Pyrazine (Bills, McDonald, & Spies, 1939), and were interested in participants' subjective feelings; yet today SWB is one of the most recognised and used well-being concepts of recent decades and can be found in most disciplines, including the social and bio-sciences.

Denier and Suh (1997), two of the most important contemporary supporters of this approach, suggested that SWB consists of three interrelated components: Life satisfaction (LS), referring to a cognitive satisfaction with life, and pleasant and unpleasant affect (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders, 2012). Kahneman, a psychologist and economist, has criticized some of the aspects of SWB, however he supported that every person deserves a voice (Kahneman, 1999; Kahneman & Tversky, 2000). He suggested the term 'objective happiness', which he defined as the "*average of utility over time*" (Kahneman, 1999, p. 3); referring to utility as the experiences of pain and pleasure. As recommended, objective happiness can be measured using more objective standards to evaluate people's subjective experiences, rather than basing findings purely on the bias of each individual and on their memory, as done using SWB approaches. Following Kahneman, Paul Dolan (2014), also one of the leading scholars in the field of SWB, defined happiness as the "*experiences of pleasure and purpose over time*" and suggested that it is the key element of well-being. He explained that a happy life is the one perceived to contain the right balance of amusement and fulfilment and that happiness is an output resulting from input and processing. Dolan explains that not all people work in the same ways; some live their lives concentrating more on fun and some more on purpose. He highlighted that purpose is experienced in the moment of an activity not in narrating the story and that early adulthood is the period in which people do not experience a great sense of purpose. However, he suggests that if people change their lifestyles slightly in doing more of the things that come secondary for them (hedonic or eudaimonic activities), they might experience increased life satisfaction.

Up to the present day SWB measures are being used for assessing individuals' as well as groups' and nation's well-being (Dolan & Metcalfe, 2012). SWB has been assessed using quantitative, qualitative and mixed methodologies, yet the most popular method appears to be questionnaires (Camfield, 2016). Even though researchers may agree on the importance of

individuals' perception and the epistemology of SWB, their definition of well-being is not always shared and it is what mainly shapes their methodology; this applies in all studies despite disciplinary differences. Measuring SWB, there is no standard questionnaire template; some questionnaires measure the three components suggested by Dodge and his colleagues (2012), some concentrate on more specific aspects which impact well-being (e.g. affection and anxiety), and others use a combination of different questionnaires (Park et al., 2004). Moreover, qualitative studies evaluating SWB have mostly used interviews (Joseph & Southcott, 2014; Judd & Pooley, 2014; Li & Lau, 2012), observations and focus groups (Lally, 2009) to measure SWB.

On a bigger scale, by almost replacing old GDP evaluations (Dolan, Peasgood, & White, 2008), SWB measures have become popular in evaluating national well-being and have received particular recognition from the governing bodies of the United Kingdom, United States of America, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development and United Nations (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2015; Dolan & Metcalfe, 2012; Dolan et al., 2008). According to recent studies, GDP is not an effective indicator of well-being for a number of reasons (Bleys, 2012; Diener & Seligman, 2004; Fleurbaey, 2009; Giannetti, Agostinho, Almeida, & Huisingh, 2015; Hicks, Tinkler, & Allin, 2013; Daniel Kahneman, Krueger, Schkade, Schwarz, & Stone, 2004). As Giannetti et al. (2015) suggested, GDP measures do not reflect people's well-being because they: 1) allow various components of non-monetary transactions to be ignored; 2) fail in evaluating changes in human capital (both social and organizational), and do not take into account whether there is a circulation of income amongst people; 3) do not take into account the spending made on activities that could harm people's well-being; every expenditure is viewed positively ; 4) enable inequalities to exist as it ignores cultural differences; 5) do not consider the damage in the environment and nature that could have a long-term impact on society but at the same time it accounts for the costs of environmental remediation as valuable production.

Studies have shown that countries with high subjective well-being tend to be more economically advanced, have less unemployment and provide people with more political freedom and human rights (Diener, Diener, & Diener, 1995; Helliwell, Huang, Grover, & Wang, 2014; Lawless & Lucas, 2011). Employment relates to self-satisfaction (Latif, 2010). In a recent publication Diener et al. (2015) suggested that accounting for SWB could enhance efficiency in policy making; nonetheless, the findings of an older study challenge this suggestion. A quantitative 2-year longitudinal study suggested that when people are

questioned about their SWB they reflect on the events that took place within the last three months (Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). Therefore, this finding raises the question of whether using SWB approaches in research will provide adequate information to form long term policies. Another issue raised about these surveys is the method of collecting data; most of them are conducted via telephone or other digital platforms, which means they are disproportionately accessed by rich people.

Overall, it could be argued that the strength of SWB, of considering individuals' unique needs for enhancing well-being, sometimes disappears when data are used in big surveys and unique needs become too generalised to be applicable.

2.2.3.2 Psychological Well-being

Whilst some argue that there is a connection between Eudaimonia and Hedonism (Waterman, Schwartz, & Conti, 2008) others favour a Eudaimonic approach, suggesting that they are related but distinguishable and sometimes not related (Vittersø & Søholt, 2011); such work suggests that well-being relates to psychological wellness, flourishing and personal development. The concept of the Psychological Well-being (PWB) includes psychological aspects for inner growth and development including life challenges. It suggests that well-being is not just the absence of ill-being (Huppert, 2009; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008), while Ryff's (1989) original conceptualization divides PWB into six dimensions: self-acceptance (positive opinion of the self, one's own qualities and one's past life), positive relation to others (caring, trusting and compassionate relationships with others), purpose in life (directed toward determined goals for living), personal growth (sense of development and self-fulfilment over time) autonomy (self-determined, intrinsically motivated and self-referenced standards for evaluation) and environmental mastery (effectual control of the environment and context that enables satisfying personal needs and values). Ryff explained that her conceptualization was formed after an extensive literature review where she argued that well-being is multidimensional and not solely concerned with happiness or positive emotions; the multidimensionality of well-being was also supported by other studies (R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2001). Some of the theories Ryff used were: self-actualization (Maslow, 1968), the fully functioning person (Rogers, 1961), maturity conception (Allport, 1961), life span (Erikson, 1959), formulation of individualization (Jung, 1933) and Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics.

Huppert (2009, p. 137) proposed that PWB “is about lives going well” which is achieved by functioning effectively and feeling good. Fundamentally, PWB theories regard negative emotions part of life and suggest that being able to manage these emotions is key to long-lasting well-being; PWB becomes compromised when the negative emotions take over daily functioning and last over long periods (Huppert, 2009). For evaluating well-being, Ryff designed a 120-item model to measure the six variables (twenty items each), which became fairly popular and accepted until recent years when they became challenged for validity reasons. For instance, Abbott, Ploubidis, Huppert, Kuh, & Croudace (2010), amongst others, suggested that four of the domains (purpose in life, self-acceptance, environmental mastery and personal growth) could be simplified into one; yet other studies comparing Ryff’s original model with more simplified concepts supported that the six dimensional one is more accurate (Lindfors, Berntsson, & Lundberg, 2006; Van Dierendonck, Díaz, Rodríguez-Carvajal, Blanco, & Moreno-Jiménez, 2008).

Besides the various questionnaires, PWB has also been successfully assessed using qualitative studies and mixed methods (Cluver & Gardner, 2007; Madsen & Holmberg, 2015). Ingersoll-Dayton, Saengtienchai, Kespichayawattana and Aunguroch (2004) used mixed methods including focus groups, interviews and questionnaires to explore the role of PWB in successful aging. An interesting methodology for assessing PWB was used by Cluver and Gardner (2007) who explored the perceptions of 60 children orphaned by AIDS/HIV, 42 of their caregivers and 20 care professionals to identify the factors that contribute to orphaned children’s well-being. The children were given a choice of worksheet-based semi-structured interviews, which featured DragonBall-Z or Simpson cartoon characters (children could choose). In addition, during the interviews they had the choice to respond verbally (either independently or with the interviewer’s assistance) or by drawing and writing. According to the researchers this method was effective as it allowed flexibility in response; their overall research success was acknowledged in the Annual Research Review: Resilience in child development (Betancourt, Meyers-Ohki, Charrow, & Hansen, 2013).

Overall, the importance of psychological well-being definitely raised its profile and gained interest and found support in other disciplines outside psychology, such as sport and medicine (Kouali, Hall, & Pope, 2018; T. Lee, Sun, & Chiang, 2019).

2.2.3.3 Self-Determination Theory

Another psychological theory on well-being inspired by the eudaimonic view is the ‘Self-determination theory’ (SDT). Deci and Ryan, the originators of SDT, proposed that there are three basic psychological needs, which are essential to be fulfilled to encourage personal development integrity and well-being; these are: a) autonomy, the sense of having a choice and volition in how to behave, b) relatedness, feeling cared about and connected with others, and c) competence, the sense of efficacy one has with respect to both external and internal environments (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan, Huta, & Deci, 2008). Fundamentally, SDT examines how cultural and social elements encourage self-determined behaviour and suggests that intrinsic motivations are the ones enabling development. In addition, it suggests that the extrinsic aspirations do not have a salient value, sometimes they can cause negative outcomes and others can serve other psychological needs, which do encourage the fulfilment of the intrinsic ones; thus could have an instrumental role (Ryan et al., 2008).

Studies using the SDT, which examined hedonic and eudaimonic goals and lifestyles found that eudaimonic pursuits offers a more stable sense of well-being, which occurs at a later point whereas hedonic does not offer long lasting life satisfaction but immediate sense of pleasure (Huta, 2013). Even though SDT supporters relate more with the eudaimonic approach, amongst others, they also advocate that people should embrace both hedonic and eudaimonic lifestyles for greatest well-being and that no choice between the two should be made (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Peterson et al., 2005). In terms of research, SDT has been used effectively in various recent studies, which sought to explore various topics including aging, parenting, education, sport and work (Gagné, 2003; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Mackenzie, Karaoylas, & Starzyk, 2018). Joussemet, Landry and Koestner (2008), in a discussion on parents’ autonomy-support towards their children, suggested that the SDT is greatly applicable in studies regarding the socialization, internalization and development of children. This theory was as well mostly investigated using quantitative methods, questionnaires measuring the level of fulfilment of the three basic psychological needs (Gagné, 2003); however qualitative approaches were also applied (Eisenman, Pell, Poudel, & Pleet-Odle, 2014; Sebire et al., 2016).

2.2.3.4 *'Flourishing' and the 'PERMA' theory of well-being*

More recently, new theories suggested that the optimum way of looking at well-being is by combining both hedonic and eudaimonic views (Henderson & Knight, 2012). Many scientists have supported that well-being is synonymous to 'flourishing' and have developed various methods in investigating it (Butler & Kern, 2016; Keyes, 2002; Seligman, 2011).

Ryff's model (Van Dierendonck et al., 2008) inspired the development of new tools for measuring 'flourishing', including the '14-item Mental Health Continuum Short Form' (MHC-SF) by Keyes (2002) and the 'Flourishing Scale' (FS) by Diener and Biswas-Diener (2008). Keyes (2002) suggested that for a person to flourish it requires positive functioning and hedonic symptoms. His model uses six items to measure the psychological well-being, three for emotional well-being and five for social well-being; by social well-being Keyes referred to "*the appraisal of one's circumstance and functioning in society*" and involve the dimensions of social integration, contribution, coherence, actualization and acceptance (Keyes, 1998). High scores on the emotional, psychological and social well-being subscales illustrate flourishing. On the other hand, Diener and Biswas-Diener, (2008) designed the FS as a measure of psychological functioning. This model was first introduced as the Psychological Flourishing Scale in a 12-item format but later on was developed to eight (Diener et al., 2010). The eight-item model includes dimensions such as self-respect, competence, meaning and relatedness, which were previously recommended as elements contributing to positive functioning by Ryff (1989) and Ryan and Deci (2001). In addition it also includes the factors of optimism, positive relationships, engagement and giving recommended by Seligman (2006) and Scheier, Carver, and Bridges (2001). According to Silva and Caetano (2013) and Sumi (2014), this model was also found to be effective in assessing PWB, especially if it is necessary to use as a measuring tool a brief scale. Park and colleagues, using the questionnaires of *Values in Action inventory of strengths* and *Satisfaction with life scale*, have examined the relationship of character strengths and life satisfaction (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). Their study indicated that zest, hope, love, curiosity and gratitude are the character strengths that positively correlate with life satisfaction, while others are not particularly relevant. Similarly, other studies have shown that neuroticism significantly reduces positive affect whereas extraversion moderately correlates with happiness (Diener & Lucas, 1999; González Gutiérrez, Jiménez, Hernández, & Puente, 2005). Such findings could be particularly useful for specialists working with people at a personal level who can monitor and guide character strengthening.

Seligman, as well, well-being is synonymous to flourishing; however in a later study than the one published with Park et al (2004), he suggested that positive emotions go beyond happiness and include awe, amusement, contentment, compassion, gratitude, hope, interest, joy, love, and pride (Seligman, 2011). Seligman developed the ‘*PERMA*’ theory of well-being (Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern, & Seligman, 2011; Seligman, 2011). PERMA is an acronym for: Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment. His concept also supports Ryff’s beliefs; well-being is not just the absence of illness. Moreover, he suggested, “*some of our capacity for experiencing positive emotions is inherited but we do have capacity to purposefully experience more positive emotion.*” This statement is supported by other studies, within which some of them held a SWB approach, and sought to understand whether there is a link between well-being with personality (Argyle & Lu, 1990; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999; González Gutiérrez, Jiménez, Hernández, & Puente, 2005) and others examined the relationship with brain activity. In regards to measuring well-being using the PERMA approach, various researchers have designed their own questionnaires using the five pillars and was found applicable in positive education (Kern, Waters, Adler, & White, 2015; Waters, 2011) and in measuring national well-being (Lambert D’raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2016). More recently, Butler and Kern (2016) developed a 16-item questionnaire, known as the PERMA-Profiler.

Although the view of flourishing representing well-being finds support in many studies, which have also incorporated in their research the same or similar elements included in the PERMA model (Diener et al., 2010; Hone, Jarden, Schofield, & Duncan, 2014; Huppert & So, 2013; Keyes, 2002; Ryff, 1989), Dodge et al. (2012) expressed a firm disagreement with Seligman’s view and characterised his attempt to define well-being a failure. Dodge and his colleagues believe that well-being is a state and not a construct. Inspired by the ‘Equilibrium theory of well-being’ (Headey & Wearing, 1989) and the effect of changes in life on homeostasis (Cummins, 2010), they suggested that well-being is the point where an individual’s resource pool (psychological, social and physical) and the challenges faced balance and that lack of challenge leads to “stagnation”. Dodge et al. proposed that this definition is optimistic however, thinking of athletes, who until retirement they always have the challenge of the next race. Those challenges cause physical and mental exhaustion, meaning that the resources are constantly lower than the challenges. Therefore, according to the balance theory, some occupations / activities disable well-being, which is somewhat discouraging.

Reviewing the psychological concepts of well-being it can be seen how the philosophies of Hedonism and Eudaimonia still form the bases of all the theories. This section has illustrated how the field of psychology has contributed to the understanding of well-being and how different viewpoints have led to the development of a variety of measuring tools. Even though some of the existing methodologies are opposing and may be creating confusion in selecting the most effective, it is important that researchers define their position in how they define well-being and how they approach it in research, so as to enable readers understand the findings and be able to criticise their trustworthiness.

2.2.4 Social sciences: diversity and context

As it has already been illustrated in recent years the concept of happiness has become popular in well-being studies; however, Cieslik (2015) suggested that mainstream British sociologists have neglected it, as they view happiness as a subjective and problematic phenomenon, associated to problems of modernity such as estrangement, consumerism, crisis in health-care systems, and lack of moral standards (Ahmed, 2010; Floridi, 2019; Morley & Floridi, 2019). Sara Ahmed offered an extensive discussion on, what the notion of ‘happiness’ does to people in recent years, describing the rapid increase in people’s interest on therapeutic cultures and practices of self-help, that took off, since 2005 (Ahmed, 2010). Ahmed also explained how happiness has become a new discipline in the academia, how governments have replaced GDP with happiness measures (also discussed previously in, and how people perceive objects and circumstances as good or bad for their happiness. This evolution and change in people’s perspective is mostly identified in Western, individualistic and capitalistic cultures, where the notion of ‘healthism’, developed by the political economist Robert Crawford, is more dominant (Crawford, 1980). By the term healthism, Crawford described the discourse in public health practice, which suggests that, individuals are held to be morally responsible for the monitoring of their own well-being and prevention of illness; people must know and avoid the risk factors associated with ill-health, and be investing in choices and practices that are health monitoring. Subsequently, the body started being perceived as an object that needs to be continually monitored and managed (Wright, O’Flynn, & MacDonald, 2006). Arguably, this discourse has been used not only to enable people live a ‘better life’ but has also developed a

“marketization of well-being and health care” (Floridi, 2019, p. 382), allowing to companies to sell health enhancing products and services.

In a critique on the social scientists’ contribution to the study of well-being, Veenhoven (2008), explained that sociologists are more interested in people’s behaviour in social groups than in how they feel as individuals, and view happiness as a construct built by the culture we live in. Even though Veenhoven is a sociologist himself, he criticises as bias colleagues who ignore the importance and relationship of SWB with sociological matters and acknowledges Diener et al’s (1997) definition supporting that well-being is synonymous to overall happiness. On the other hand, some sociologists are more committed to concepts that use objective measures of well-being, such as social equality and cohesion (Forgeard et al., 2011); yet again, Veenhoven (2008) suggested that some of them are not interested in exploring how people actually feel under such conditions and frequently ignore research results that contradict their favoured views. Despite Veenhoven’s critique, sociologists and other social scientists have contributed significantly to the study of well-being adding knowledge on various cultural elements that influence people’s well-being (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000; Düzgün, 2014; Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith, & Demo, 2015).

2.2.4.1 Identity and Well-being

What is central in the studies of well-being in sociocultural sciences is how cultural factors and society’s characteristics impact people’s lives. It is suggested that the biggest difference amongst the various cultures is on how people perceive themselves and the meaning of well-being (Lambert D’raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2016). Significant differences appear between collective and individualistic, western and eastern and between religious and non-religious cultures (Lambert D’raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2016; Uchida, Ogihara, & Fukushima, 2015). In individualistic cultures happiness relates to independence, personal pleasure and achievement; whereas in collectivist cultures, interdependence, role fulfilment and social obligations are majorly important.

Being a part of a culture people often embody and adopt their culture’s values, while in the broader society they become identifiable and associated with certain characteristics, or stereotypes, which may or may not be representing them but are attached to the culture; yet these identities impact their socialization and subsequently their well-being. Some identities

are perceived as more prestigious than others and are people holding them are often treated more favourably, which consequently impacts positively their well-being (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000). For instance, performance athletes often receive positive recognition as they are associated with desired characteristics (e.g. high physical ability, motivation and hard-work). On the other hand, other social identities (often religious and race-specific) in some contexts are mistreated and can suffer uncomfortableness or even face danger; thus their well-being can be affected negatively (Düzgün, 2014; Hughes et al., 2015; Jetten, Haslam, Haslam, Dingle, & Jones, 2014; Spohn, 2000). For instance, racial discrimination towards Muslims is apparent in western countries (Düzgün, 2014). Significantly negative experiences can cause long lasting damaging effects on well-being. Hughes, Kiecolt, Keith and Demo (2015) examined racial identity influences on the self-esteem and psychological well-being of African Americans. Some of the participants had internalised racism; yet the findings suggested that those who identified more with their group and evaluated it more positively have less depressive symptoms and greater self-esteem and mastery. Such findings illustrate the need for both, sociological and psychological attitudes in examining well-being, as well as perhaps the danger of producing generalised findings; as described, studies found significant differences in the experiences of 'homogenous' individuals'.

It is important to note that every individual is part of various cultures and carries different identities. Some identities are inherited (e.g. family, gender and race) and some are acquired (e.g. parenthood, job title). Studies have demonstrated that having various identities appears to be beneficial to well-being. Haslam et al. (2008) examined whether belonging to multiple social groups prior to stroke and the maintenance of those memberships post stroke related to well-being. Their findings suggested that having various memberships helped in maintaining well-being and life satisfaction after a stroke, as these people have larger social circles and thus the availability of support is extended.

Life transitions affecting one's identity also impact well-being (Haslam et al., 2008). For instance, the transition of becoming a member of a national sport team has a positive impact as it offers feelings of achievement, self-recognition, and relatedness with top athletes as well as social recognition. On the other hand, athletes' retirement often causes distress and that is due to the loss of their identity (Cosh, Crabb, & Tully, 2015). Another example of a transition impacting well-being includes changes in marital status; according to Gray et al (2010), divorcing appears to have long-lasting negative effects on well-being for both genders; however, women develop mental and physical health issues when they remain single whereas

men do not (Gray, De Vaus, Qu, & Stanton, 2010). Moreover, getting married at an elder age was found to correlate with higher sense of well-being and LS especially for women (Gray et al., 2010).

People's well-being can also be reduced when having clashing identities, this could cause social and internal confusion, distress and conflicts; thus can impact negatively well-being (Sanchez, Zogmaister, & Arcuri, 2007). As people socialise in different contexts at different times, and sometimes to conform to the rules and norms of the environment, and might even have to hide (when possible) some of the identities they hold (e.g. sexual orientation) to avoid conflicts, (Goffman, 1959). Such forces diminish peoples PWB. For these reasons, most studies by social scientists, which aim to capture well-being matters, are usually contextually and culturally specific; such as Muslims' experiences in western countries (Düzgün, 2014).

2.2.4.2 Religion and well-being

The relationship between religion and well-being has mostly been examined through the lens of social scientists, psychologists and philosophers. Sociologists suggest that often, religion appears to be a cultural characteristic (usually more vivid in collectivistic cultures) which defines people's identities and way of living. Nonetheless, interestingly, different religions can have both similarities and differences in the way they view a good life, well-being and happiness.

According to Karim, the collective Islamic notion of happiness *“is the feeling that resides in the heart. It is characterized by peace of mind, tranquillity, a sense of well-being, and a relaxed disposition. It comes as a result of proper behaviour, both inward and outward, and is inspired by strong faith”* (Karim, 2009, p. 132). Muslims relate happiness to the absence of shame; therefore, absence of negative feelings and social acceptance it is important to them. Hence, their self-perception somewhat depends on others' perception (Lambert D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2016). Indigenous people who also come from collective cultures believe that health and well-being can only be achieved when there is a balance in all aspects of a humans lives: cultural, physical, emotional, financial, spiritual and environmental (Boulton & Gifford, 2014). Despite the similarities and differences of the various religions, the great majority of them relate to the eudaimonic view and they all provide a set of moral rules that believers are

required to follow to earn a place in the ‘desired place’ after their death (e.g. heaven or hell); therefore, for religious people the ‘lived life’ is often perceived as a test or a process, and the afterlife as the ultimate goal.

Studies have illustrated that religious people tend to have lower levels of psychological distress as faith offers comfort, hope and meaning, lightens suffering and fundamentally helps in coping with problems (Faull, 2013; Heintzman, 2020; Peterman, Fitchett, Brady, Hernandez, & Cella, 2002), while also participation in religion and religious activities can sometimes have a positive effect on well-being (Faull, 2013; Heintzman, 2020; Ivtzan, Chan, Gardner, & Prashar, 2013; Peterman et al., 2002; Schafer, 2013). A mixed-method study examining the LS of 51 Christian elder widowed women (69-93 years old) illustrated that participating in church activities can offer hope in overcoming hardships, enable maintaining friendships giving them a sense of belongingness, and provided a vehicle through which they could contribute to their community and feeling useful (Neill & Kahn, 1999). Contradictory results were found in a similar study which by using questionnaires examined the relatedness of hope, spirituality and religious practise of 212 Portuguese adolescents aged 15-20 (Marques, Lopez, & Mitchell, 2013). The results illustrated that religious practises did not correlate much with LS; another study examining church attendance and LS of North American students also demonstrated that there was no correlation (Holder, Coleman, & Wallace, 2010). Moreover, although there are numerous studies upraising the psychological benefits of being religious, others have found no difference in the well-being levels of atheists and religious people (Caldwell-Harris, Wilson, LoTempio, & Beit-Hallahmi, 2011). Such studies illustrate how well-being is subjective to the individual; however, it can be questioned how a non-believer might feel in a religious-dominated society, and how that surrounding impacts other aspects of their well-being, such as social.

Numerous studies regard the culture a key element that impacts well-being and advice its consideration (Joshanloo, 2013; Ku, Fox, & McKenna, 2008). The identification of any existing religion can be significant when examining well-being as believers’ perception on what well-being is differs and the embodiment of what is ‘God’s will’ shapes their experiences. For instance, people fasting may not be experiencing hunger as suffering per se, but as doing the ‘right’ thing. Moreover, Ingersoll-Dayton et al. (2004) suggested that there is evidence of cultural inconsistency in the nature of psychological well-being and that different measures should be used for different cultures; significantly, most recently, Heintzman suggested that

more studies using established scales are needed to explore the relationship of spiritual well-being and leisure (Heintzman, 2020).

2.2.4.3 *Wealth and well-being*

Does money relate to well-being? This question concerned both, eudaimonic and hedonic view holders (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Kasser & Ryan, 1993; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2001) and has been a topic of discussion and research in long time (Carlin & Reinsel, 1973). People would assume that money does contribute to well-being due to the power of money to buying goods and services and it is no surprise that most people, especially of the working-class, want to become somewhat wealthier. And they might be right; money does buy a lot of things, from the more basic needs such as food, shelter and health care, to luxuries that would enable having hedonic moments, such as buying a ride ticket in a fun fair. Although, nowadays it is agreed that the society's well-being cannot fairly be evaluated using GDP, financial factors are relevant. The SWB approach was used to investigate the relationship of income and well-being and provided significant insights (Becchetti & Rossetti, 2009; Diener, Sandvik, Seidlitz, & Diener, 1993; Easterlin, 1995). Lorant et al. (2007) suggested that depression can occur to people who are on constant strive for more money and spend long hours working, either for survival or to pursue a bigger career, due to the low level of socialisation, and to people who face deterioration of socio-economic circumstances, such as lowering materialistic standard of living. Van der Meer's (2014) study explored the impact of unemployment on the different genders. He suggested that SWB depends much on social approval and physical well-being, given the restrictions to wealth and time, and that women's SWB is based upon different elements than men and unemployment has less impact on them. In comparing unemployed single and married men findings illustrated that singles suffer more. Also, married women's status is more related to their husbands' job than through their own as they comply with different norms, which makes work less central to their life than for men (Van der Meer, 2014). This could be explained by the still-existing patriarchal ideologies and theories on masculinity and manhood; men are the bread earners (Hanlon, 2012). Relating to this finding, in an analysis of the national data of 19 nations upon citizens' SWB, Diener and Biswas-Diener (2002) found that people with lower income, living in social democratic nations with liberal welfares have a higher LS than of people with low income in other countries, with

the only exception of Norway. Nonetheless the mean values of LS, financial satisfaction, positive and negative affect between richer and impoverished people illustrate that wealth does relate to higher SWB. Despite the burdens that poverty or financial difficulties cause in the everyday life there has always been class discrimination, from the years of slavery in ancient Rome to today's discrimination and inequality (Atwood, 2014). Spohn (2000) explained that wealthier people tend to receive more comprehensive prison sentences and that they are less often victims of violent crimes. Also, poor people are segregated in poorer communities where access to education and health care is difficult; even in cases when lower-class people tried to engage into the activities that upper-class people were involved they experienced inequality, marginalisation and bullying (L. Smith, 2013). Consequently working-class is vulnerable to physical and psychological risks (L. Smith, 2013) as marginalisation is found to relate to mental disorders (Evans & Repper, 2000).

Having discussed a variety of existing theories and concepts regarding 'well-being', this section has illustrated the complexity of the term and the diverse research conducted on the subject. These theories were studied and have been discussed in this section, to allow the readers develop an understanding on the theoretical underpinnings of well-being, which have inform the methodology of the study. The following section focuses specifically on family wellbeing (FWB)

2.3 Section B: Families and their well-being

2.3.1 The definition of ‘Family’

The exact period that the term ‘family’ was developed is unknown; yet forms of families existed throughout human history and even earlier if considering prehistoric animals (Taschaman, 1975). The numerous attempts to define the term family derived mostly from the fields of psychology, sociology, children’s welfare and economics. Although there are numerous definitions, significant shifts in the understanding of family took place due to changes in the society; since the Industrial Revolution, families became more mobile, industrial, and urban (Laslett, 1973; Taschaman, 1975). The significance of defining family lays in the essence of conducting effective research, and formulating effective welfare policies and intervention methods to support their well-being (Holtzman, 2011).

Family system theories (FST) look at families as social systems because of their characteristics: 1) family members are interdependent as they occupy various roles within the system which are interconnected; 2) family units are relatively closed and maintain boundaries; 3) families seek for an equilibrium and can be adaptive to changes; 4) the family is a task performing unit that meets both the expectations of external agencies in the society, and the internal needs and demands of its members (Bowen, 1976; Epstein, Bishop, & Levin, 1978; Hill, 1971; Minuchin, 1974; Satir, Banmen, Gerber, & Gomori, 1991). Although FST provide a conceptualization on the nature of the family, they are limited to the structure of ‘traditional families’, which consists of parents and children.

United Nations (2008) differentiated the concepts of households and families to provide clarity in the guidelines that censuses should follow when defining and evaluating families. In the publication of ‘Principles and Recommendations for Households and Housing Censuses’ it is suggested that a household can contain solely one person but a family must contain at least two members. The members of a multi-person household can be unrelated to one another, but the members of a family must always be related by blood, marriage or law. Furthermore, a family cannot contain more than one household; yet a household can contain only non-related individuals, or can contain more than one family, or one or more families together with one or more non-related persons. In addition, it was stated that, “A family nucleus is one of the following types (each of which must consist of persons living in the same household): (a) a

married couple without children, (b) a married couple with one or more unmarried children, (c) a father with one or more unmarried children, or (d) a mother with one or more unmarried children.”(United Nations, 2008, p. 152). This implies that, when a child gets married and leaves the household is not any longer part of the nuclei. As it is explained the meaning of children regards their role in the family and is not limited by age but only by their function.

Although in the U.N. there is participation of both westernised and eastern countries, some nations do not employ this definition; the definition and the perception on what constitutes a family seems to be more related to cultural factors (Simadi, Fatayer, & Athamneh, 2003; Tillman & Nam, 2008). For instance, the definition of family in the U.S. census, which stands since 1940, is: *“a group of two people or more related by birth, marriage or adoption and residing together; all such people are considered as members of one family”* (Strong & Cohen, 2013, p. 11). Similarly, in the United Kingdom a family is regarded as *“a married, civil partnered or cohabiting couple with or without children, or a lone parent with at least 1 child. Children may be dependent or non-dependent”* (Office for National Statistics, 2016). These definitions imply recognition to families constituting same-sex couples, which nowadays is also offered by other nations. On the other hand, more eastern countries (e.g. Arabic and Muslim), have different views do not accept same-sex marriages or bonding, which implies that their definition and approach to families differs significantly (Tillman & Nam, 2008). In addition, some countries still allow polygamy, whereas westernised countries it is illegal (Taschaman, 1975). These findings provide a significant baseline for researchers conducting research on culture and families, but cannot be taken for granted as sometimes different perspectives exist within the same societies, making the study of families more complex. In the United States, three categories of Americans were identified: the Exclusionists, who have a restrictive definition of family; the Inclusionists, who permit all structures of families; and the Moderates, who are somewhere, in the middle (Powell, 2017). In addition, in time there were changes in people’s perception, in 2003, 45% of Americans were exclusionists, 29% moderate and 25% inclusionists; in 2010, exclusionists and moderate had 34%, and inclusionists 33%. These findings suggest that the time and context matter in defining family.

In the academic literature a definition, which appears (Braithwaite et al., 2010) to be fairly accepted for its inclusiveness and for reflecting the society nowadays is the one given by Galvin (2015): *“networks of people who share their lives over long periods of time bound by marriage, blood, or commitment, legal or otherwise, who consider themselves as family and*

who share a significant history and anticipated futures of functioning in a family relationship” (p.6). Similarly, Poston et al. (2003) suggested that families are *“the people who think of themselves as part of the family, whether related by blood or marriage or not, and who support and care for each other on a regular basis”* (p.319). Notably, the social changes that took place over time have changed the understanding of what constitutes as a family is. The definitions found in the contemporary literature are more fluid and inclusive, allowing people to determine who their family is according to their perception, whereas in the past, the term family was fixed and unquestionable; it was the biological family and the one built by marriage (Parke, 2017; Powell, 2017). Nonetheless, despite of the development of new definitions, consciously or subconsciously, the old mentality is still strongly apparent; the society and media continue exhibiting the notion of a ‘good’ or ‘perfect’ family to be blood and / or heterosexual marriage bonded people who fulfil specific criteria; for instance, have no arguments and go on holidays together (Hall & Holdsworth, 2016). Significantly, these beliefs continue shaping people’s sense of identity and well-being.

Family identities have a major role in the shaping of people’s everyday life, opportunities, personality and future, as the discourse around the importance of family is embodied by the very first stages of life (McCarthy, 2012). Amongst others, McCarthy (2012) suggested that some of the most important mechanisms of a family system is the provision of the sense of belongingness and identity. When people do not feel that their family of origin offers support, acceptance and care, they sometimes ‘subsidise’ their family with other people, like friends or teachers. Calling a friend ‘family’ or ‘brother’ / ‘sister’, indicates the need for having a family as well as its power over others (McCarthy, 2012); it could be argued that when a friend is called brother / sister, is almost like an upgrade. Therefore, the sense of belonging to or having a family is a core human need. It’s usual to hear people say, “she is not a mother”, because a woman does not meet those expectations; yet by definition, a mother is a woman who gave birth, and that cannot be undone. The new definitions were developed mainly to conceal the sense of rejection by the family of origin and to fulfil people’s need to belong in one; examples can be found in LGBTQ+ literature (Powell, 2017).

The new definitions and the freedom of expression indicate progress, as it enables people to fulfil that need even when their family of origin rejects them or is not present; it can be argued though, that the flexibility of the term can sometimes be problematic, especially when conducting research or trying to develop policies to fairly and effectively support families. For instance, friends can have a ‘family-alike’ relationship, however if friends were

permitted to claim family benefits many people would perhaps take advantage of the system, while others in real need would suffer the consequences of the increased government expenditure. Another dilemma raised in this thesis, is whose family should be assessed if the definition is so flexible? In other words, whose family should be taken into consideration if a mother feels that her family consists of her husband, children and her parents, but her husband feels that his family includes his parents, wife and children, and then the children have a different opinion involving their favourite auntie?

This study respects the emotions and perception of everyone; however, it suggests that some boundaries on the definition of family should sometimes exist for practical reasons. For facilitating research the more objective factors should perhaps be considered. This study suggests six types of families: a) biological family, b) nuclear family c) immediate family, d) extended, e) blended families and f) emotional family. The biological-family, in which members share inherited genetic characteristics; biological family members can share a nuclear family but can also be even unknown to one another. The nuclear families are formed by two or more people who: a) are bonded by blood or choice, b) share a common family identity relating one to another (e.g. parent, spouse, child, and sibling), c) are interconnected and interdependent to one another and d) live together in one household. The nuclear family can change in size and structure; it can grow when new children are born or adopted and/or when a new spouse joins the household in polygamous families. The family can become smaller by death or when a member leaves. If a child moves out of the nuclear household and lives with their new family, then the child who leaves becomes a 'distant-immediate' member to the family of origin. This defines that they are out of the nuclear household but immediately related. Their new family is considered as extended family for the members of the family of origin, but at the same time they are the new nuclear family of that person. This definition agrees to a great extent with the one provided by the United Nations (2008). A blended family refers to the division of the nuclear family; when parents separate and they leave in different households with new partners then the children become part of a blended family, while their parents create a new nuclear family. The extended family can also depend upon each individual's perception, as alike belongingness, closeness is also relative and subjective; nonetheless, to facilitate assessments this study suggests that the extended family is any member living in a different household, who is blood related with their nucleus family (e.g. spouses' siblings), or bonded to individuals by law (e.g. best man and godmother). In the case that a member of the external family lives in a nuclear household, their status does not change

but their role has to be examined. The emotional family is the one that each person feels they belong to; for instance, a neighbour could be regarded as a mother for someone and a friend a sibling. This type of family is subjective solely by the individual and can only be assessed at an individual level.

2.3.2 Families in history

Significant to the study of FWB is understanding the development of families through time. Norbert Elias (Elias, Goudsblom, & Mennell, 1998) and Ariès (1962) were amongst the first to describe through a historical overview how time has changed the child-parent relationship and subsequently the families as entities; their structure, functioning, relationships and also how they are perceived.

Families and family relationships are diverse and have changed over time in relation to cultural and community norms and policy influences (Ruspini, 2013). From the ancient times until the late nineteenth century there were no laws protecting children; infanticide, selling and exposing children to all sorts of labour was tolerated. Before and during the medieval period, children were not treated differently than adults and parents did not have any secrets from them (Elias et al., 1998). Children and parents shared the same bed and no embarrassment existed. Entering the modern times (around 15th century) these behavioural ‘norms’ started moving to the opposite direction and as a consequence people started developing feelings of shame and of responsibility. The houses built became bigger and included more rooms, which were designated for specific uses; children were no longer sharing beds with their parents and natural needs. Also, parents became responsible for their children’s actions and decisions whereas in the past, parents had no duties towards them or responsibilities. For instance, children had to be taught to restrict their natural needs to the designated places and that they should be ashamed not to. During the Victorian era, when people started isolating their bodily functions from others, children were kept physically distant from their parents; for instance, mothers would not pick up and cuddle their children (Elias et al., 1998). These taboos started disappearing however people ‘have to’ conform to the society’s new expectations (Ruspini, 2013).

As Ariès (1962) also described, in the medieval society the idea of childhood did not exist; yet he explained that the neglect of children in the past was due to the high morality of infants; as new-borns often did not survive, parents were discouraged to become emotionally attached. Interestingly Ariès’ study on childhood was greatly based on paintings; he identified

that children started appearing in paintings in the 13th century when artists began portraying Jesus until the 15th century when painters in the Gothic period drew naked and dead children. In the 17th century paintings of children portrayed them being dressed in adults' outfits and Ariès suggested that that is a proof of the society's perception at the time that adults and children were not different (Frost, 2005). In the 18th century parents started being interested in the health and hygiene of children however by the age of five or seven they were being treated as adults; Ariès described this as "brief childhood".

Elias suggested that the society impacts the family structures and relationships between the members and that "today the family has lost to other institutions, especially the state" (Elias et al., 1998, p. 208). He explained that although the new era empowered and provided some protection to the children, the 'civilising process' has created problems to the family relationships. Nowadays being autonomous is regarded as power, and children are raised in ways that would enable them develop autonomy; however, with regards to the family these practises have somewhat detached the members. In the past education took place in the family whereas now it is in other institutions, which are often far from the family home; the same applies for health care and social circles.

Other more contemporary social changes that have impacted globally the notion of family, include the equality of genders and laws against racism (Donnelly et al., 2016; Fryer Jr., 2007). By providing women equal rights with men, patriarchal practices started disappearing, women became bread-winners as well and gradually the stereotypical roles of men and women changed (Osezua & Agholor, 2019; Ruspini, 2013). Fathers spend more time with their children as couples divide the housework and the parental responsibilities. At the same time, with the gradual fall of racism, mixed raced families are becoming more accepted. Moreover, nowadays people are educated about birth control and the technological progression has enabled technologically assisted pregnancies, abortions and contraception whereas in the past people were naive of the process and families were created without having regulators (Ruspini, 2013). In addition, same gender interactions were punished whereas now is accepted in various countries. These changes do not apply in all societies however the technological progression and other globalisation processes enable these changes to be projected in other countries and influence changes (Parke, 2017).

Although both Elias and Ariès' writings are not recent and only narrate the European history, they provide an understanding of how the society's progress reflects on the family.

2.3.3 Family Well-Being

A mass interest in family studies emerged after the Second World War when mental health therapists were interested in exploring why some injured veterans readjusted when they returned home and why others did not (Fingerman & Bermann, 2000); ever since various theories were developed to conceptualise various matters that regard the nature, structure and functionality of families.

Miller, Ryan, Keitner, Bishop and Epstein (2000) stated that, a ‘normal’ family is often described as one that does not display any particular problems; nonetheless positive features are often not explained. However, if we do not know what family well-being exactly means, then how can ‘normal’ families, meaning families that are not facing major issues and have a typical everyday life with children going to school and parents working, maintain well-being? Is FWB a matter of absence of problems, like some suggested for individuals’ well-being?

The following paragraphs present different systemic theories, which relate to FWB. Some discuss what it is constituted of while others of how it is achieved.

2.3.3.1 Systemic Family Therapy Theories

Family systemic theories look at families as unique systems, examine their members’ dynamics and provide various conceptualisations on how families should function to be ‘healthy’. The following theories are the most recognised, as they were the first ones developed, their family therapy methods became recognised and have also inspired and formed the bases of other theories on FWB.

2.3.3.1.1 Bowen’s Family Systems Theory (FST)

Murray Bowen, a well-established psychiatrist, was one of the first scientists who sought to uncover how families function using a systemic approach. Bowen’s (1966, 1976) view was that, “family is a system in that a change in the functioning of one family member is automatically followed by a compensatory change in another family member”.

His theory is based upon people’s ability to differentiate the feelings and intellectual processes. Bowen did not look at how the family shapes the individual but on how an individual is a part of the whole dynamic system and suggested that emotional illness is caused

by a disorder in the system (1976); more specifically Bowen believed that the main issue that families face is anxiety and that it causes ineffective functioning. He suggested that the main cause of anxiety in families is, the perception of either too much closeness or distance in a relationship. Bowen explained that these perceptions are shaped by external stressors and sensitivities to certain themes, which were transmitted by previous generations. Moreover, if the members do not have the capacity to think through their responses to relationship dilemmas, but rather react anxiously to perceived emotional demands, there is risk for chronic anxiety to be developed. Bowen interviewed the family members to evaluate the differentiation and fusion level of the families while his focus was on the patterns that families develop to resolve anxiety. His therapies aimed at reducing chronic anxiety by helping the members achieve differentiation (explained in the next paragraph), and by raising awareness of how the emotional system functions (J. Brown, 1999).

Bowen's FST is based upon eight core concepts: 1) Differentiation of self, refers to the degree to which individuals have solidity in themselves, their values and principles, have awareness of their own desires and needs, and the ability to differentiate the intellectual and emotional spheres. In contrast to a differentiated person is the fused, or else known as the "pseudo-self", which is always emotionally involved and always reacts according to others' behaviours. As Winek (2010) explained, "a pseudo self may belong to groups with inconsistent ideals, but does not know why it feels uneasy, being unaware of its own beliefs. A solid self may belong to the same groups, but is aware of the contradictions and rationally choose to belong". In regard to fused families, it is suggested that there is pressure on the family members to experience similar emotions at all times while emotional autonomy is experienced as abandonment. That is why, Bowen's therapy model works on building differentiation. 2) Emotional triangle is a concept referring to the instances when a third person intervenes in a dyadic relationship, which faces crisis to reduce their anxiety; a triangulation example is when a father and child dyad face crisis and the mother intervenes. According to Bowen, the more differentiated the two individuals the less the 'triangulator' will be necessary. 3) Multigenerational transmission refers to the process of families passing values, ideas, and problems to the next generation. By reviewing the previous behavioural patterns Bowen suggested that future patterns could be predicted. 4) Nuclear family emotional system is a concept, which focuses on how fusion affects the emotional functioning of a single generation family; it is suggested that spouse illness, couple conflicts and projection of a problem on children can be possible outcomes of fusion. 5) Family projection process suggests to parental

problems and relationship anxieties from previous generations are being transmitted to the children. 6) The siblings' position is regarded as a factor determining children's personality, their role in the family and their level of differentiation. 7) Emotional cut-off is a concept describing how members distance themselves (physically, emotionally or both) seeking an escape from the family's fusion. 8) Societal regression describes how families are influenced by the society and how the various families shape the society (Bowen, 1976; J. Brown, 1999).

2.3.3.1.2 *Satir's Family Therapy Model*

Virginia Satir is one of the founders of the family therapy field while she is the leading figure in the development the family therapy model based on communications (Rasheed, Rasheed, & Marley, 2011). Satir's theory agreed with Bowen (1976) that the family of origin, including past generations, impacts significantly people's behaviours and attitudes. She also viewed families as systems and suggested that they need, and seek for balance, in order to function effectively; in addition, she supported that family dynamics and processes should be serving the members in raising their self-esteem. Dysfunctions are created when the members' needs do not get fulfilled and that is usually resulted when inappropriate roles, restrictive rules, and/or unrealistic expectations exist in the family. Consequently, dysfunction causes members to feel that their self-esteem is weakened and threatened, and as a defend mechanism tend to develop low self-esteem and defensive behaviours (Rasheed et al., 2011).

Families with poor communication are families in which the communication is blurred, imprecise, indirect, insincere, distorted, and incomplete. These families are unable to communicate and subsequently members do provide adequate help to each other to develop.

Satir's communications/humanistic model (Satir, 1972) describes four dysfunctional communication stances (placator, blamer, super-reasonable and irrelevant) that people generally hold when they are unwilling to reveal and hide their true feelings of low self-esteem and low self-worth. The *placator* stance involves hiding those feelings by adopting apologetic, hesitant, and self-effacing communication styles aiming to satisfy others to achieve self 'emotional survival'. The *blamer* stance involves attempts to control others by disagreeing indiscriminately and gaining a sense of importance despite the inner feelings of loneliness and failure. Blamers engage in pinpointing flaws and faults, apply criticism and use various characterizations. The third stance is the one of *super-reasonable*, people holding this stance

try to numb their true feelings and insulate themselves in times of crisis. Their participation during family communication, especially during a conflict, is usually more intellectual while they use rational arguments; in this way they avoid getting emotionally involved with the issues. Finally, some people hold the *irrelevant* stance; they react to conflicts and stressful situation by acting as if everything is fine. They engage in irrelevant conversations attempting to turn the attention of the family elsewhere. Overall, these people tend to feel unimportant and marginalized from the family. Importantly, Satir notes that these dysfunctional communication stances are changeable and not fixed on individuals; according to the circumstance each member reacts and employs the stance that serves them better. For achieving harmony in a family and assist members to develop, congruent communication is the key; family members need to be clear in their communication by matching the overt and covert messages they send to their family, as explained non-matching messages disable understanding and create confusions (Satir, Stachowiak, & Taschman, 1975).

Satir developed the Human Validation Process Model (Satir, 1986) and the Growth Model (Satir et al., 1991) for assessing families and like Bowen, Satir also used interviews in her assessments for examining communication patterns and identifying any dysfunctions. For Satir the suppression of feelings from any member would classify the family as dysfunctional. It is important to note that Satir's Growth model faced negative criticism from Lee (2002), who suggested that it lacks theoretical support and has validity issues; in response Lee introduced the Congruence Scale; yet contrasting views exist (for example: Der Pan, 2000; Ko & Kim, 2010).

2.3.3.1.3 *Minuchin's Structural Family Therapy*

Minuchin (1974) suggested that there are three types of families; the enmeshed, clear and disengaged family. The concept of enmeshed families relates to Bowen's fused families, Satir's dysfunctional communication and McMaster's roles (explained in the next section). Essentially, Minuchin suggests that enmeshed families lack of effective communication, which creates dissonance and gap for understanding one another, have absence of freedom respect and lack internal boundaries between the members (boundaries are diffused). The members tend to suffer from lack of privacy and face confrontation of one another in times of stress. They often argue over unimportant issues but manage to resolve them easily; families from

collectivist cultures are often characterised as enmeshed (Simadi et al., 2003). Disengaged families have very rigid borders between individuals and family subsystems, as well as with their extended family and the society maintaining almost isolation. These families are characterised by individualism and the subsystems within them work independently at all times, and do not collaborate even in the cases of achieving a common goal. There is lack of communication and sometimes negligence; relating to the indifferent parenting. Overall, disengaged families function utterly differently than the enmeshed; yet they both face the same consequences, including children developing antisocial behaviours and failing at school. Finally, the clear family is the one standing in the middle of the enmeshed and disengaged. Clear families are functioning effectively, as they have clear boundaries and roles but at the same time, in times of need there is good collaboration, and use democratic approaches. This type of family is regarded as the one enabling its members to progress in life.

As Minuchin explained, a healthy family is not the one that does not face any problems but the one that functions well and can modify their structure in cases when they need to deal with changes. On the other hand conflicts arise from cross-generational collisions, conflict avoidance, weak hierarchies, inflexible structure and weakness to accommodate changes. Minuchin's (1974) approach to assessing family functioning is by interviewing the entire family to identify the behavioural patterns and the type of family (enmeshed / disengaged / clear). As it was earlier explained, for Minuchin FWB would exist when a family is 'clear'.

2.3.3.1.4 McMaster model of family functioning

The McMaster model of family functioning (MMFF) was developed by Epstein, Bishop and Levin (1978) and it is based on some of the basic concepts of systems theory, which suggest that the members of families are interrelated. It supports that one part of the family cannot be properly understood when is in isolation and nor can the family functioning be evaluated by simply understanding its members at an individual level. The members' behavior is motivated by the family's organization, structure and transactional patterns. In order to evaluate the functioning of the family (most ineffective to most effective) the model draws its focus on 6 basic factors that determine the functionality level (Miller et al., 2000; Ryan, Epstein, Keitner, Miller, & Bishop, 2005): 1) Roles, referring to members' repetitive behavioral patterns that enable functionality in terms of providing nurturing and support, adult

sexual gratification, provision of resources and personal development. For the roles to be effective there has to be a clear role allocation and accountability, as well as clarity of boundaries and functions that enable decision-making, health, household finance and behaviour control. 2) Communication, referring to how information is exchanged between members and it is subdivided into affective and instrumental areas. It is important to note that the methodology of MMFF focuses on verbal communication as other forms can hardly be evaluated through its quantitative methods. 3) Problem solving, referring to the ability to solve instrumental and affective issues. 4) Behaviour control, referring to the pattern adopted when needing to handle a situation; there are three types of situations, a physically dangerous, involving expressing and meeting psychological drives or needs and situations which, involve interpersonal socializing behaviour. 5) Affective responsiveness, referring to the manner that members react to stimuli that trigger welfare and emergency emotions; the MMFF suggests that in a healthy family, members feel free to express their feelings at all occasions. 6) Affective involvement, referring to the degree to which, the family values and expresses interest in its members' individual preferences, for instance a child's participation in sport. For evaluating the six functions Epstein et al. (Epstein et al., 1978) designed the questionnaires of: 'The Family Assessment Device' and 'the McMaster Clinical Rating Scale', and the McMaster Structured Interview of Family Functioning; the interviews are conducted in a focus group manner.

2.3.3.2 Other FWB definitions and concepts

Besides the conceptualisations deriving from systems theories, there have been several other attempts to address FWB by other behavioural scientists (Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch, & Ungar, 2005; Newland, 2015; Zimmerman, 2013). For instance, Hanson suggested that family health is *"a dynamic, changing, relative state of well-being that includes the psychological, biological, sociological, cultural, and spiritual factors of a family system"* (Hanson, 2005, p. 7); Fahey, Keilthy and Polek (2013) used FWB as an umbrella term comprising of the family members' individual well-being and the stability and quality of relationships between family members; Armstrong, Birnie-Lefcovitch and Ungar (2005) explained that FWB constitutes the matters of a) 'family organizational structure' which regards the family's harmony, cohesion, agreement on caregiving, expressiveness and conflict;

b) ‘interpersonal relationships’ within and outside the family; c) ‘parents’ psychological status’ and d) ‘parent self-efficacy’, meaning the parents’ sense of competence in dealing with their children’s issues. Notably, many of the approaches to examining how well families are doing have been inspired by well-being concepts; for instance, SWB and Life Satisfaction have inspired family life satisfaction (FLS) and satisfaction with family life (SWFL) scales (Carver & Jones, 1992; McCollum, Schumm, & Russell, 1988; Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1994; Zabriskie & Ward, 2013), PWB inspired the model for assessing the Psychological well-being of families (Koen, Van Eeden, & Rothmann, 2013) and Quality of Life the Family Quality of Life (Hu, Summers, Turnbull, & Zuna, 2011; J. Park et al., 2004; Summers et al., 2005; Zuna, Summers, Turnbull, Hu, & Xu, 2010), and have facilitated the development of measuring tools.

Like for well-being, the various theories on family well-being / life satisfaction / quality of life, perceive ‘good’ differently, therefore their measures provide different versions of ‘reality’. The Family Quality of Life (FQOL) concept is found mostly in studies of families with a disabled child (Brown, Anand, Fung, Isaacs, & Baum, 2003; Gardiner & Iarocci, 2012). Park et al. (2004) defined FQOL as the “*conditions where the family’s needs are met, and family members enjoy their life together as a family and have the chance to do things which are important to them*”. Zuna, Summers, Turnbull, Hu and Xu (2010) suggested that it is “*a dynamic sense of well-being of the family, collectively and subjectively defined and informed by its members, in which individual and family-level needs interact.*” (p.262). FQOL is mostly being measured using quantitative methods, such as the FQOL-2006 Survey is a tool. FQOL-2006 measures quantitatively the: a) opportunities for improvement, b) initiative of family members to act on opportunities, c) attainment, d) satisfaction, e) stability and f) importance in the areas of health, family relationships, financial well-being, support from services, support from other people, community and civic involvement, leisure, careers preparing for careers, spiritual and cultural life, and support from disability services. Significantly the FQOLS-2006 has been translated in 20 languages is being used by over 25 countries (Gardiner & Iarocci, 2012). Brown’s et al. (2003) findings suggested that although the model enabled obtaining interesting insights the data would be more informed by using some qualitative methods as well. Another model which is found to be valid and efficient is the Beach Center Family Quality of Life Scale which measures the members’ satisfaction across five areas: family interaction, parenting, emotional well-being, physical/material well-being and disability-related support (Gardiner & Iarocci, 2012; Summers et al., 2005).

Relating to GDP measures of well-being (Bleys, 2012; Giannetti, Agostinho, Almeida, & Huisingh, 2015), Cotterell, Wheldon and Milligan (2007) examined the changes of FWB of New Zealand between 1981 and 2001 using the data collected from by Statistics of New Zealand, which include the five-yearly New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings. The indicators of well-being in the census include health, income, work, education and housing. This study suggests that using reports of censuses can be an asset as it allows continuity; also the data collected include information about all members, which allows further analysis of the well-being status of each family. Nonetheless, the authors suggest that data from the census can be somewhat inadequate in developing further understanding; for instance, the members' subjective well-being is not taken into consideration. In regard to measuring FWB using income or other wealth related indicators there are noteworthy disagreements. Leeni Hanson (Wall, Leitão, & Ramos, 2010, p. 50) stated, "*family wellbeing cannot only be measured by economic indicators such as GDP; the pertinence of the capability approach (access to basic rights, education, being able to care for the people we like... in this context). Research should go to the community and to the local specificities, and involve people and their own definitions of their wellbeing [...] we need to construct more subjective indicators related to household and family perspectives*".

The indigenous tribe of Māori, regards FWB as a state of balance of resources and demands (Boulton & Gifford, 2014; Rask, Åstedt-Kurki, Paavilainen, & Laippala, 2003). In the Māori culture it is fundamentally believed that FWB consists of: well-being factors (physical, psychological and spiritual well-being, and decent living environment), sense of belonging and having an identity, happiness and enjoyment of being together, financial security and support by others, and it is enhanced by being involved with the community, through to family participation in sports and at the local school (Boulton & Gifford, 2014). They also believe that FWB is achieved when all the family's needs are fulfilled, including subjective and objective components and when balance between mental, physical, and spiritual wellbeing exists. Importantly, for Māori family includes their extended family as well, and its well-being also depends on the well-being of their sub-tribe, and tribe. A tribe member explained that Whānau ora (family health) is achieved when "everyone's healthy, everyone's happy ... everything's happy".

Inspired by Māoris' beliefs, the '*Family and Whanau model*' (Milligan, Fabian, & Coope, 2006), has been used to evaluate FWB in New Zealand. It suggests that the analysis of the FWB is complex due to the dynamic relationship of the members and the influence that

they all have on one another, and it measures the balance between subjective and objective components. The objective factors can be measured by using quantitative methods to evaluate the living conditions and the families' access to resources that support their well-being. According to this model, some of the crucial resources are: financial, social (networks and support availability), human capital (members' skills and abilities), time, as well as physical health and safe environmental conditions (such as non-polluted air and good quality of drinking water). On the other hand, subjective well-being refers to the self-assessed well-being of the family unit which is measured by evaluating the feelings and thoughts of each member. Notably, this model does not consider the interdependency of the members, or any cultural or identity factors. In the findings report, the authors justified this exclusion by stating: "*There is evidence to show that a secure identity and sense of belonging is important to subjective wellbeing, but this sense of identity and belonging may be based in things other than culture. Most research has shown that the protection of cultural identity and social cohesion is important at the societal level.*" (Milligan et al., 2006, p. 27). This statement contradicts several studies and the original philosophy of Whānau ora.

Overall, most conceptualisations include family interaction and cohesion nonetheless, most of the tools developed for measuring FWB were intended to struggling families. Despite the existing diversities, these tools can offer another lens that researchers could use for assessing FWB and could potentially be reformed.

2.3.4 Sociocultural influences on families' dynamics, development and lifestyle

The findings of several studies illustrate how assessing FWB must be context specific (Koen et al., 2013) due to the influence of sociocultural elements on the perception of family and FWB. Some of the most influential characteristics include the society's nature (individualistic or collectivist), wealth, religious orientation, government and law (Powell, 2017); although families are unique, these characteristics can shape to a great extent family functioning and subsequently FWB (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999).

In wealthier countries, there are more opportunities for people to develop their own careers; they do not work as much in their family business, they live more for themselves and become more disengaged from their families (Zontini & Reynolds, 2007). Also in wealthier countries there are various government institutions responsible for the health care, of

individuals and families, and people tend to rely more on them rather than on the family, whereas in poorer societies there is more dependence on the family (Cheal, 2002). In addition, Bratt (2002) suggested that *“Housing is the foundation of family life, without which all other activities are severely challenged or rendered impossible to carry out”* (Bratt, 2002, p. 14). She explained that, the family house is not only important for physical well-being but also for psychological; a comfortable, stable and safe house allows healthier relationships between the members to develop, whereas overcrowded houses cause distress as members do not have space to function freely nor privacy. Moreover, the location of the house shapes the socialization of the members, for instance rural areas do not have many sports facilities or much tourism. Nevertheless, having a house with these qualities cannot be feasible for many people globally; although Bratt’s hypothesis is ‘valid’, it could be argued that there are families, which live under different circumstances and do sense FWB.

According to Kay and Spaaij (2012), one of the differences between individualistic and collectivist cultures lays on the parenting; in Western and individualistic societies the parenting of children is a responsibility of the biological parents, whereas for some collectivist cultures it is the responsibility of the broader society too; as Africans say *“it takes a village to raise up a child”* (Cara, 2012). This illustrates that collectivist societies may have stronger bonds with the external family and with their neighbours, whereas in individualistic, the family is a more ‘private’ system. Simadi, Fatayer and Athamneh’s (2003) findings illustrated that in comparison to western families, the Arabian are significantly larger in size (contraception is not allowed and polygamy usually is), more connected with the extended family and there is more interfering in each other’s private life. Moreover, the Arabians parenting style involves more patriarchal views and practises. The parenting style is an important aspect in the study of families as it shapes the relationships, roles, development of its members and the family’s as a whole. It is suggested that each family is guided by internalised cultural values and the expectation of the society to act upon them (Georgiou, Stavrinides, & Fousiani, 2013). Families living in strong religious orientated societies are expected to participate and conform to the culture’s values and laws. Parents are expected to teach religion to their children, while controversial behaviours are negatively judged; therefore, families become somewhat restricted in functioning independently. Finally, along with religion and government come the laws of polygamy and same-sex marriages, early marriage and contraception (Pearce, Brauner-Otto, & Ji, 2015). There are four main parenting styles; authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and the indifferent (Baumrind, 1991). To provide a brief outline, the authoritative parents are

described with firmness, warmth and invest on the development of their child's autonomy and self-direction. They set standards and guide them using effective communication; in stressful times they deal with issues in a more issue-oriented manner and rationality. The authoritarian parents do not encourage independent behaviour and restrict the child's autonomy. They believe in conformity and obedience, believing that their children should be obedient and not questioning their rules. This style reflects collectivist cultures. The indulgent parents do not place many demands on their children and allow freedom, as they believe that controlling violates their freedom and limits their potential to develop. They have no expectations for their children to adopt their views but rather, see themselves as sources that could possibly influence their children. Finally, the indifferent parents, who are often perceived as neglectful, do not engage with their children's activities and do not know much about their whereabouts, and their family is functions in a way to satisfy their own needs (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992). Studies suggest that the authoritative style is the most effective style in enabling children to develop competence, success motivation and also high self-esteem (Baumrind, 2005; Maccoby, 1992); nonetheless it can be argued that this is subjective to the contextual factors.

All these sociocultural factors including with many others are shaping the structure, functioning and the perception of what family is and subsequently what counts as FWB.

2.3.5 Conclusion

This section has provided an overview of how the concept of family has developed in time and of the factors that influence its meaning, structure and dynamics. From this review it can be recognised that studying families is a complex task. Most studies have upraised that besides the common well-being factors (physical, mental and spiritual well-being), it is important to pay attention to several cultural factors that influence them as well as to respect each family's uniqueness (e.g. identity, values and struggles). Similarly, to well-being, FWB exists in various policies but there is neither an agreed definition nor measurement tool. Reviewing the different assessment methods, it was found that the main difference between the measuring methods used by family therapists with the ones by governing institutions is that family therapists use individualistic approaches as they value highly the uniqueness of each family. In contrast, the institutions responsible for measuring FWB use less individualistic

methods, which lead to the ability to make generalisations from the findings. They contribute in raising understanding on the factors that impact FWB, however, that knowledge cannot be effectively applied on specific circumstances, as families have their own struggles and interfamily functioning (including communication, rules, roles and norms). As discussed in the previous chapter, well-being is a personal and subjective matter and so is FWB, yet it is more complex as it involves more than one individual. Finally, the great majority of studies have examined the well-being of struggling families, such as broken, abusive or of ones which have child with a disability (Tint & Weiss, 2016); amongst a limited number, the first study which sought to examine ‘ordinary’ families was conducted by Elizabeth Bott Spillius (1957). Even though it would be agreed that struggling families may need more help than others and should be prioritised, it can be argued that there is lack of knowledge on a more basic level; what FWB is or constitutes?

2.4 Section C: Sporting families

2.4.1 Athletes' well-being

Athletes go through numerous struggles to achieve success (Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014); they must committedly invest time and resources, often sacrificing a large part of their personal life, to enhance their physical and mental strength in order to perform at competitions. Extensive literature has examined how participation in sport, especially in high-level, affects well-being (Amorose, Anderson-Butcher, & Cooper, 2009; Lundqvist, 2011; Lundqvist & Sandin, 2014; Macdougall, O'Halloran, Sherry, & Shields, 2016; Schüz, Wurm, Warner, & Tesch-Römer, 2009; Theberge, 2008).

The positive outcomes relate more to eudaimonic well-being; athletes become disciplined and cope well with work demands, they develop stronger bodies, high self-esteem and high perceived ability. When progressing to performance level the benefit have a more hedonic nature; athletes receive funding, equipment, get to see and meet new people and places through travelling for training and competitions, win medals and trophies, and become recognisable and respected etc. Nonetheless, most sport studies on athlete's well-being have focused on the negative impacts such as anxiety, depression and injuries. Interestingly, Theberge (2008) examined athletes' perceptions on the relationship of sport with health and found that they are aware that sport can impact negatively their health. An elite athlete particularly said "Health and performance don't go hand in hand at all. I think they're almost the antithesis" (p.209); yet they are usually willing to sacrifice health to perform. These findings illustrate how complex it is to understand athletes' well-being; considering the willingness to participate in sport in risk of damaging their well-being it shows that sport offers them some satisfaction, usually psychological (L. J. Ferguson, Kowalski, Mack, & Sabiston, 2015). Nonetheless, it is questionable how their well-being looks like when psychological well-being exists but without the physical health; how long can the PWB be maintained without the physical health?

Significantly to the study of athletes' well-being, the majority of literature does not clarify the definition of well-being. Many studies on athletes' well-being have used the SDT model, which as explained in section 1, suggests that well-being relates to the fulfilment of three basic needs, competence, autonomy and relatedness (Amorose et al., 2009; Gagné, Ryan,

& Bargmann, 2003). Reviewing 17 studies, which have examined athletes' well-being, Lundqvist, (2011) found that only 7 of them have offered a clear definition or a clear conceptual rational. An example comes from Gagné, Ryan and Bargmann's study (2003) defined well-being as "*psychological functioning characterized by positive experiences and an integrated sense of self within the domain of action*" (p.374). Lundqvist designed a model, illustrating how athletes' well-being could be conceptualized and studied. The model includes the dimensions of PWB, SWB and Social WB at the global level, and the same dimensions adjusted to the context of sport. This framework appears to be the most inclusive within the sport studies, as it does not just concentrate solely on one aspect of well-being, and has been used by some recent ones (Ferguson et al., 2015).

Leading to the next section, numerous studies have examined the impact of families on athletes' well-being and development (Côté, 1999; Kay & Spaaij, 2012).

2.4.1.1 The impact of family on athletes' WB and sporting experiences

According to Kay (2000), in the UK, sporting success is more likely to occur from children that come from specific types of families; as it was discussed in the FWB section, the living location, the culture, the parenting style and family's structure are factors that amongst others have an impact in the way that a child will be raised and in the opportunities, they will have. For instance, a child living in a western urban area, whose parents are financially flexible is more likely to have an opportunity to participate and progress than a child living in an eastern rural area whose parents are struggling financially (Kay & Spaaij, 2012). Moreover, McMillan et al. (2016) suggested that, in Canada youths living in single-parent or reconstituted families sometimes experience inequalities in organized sport participation, which are often related to family wealth.

Parental behaviours have been noted for making youths feel uncomfortable, anxious, pressured or even have a direct impact on their allowance to participate (Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011). From a psychological perspective, Bois, Lalanne and Delforge (2009) examined how parents' competition attendance influences athletes' pre-competitive anxiety; 341 youth athletes (201 basketball players and 140 tennis players) completed questionnaires before an official competition. The findings indicated that when both parents were present all participants, except male tennis players, experienced higher pre-competitive anxiety. At the

same time, interestingly, when none of the parents were present, the athletes did not experience less anxiety. Noteworthy was also that there was a difference between the levels of anxiety between the two sports. The more parenting practices, the higher pre-competition anxiety level was experienced by tennis players, whereas this did not apply for basketball. Finally, the only ones who appeared to benefit from appraisal and understanding were the female tennis players. These findings illustrate the importance of contextualising athletes' well-being on a more context specific level, as suggested by Lundqvist (2011). Parents can also affect how children experience sport; self-perception of ability and confidence are essential for successful performance and sport enjoyment, yet it depends much on their parents' perception (Jowett & Rhind, 2007). From a more practical perspective, parents' behaviours have also been the reason suspending youth athletes from competing (Dinich, 2001).

According to Omli and Wiese-Bjornstal's study (2011) the preferred parental behaviour during events is being 'attentive silent'; however Kanters, Bocarro and Casper's (2008) study illustrated that there is a gap of understanding / awareness for parents on what athletes need. Using separate questionnaires for parents and their children, Kanters et al. (2008) examined whether parents anticipated correctly how their children (young athletes age 9-11 years old) felt about their involvement in their sport. The findings suggested that parents' perception differed consistently with the children's feelings; they did not realise that their manners towards supporting were causing pressure.

2.4.2 Sporting parents' well-being

Similarly to athletes', parents' well-being is also impacted by participation as the various sport-related practices affect their expenditures, duties, time distribution and socialisation. Evidence suggest that the way parents perceive sport and become affected by, relates to the sense of sacrifice; usually the more self-investment and the more involved they become the more stressors they face (Burgess, Knight, & Mellalieu, 2016).

On the positive side, parents get to spend more time with their children and strengthen their bonds. Sport appears to work as a communication facilitator in the family, it brings the parents and athletes closer (Dorsch, Smith, & McDonough, 2009); yet sometimes marginalises other siblings (discussed further in a following paragraph). According to Lally and Kerr (2008) when their children retire, parents have less communication with their child as there are no common interests and athletes most of the times spend more time out of the house doing the

things they could not do during their athletic career. Parents get to extend their social circle as they become friends with other parents, while they also feel as part of the team; this sense of belongingness enhances social well-being (Jetten et al., 2014; Keyes, 1998). Sometimes they become inspired to participate as well in physical activity, which relates to physical and psychological well-being (Dorsch et al., 2009). Being involved they feel accomplished and good as parents for fulfilling their parental duties (Coakley, 2006).

On the other hand, parents can experience a range of stressors from organisational, competitive, and developmental sources, and depending on the circumstance they react differently (Burgess et al., 2016; Dorsch et al., 2009). Factors that influence parents' sporting experiences: a) child's performance and behaviour, b) performing to their potential, c) child's on court behaviour and d) child's reaction to match (Knight & Holt, 2013). In addition, when parents feel that their child was treated unfairly, insensibility or incompetence by a referee, coach, athlete, or other parent spectator they develop angry reactions (Omli & LaVoi, 2012). Holt, Tamminen, Black, Sehn and Wall (2008) using the ecological system approach examined parents' comments on sport settings. The comments ranged from supportive to controlling and seemed to be influenced by the context (result, other parents and referees). The emotional intensity of the crowd appeared to influence and be influenced by parents.

A study by Burgess, Knight and Mellalieu (2016) has examined how parents of elite youth gymnasts cope within youth sport. The participants were seven parents of youth national and international level gymnasts (11–14 years old). The participants were interviewed and the study followed the methodology of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). The findings suggested that parents' stress experiences are “dynamic and complex”. They have to deal with various demands such as, time and financial demands, competition anxieties and other parents' behaviour, and also children's development including education and injuries. Depending on the situation and its demands, parents adopt different coping strategies. Four main stress-management categories were identified: (a) detaching from sport (e.g. by parents dividing the demands, counting on children to handle situations, and sustaining a balanced lifestyle); (b) normalising experiences (e.g. by recalling and comparing situations); (c) trying to educate themselves (e.g. by talking to others); and (d) managing emotional reactions (e.g. through emotional release, self-talk, distraction, and avoidance strategies).

The various transitions that athletes face also affect the parents; for instance, post retirement parents lose that source of demandingness and their social relationships and everyday life are impacted (Lally & Kerr, 2008). For some parents retirement is relieving as

they struggle with coping (Burgess et al., 2016). However, some experience it as a loss; they lose the team identity they previously acquired and also spend less time with their children, as they seek to explore new things (Lally & Kerr, 2008). Parents seek to find new 'hobbies', and often they start doing the things they enjoyed but didn't have time to. Moreover, some parents develop worries for their children's future, guilt for not intervening when coaches were abusive (shouting at their children, pushing them to train excessive amount of hours etc.) and for potentially neglecting the siblings during the years of participation (Lally & Kerr, 2008).

Managing to deal with the stressors successfully is important for the parents as often they can impact negatively the development of their children; they can cause children losing interest and enjoyment of sport, problems with the team's organisation and coach, have a direct impact on a competition causing pre-competition anxiety or even affect the result (Knight & Holt, 2013; Omli & LaVoi, 2012). Rosenthal's (1991, cited in Kay, 2000) study, suggested that sometimes families face conflicts due to disagreements between parents over how much time and money should be invested in sport, how much time can be sacrificed from school, and what would be best for their child's development beyond sport. Overall, the sport stressors placed on the parents do not only impact their individual well-being but also their child's and subsequently the family unit's.

2.4.3 The well-being of athletes' siblings

Siblings, like the other members of a family, have a reciprocal impact on sport participation, but in contrast to parents and athletes, siblings have received a very limited research attention. The reason for this is probably that siblings do not usually impact directly the athletes' performance; unlike parents, siblings are (most often) not responsible, capable or directly involved in the provision of the necessary resources.

Although no research was found to be explaining how siblings impact athletes' careers, family members are dynamically interconnected and there is a 'chain reaction' when something happens to one member. What is commonly seen in sporting families is, siblings becoming neglected due to parents' increased responsibilities towards the athlete. Due to this though, sometimes siblings develop negative feelings, which subsequently affect the family dynamics, FWB and everyday life (Knoetze-Raper et al., 2016).

Through exploring how the family dynamics change through the athletes' development in sport, Côté (1999) found that during the specializing years older siblings act as role models for their younger sibling-athlete and suggested that what enabled this to occur, was the parents' ability to recognize the uniqueness of each child. Although no reference was made on the younger siblings' role during the specializing years or on the older siblings' role during the investment years, the findings illustrated that the younger siblings, who were either not involved or less involved in sport, expressed jealousy due to the uneven distribution of family resources to the 'talented' athlete. Blazo, Czech, Carson and Dees' (2014) study focused on the experiences of younger siblings of NCAA Division 1 athletes and their findings also reveal mixed perspectives; some siblings expressed positive affect whereas others negative.

Many of the studies on athletes' siblings have focused on siblings who participate in sport together and have reported similar findings to the ones, in which there was only one athlete in the family. Trussell (2014) examined the impact of community level sport in the relationship of siblings. The study involved siblings of seven families (9-17 years old, M: 12.8), who participated in individual semi-structured interviews. The findings suggested that for some siblings participating in the same sport have more opportunities to spend time together as they have more common interests. Tension was mostly found to be created between siblings when a younger same sex sibling was thought to be the star athlete and when siblings were team mates. Some devalued their own sense of skills and abilities, and some even wanted to seek out an identity of their own and/or niche in another activity that was unique to them. Similarly, to Côté (1999), Trussell also reported that some older siblings sometimes developed a mentor relationship with their siblings, showing them new skills and providing advises. Likewise, Davis and Meyer (2008) found that the younger siblings expressed bitterness and jealousy towards their talented older sibling or felt the pressure to perform and measure up to their achievements. Older siblings and/or more experienced siblings sought to maintain their superior athletic status. More recently, Nelson and Strachan (2017) examined how siblings influence high performance sport participation through retrospective interviews with former elite youth female athletes and their sibling of the same sex, who participated in the same sport. This study suggested both positive and negative experiences; spending time together, relating to one another and building strong bonds.

Reflecting on how these studies have been conducted, Fraser-Thomas, Côté and Deakin's (2008) findings suggest that the timing of research might have significant impact on the findings. When comparing the sporting experiences of engaged adolescent swimmers to

those of former competitive swimmers who had dropped out of the sport, it was evident that engaged swimmers spoke positively of their sibling relationships whereas swimmers who had dropped out referred to rivalries, competition, and jealousy among siblings, leading to negative sport experiences for these athletes. Reflecting on experiences permits participants to reconsider their emotions while sometimes the memory is faded.

Overall, as also explained by Hopwood, Farrow, MacMahon, and Baker (2015, p. 725) *“The results of these studies suggest a complex, reciprocal relationship between siblings and sport involvement, indicating that while siblings may influence athletes’ participation in sport, athletes’ participation in sport may also influence sibling relationships”*

2.4.4 The impact of elite sport on the family well-being

As previously mentioned, the impact of elite sport on the family unit has not received much attention; however, the few studies, which have explored this matter have provided some significant knowledge that contributes to understanding the impact on the FWB.

Kirk et al. (1997) conducted a mixed methods study, including 27 families from Australia each with a junior athlete (gymnastics, netball, cricket, hockey and football) to explore the time commitments in sport and the social consequences for the athletes and their families. The findings illustrated that participation had significant social consequences for family life in terms of intra-familial relationships, parents' roles in junior sport, and the nature of children's participation. The study highlighted the differences in the yearly cycles and demands that each sport has and suggested that children's participation in junior sport could be restrained / limited due to its impact on family life.

Blazo et al., (2014) suggested that when sport becomes a focal point of the family, members tend to spend more time together; travelling to competitions, training sessions and recruitment events, and also become involved in various “unstructured” activities which provide additional practice, referred to as “backyard games. Similarly, Knoetze-Raper et al. (2016) sought to explore the experiences of three South African families with an adolescent high-achiever. The members of the three families took part in a face-to-face interview and then additional interviews were conducted just with the parents, and then with the high achiever and the parents. Their findings illustrated that sport shapes the families’ lifestyles and perception towards physical health, time and social life. The families were seen to be trying to live a

balanced life however the spouses' relationship sometimes appeared to be facing challenges as sport is not allowing any free time for the couple and the siblings were also at times neglected. The researchers suggested that all the members need support to strengthen their interpersonal relationships and communication skills and recommended practising mindfulness.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has provided an in-depth exploration on various approaches regarding well-being and FWB as well as a review of the existing knowledge on the relation of participating in sport on the well-being of individuals and families, aiming to support the essence of this study and to provide the readers with an insight on the theories that informed the methodology.

As illustrated in the literature, all family members are affected by participation in both positive and negative ways, and are vital to be taken into consideration to secure families' well-being and facilitate their development, in sport and outside. Importantly, there is no agreement on how different members experience sport; for instance, some siblings sense jealousy, whereas others pride, some families are brought closer by the participation, whereas for others sport functions as a divider (Blazo et al., 2014); this inconsistency demonstrates the subjectivity in how families and individuals can be impacted by sport and allows discussion regarding the different needs; not all parents' giving coaching advices are perceived to be pushy by their children; therefore, how can guidelines be given to parents or how can families be assisted in maintaining their well-being while being involved in elite sport? According to Knight et al. (2016) it is significant to consider individual and socio-contextual factors when educating parents about their stance towards their child-athlete; likewise, this must be also applied when looking at families as entities. Moreover, as Lundqvist (2011) suggested, well-being of athletes must be studied in a more contextual focused manner, while *"Any investigation of children's participation in sport requires such participation to be located within the context of family life and to take account of the family structures and circumstances"* (Kirk et al., 1997, p. 51). Finally, in the sporting literature, not many studies exist exploring the experiences of whole families and this study suggests that it is essential for the role of sport on FWB to be further explored in a more context specific manner and to offer knowledge on how to secure families.

3 Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods

Introduction:

This chapter provides a detailed account and a theory-supported justification of each step taken towards achieving the aim and objectives of the study. The aim was to examine and explain the impact of living with adolescent elite swimmers on the well-being of Cypriot families; while the objectives were: (i) to examine the sociopsychological dynamics of Cypriot families living with adolescent elite swimmers, and (ii) to critically explore the core well-being elements of Cypriot family life in the context of elite swimming (e.g. happiness, central purpose and life satisfaction).

Divided into two sections, section A of this chapter introduces the underpinnings of qualitative research and provides some historical background of its development. It describes how the various existential philosophies on ‘being’ have evolved through time and have led to the development of phenomenology as an epistemological and ontological framework for understanding the human condition. It introduces the reader to the paradigmatic aspects of the research and explains the selection of the methodology of the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Section B provides the detailed step-by-step plan that was followed, from the beginning of the project until the end. It includes the recruitment process, a description of the participants, the selection of individualised semi-structured interviews as a data collection method as well the decision to conduct four rounds of interviews in order to cover the participants’ year experiences. Moreover, section B, describes the analysis process and the framework of the findings presentation.

3.1 Section A: Qualitative research methodology

3.1.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research is defined in different ways (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Ormston, Spencer, Barnard, & Snape, 2014); yet one of the most accepted ones comes from Denzin and Lincoln (2011):

“A situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 3).

Despite the diversity that exists regarding the definition, it is fundamentally agreed that it is an interpretative and naturalistic approach, concerned with understanding how people perceive the different phenomena. As Sparks and Smith (2014) explained, qualitative research is an umbrella term, which encompasses various small communities with unique beliefs and language; as Lincoln explained *“we are interpretivists, postmodernists, poststructuralists; we are phenomenological, feminist, critical. We chose lenses that are border, racial, ethnic, hybrid, queer, differently abled, indigenous, margin, center.”* (Lincoln, 2010, p. 8). Through exploring and interpreting participants’ perspectives and experiences, qualitative studies aim to provide in-depth understanding of the structure and functioning of the social world (Ormston et al., 2014). Qualitative studies attempt to provide explanations for the rise or existence of social phenomena that appear in specific contextual settings, by exploring ‘why?’, ‘how?’ and ‘what?’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

3.1.1.1 The development of qualitative research and its philosophical underpinnings

Before the 19th century research was mainly conducted using quantitative methods as the Cartesian philosophy was dominant and researchers were mostly interested in answering questions such as ‘how many?’ and hypothesis testing (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston, 2014). The qualitative approach in research was a formation of various philosophies opposing to the Cartesian philosophy, which focus around the matters of existence, mind, consciousness and reality. Examples include, Immanuel Kant’s arguments about the ways of knowing and consciousness made in his book ‘Critique of Pure Reason’, in which he suggested that each individual perceives the world differently through their unique senses and interpretations, and thus realities are personal constructions (Ormston et al., 2014). Kant also explained that people can only develop knowledge about the things that can be experienced, whereas any metaphysical questions cannot be answered (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Following Kant, Wilhelm Dilthey (1860s-70s) stressed the significance of exploring the lived experiences of people, which appear under a certain social and historical context. He proposed that, actions are encouraged by self-determination and human creativity, and based on this he suggested that, to understand the links between the cultural, social and historical aspects of people's lives, and to see the context in which exact actions take place, social research should explore lived experiences (Ormston et al., 2014). These concepts, as well as other philosophies on existence and consciousness, have set the bases and promoted the evolution of qualitative research, which resides in the interpretive approach to social reality and in the description of people’s experiences (Bryman, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The selection of a research approach is based on the projects’ research question but also on the researchers’ paradigmatic views; referring to a set of beliefs, which incorporate the ontological and epistemological stance of the researcher (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Healy & Perry, 2006; Ponterotto, 2005). The four major paradigms according to Guba and Lincoln (1994) are thought to be positivism (most often adopted in quantitative studies), post positivism, critical theory and constructivism / interpretivism (most often adopted in qualitative studies). Ontology refers to the perception of the researcher about the nature and form of reality; it essentially refers to whether there is a valid reality that exists beyond human conception or just a shared social reality or even multiple versions of reality (Ormston et al., 2014). The two main ontological positions are realism and relativism (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Realism is usually held by positivists and suggests that there is a singular reality, which exists independently of people’s understanding and that realities are objective and can be discovered

through investigation. On the other hand, interpretivists usually hold a relativist position, which suggests that reality depends on people's perception (Ormston et al., 2014) and therefore reality is fluid and multifaceted (Sparkes & Smith, 2014). Epistemology is the philosophy regarding the nature of knowledge (Bahari, 2010); epistemological suppositions question what could be considered as acceptable knowledge in a discipline. Moreover, epistemology defines the view upon the relationship between the participant and researcher and the possible approaches towards discovering reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Snape & Spencer, 2003). Positivists hold an objectivist epistemological stance, which supports that knowledge consists of "*verified hypotheses that can be accepted as facts or laws*" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 113). On the other hand, interpretivists hold a subjectivist epistemological stance, suggesting that the phenomenon that is studied is "*not 'out there' independent of inquirers*" (Sparkes & Smith, 2014, p. 13); interpretivists suggest that researchers have their own personal views and background and that has a role in the knowledge making.

Methodologically, the majority of times, researchers adopting the interpretivist paradigm use a qualitative methodology and employ hermeneutical / dialectic approaches intending to create meanings through uncovering the participants' experiences (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The data collection of qualitative studies is viewed as an interactive process where the researcher learns from the participants about their experiences. It requires active engagement with the participants and immersion in the setting, aiming to get as close as possible to their lived experiences. Some of the methods include interviews, observations, diaries and analysis of visual materials. In contrast, positivists use a deductive approach; they use testing and often mathematical formulas to sometimes prove or disprove prespecified hypotheses, to explain relationships, identify causes which influence outcomes while they believe that everything can be explained in a logical analysis (Snape & Spencer, 2003). Their aim is to formulate laws that could be used for prediction purposes and generalization (Scotland, 2012). The findings produced by qualitative studies are not a result of mathematical procedures or any other quantifying methods but are products of interpretation. Opposed to quantitative studies, most often qualitative findings are presented in non-numerical forms (Golafshani, 2003); they are usually presented in everyday language and often integrate the participants' words to describe their experiences or the different phenomena (Taylor, Bodgan, & DeVault, 2015). It is important to note that there is no universal law on which ontological, epistemological and methodological stances should be combined; these philosophical views solely depend on the researchers' worldview and the research question. Nonetheless, the

significance of the epistemological and ontological stance of the researcher lays also in the relationship they have with what they consider as a valid, legitimate contribution to knowledge (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Leung, 2015); yet for each paradigm there are controversial opinions regarding how they should be criticised and what makes them trustworthy or valid.

Within qualitative research there are various traditions / approaches to research, some include phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, grounded theory and discourse analysis; a detailed description of each approach is beyond the scope of this chapter, so the following section describes phenomenology as it is the approach that underpins the research in this thesis

3.1.1.2 Phenomenology

Phenomenology exists both as a philosophy, which is the ideology which has brought the rise of qualitative research, but also as an approach to research that is concerned with understanding phenomena, meaning the things as they appear within their social environments (Bryman, 1988; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Tuohy, Cooney, Dowling, Murphy, & Sixsmith, 2013). The philosophy of phenomenology suggests that people are not passive to phenomena; as each one has a unique anticipation, which is developed by their fore-conceptions, everyone is an interpreter and developer of new phenomena (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Phenomena do not exist objectively ‘out there’; they are uniquely perceived, framed and reframed by different people. A phenomenon does not have the same importance for everyone, for some it might be a major issue while for others insignificant.

The founder of phenomenology was the mathematician and philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859- 1938) (Tuohy et al., 2013); however, some argue that the philosophy has been practiced without a ‘name’ for centuries and that the original founder is Kierkegaard (Valle, King, & Halling, 1989). Husserl was inspired by Descartes philosophy on ‘Dualism’, which suggests that reality is separate to the individual and exists out there and can be discovered. Husserl, though, went the opposite direction; he proposed the notion of embodiment and suggested that the mind and the body cannot be separated. He argued that people and the world are co-constituted, and that phenomena do not simply exist objectively ‘out there’; instead, they are uniquely perceived and framed by different people. Therefore, phenomenology is essentially the movement away, or the contrasting ideology, of the Cartesian philosophy (Laporte, 1963).

Husserl (1859- 1938), beyond developing the philosophy of phenomenology he also developed the phenomenological research approach, which made its appearance through qualitative studies in the late 19th century by British and American anthropologists and sociologists, in the form of ethnography. Epistemologically Husserl proposed that reality can be discovered by ‘bracketing’ or else known as phenomenological reduction, putting aside one’s beliefs and emotions and investigating with a clear mind (Levasseur, 2003). Heidegger (1889-1976) was Husserl’s student, and he is one of the most important figures in phenomenology; he developed Husserl’s views into a contrasting new perspective. Heidegger focused on ontological questions of meaning and lived experience. He suggested that the experiences of people are essentially context-bound, that is, they cannot be free from time and location or the mind of the human actor (Kafle, 2011; Kerry & Armour, 2000).

Leading to the next section, the approach of phenomenology has been earning popularity in social sciences, including sport studies while various established sport social scientists have endorsed its effectiveness (Allen-Collinson, 2009; Kerry & Armour, 2000; Papathomas & Lavalley, 2010; Sparkes & Smith, 2014).

3.1.2 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The study employs an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its philosophical underpinnings (discussed below) reflect the researcher’s world views. According to Smith, Flowers and Larkin, IPA provides an in-depth approach for developing an understanding about the way that people perceive particular situations and the sense they make of their social and personal world (J. A. Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). They suggest that IPA is particularly valuable for researchers interested in complexities, processes or innovations, and for topics that are under-researched or new (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2007); FWB is complex involving diverse social relations and exploring FWB in Cypriot sporting families has never been studied before. Essentially, IPA requires participants to recall and reflect on past experiences while the researcher seeks to develop an understanding of what those experiences mean for them. IPA is often mistaken as being a method; nevertheless, it is a methodology theoretically underpinned by phenomenology (described in 3.2.1.2), hermeneutics and ideography and offers an informed framework on how to conduct qualitative research and not a technique for collecting or/and analysing data (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Hermeneutics refers to the interpretation of phenomena; it moves beyond descriptive accounts and seeks to uncover meanings (Reiners, 2012). The investigator, using their own perception, develops and offers their understanding of what they essentially see and believe is happening. As explained, IPA includes “*a two-stage interpretation process, or a double hermeneutic, is involved. The participants are trying to make sense of their world; the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world*” (J. A. Smith & Osborn, 2008, p. 53). Ideography refers to the commitment to the detailed analysis of each separate case (participant). Through examining individual case studies, researchers can make statements about the individuals (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). In order to be able to provide insights on how a larger number of people perceive a particular phenomenon, IPA researchers use purposive sampling and usually recruit a rather homogeneous and small sample of participants, for whom the research question is meaningful. There is no determined number of participants required for an IPA study; in the literature, there are studies involving one (Eatough & Smith, 2017; Rhodesa & Smith, 2010) to over fifteen people (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Examples include examinations of: the experiences of burnout and recovery of eight elite Swedish soccer coaches (Lundkvist, Gustafsson, Hjälml, & Hassmén, 2012); the experiences of disordered eating of four elite female athletes (Papathomas & Lavallee, 2010); and a case study on the experiences of depression (Rhodesa & Smith, 2010). Giorgi (2008) on the other hand stated that a phenomenological study must involve at least three participants in order to draw out differences between the individual and the shared to be distinguished. Nonetheless, in support of the studies with less than three participants, it can be argued that, if the core philosophy of phenomenology is followed, supporting that each individual is experiencing and providing a unique perspective, then the identification of differences is a secondary concern and one that would mainly concern researchers with a more positivist or post-positivist approach. Moreover, “the choice of a single case may provide sufficient access to a phenomenon depending on the epistemological goals of the project, and the rigor of the eidetic approach adopted” (Finlay, 2009, p. 10).

In practice, the researcher in IPA studies takes an active role trying to develop an insider’s perspective of the participant’s experiences; this process is characterized as dynamic and it is most commonly performed through semi-structured interviews, which is the main qualitative data collection method used in IPA studies, as it enables the researcher to have an in-depth dialogue with the participant (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). The questions included in IPA studies are open-ended and they are focused on the experiences of the participants, allowing

them space to expand on their views without being directed. For instance, IPA researchers may ask, “can you describe to me how you experienced the competition?”, instead of: “were you happy about winning?”; this is because asking specifically about experiencing happiness, directs the participant to reflect solely (or mostly) on that emotion, whereas asking for a narration of the experience enables the participant to decide and share what was involved for them. In addition, the researcher can identify what is most significant for the participants by their first response. Therefore, following the guidelines of IPA, the researcher firstly asks open ended questions, which enable developing an understanding of the broader context and then according to the response probes more specific questions to attain more in-depth data (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA is a systematic and practical approach to analysing rich data (Baker, Pistrang & Elliot, 2002), which does not provide any strict guides on how to conduct analysis allowing the researchers to freely interpret their data (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Smith and Osborn (2008, p. 53) provided valuable advice for enhancing reliability: *“a detailed IPA analysis can also involve asking critical questions of the texts from participants, such as the following: What is the person trying to achieve here? Is something leaking out here that wasn’t intended? Do I have a sense of some- thing going on here that maybe the participants themselves are less aware of?”*. However, this flexibility was negatively judged by Giorgi; he suggested that *“IPA’s hesitation to claim fixed methods makes the possibility of replication of IPA studies impossible”* (Giorgi, 2011, p. 195). In support of the choice of IPA, this study argues that, since every person is an active social interpreter and constructor of knowledge, constructing and deconstructing knowledge daily through communication, using their own cognition; then, in qualitative research, the precision of the analysis method is only significant and relevant on whether it is ethical and if it enables answering the research question effectively and adequately.

Moreover, since 2008, there has been a significant increase in the number of sport studies employing IPA (Callary, Rathwell, & Young, 2015); it has been used to examine the experiences of coaches’ (Lundkvist et al., 2012), athletes (Burgess et al., 2016; Holt et al., 2008; Lundkvist et al., 2012; Papathomas & Lavalley, 2010), physiotherapists (Arvinen-Barrowa, Penny, Hemmings, & Corra, 2010) and others; this increasing continuity illustrates that IPA offers an effective approach.

Another reason for selecting IPA lays on the fact that the majority of studies, which have used IPA derive from health psychology (Brocki & Wearden, 2006), and since mental

well-being is one of the core contributors of well-being, following the literature's recommendations, using IPA appears to be appropriate. Moreover, holding a socio-psychological perspective, and supporting the view that socio-cultural factors impact the psychology of individuals and communities, this study sees FWB as a flux state, shaped by all the members' sense of well-being and the harmony and satisfaction with their togetherness (Armstrong et al., 2005; Fahey et al., 2013). Therefore, FWB is a phenomenon experienced by the members of each family and can be observed by others.

Section B in this chapter provides a detailed description of how this research was conducted, including data collection and analysis methods, adopting the approach of IPA.

3.1.3 Ensuring quality in qualitative and IPA research

Debates about the validity criteria of qualitative studies have been ongoing since the mid-1990s (Cronbach, 1948); the critiques mainly regard the inability of the findings to be generalised and applicable to the general population and the lack of validity, as the findings are based on the researchers' interpretation (Sandelowski, 2004). Quantitative researchers argue that qualitative studies are not as useful as quantitative studies because they do not represent the society due to the limited number of participants they involve in their studies; they only represent the view of the researcher related to a very small number of people, and not reality (Malterud, 2001). On the other hand, qualitative researchers argue that quantitative studies provide generalised findings and are marginalising minority groups, or the outliers; as their findings do not represent the entire population then there are always some people who remain 'unheard' or 'unconsidered'. Qualitative researchers support that through their studies people's voices become heard, as they use direct quotes from their participants to illustrate findings (though not all qualitative studies record voices). As Malterud (2001, p. 485) explained, "*No study, irrespective of the method used, can provide findings that are universally transferable.*" The debates about trustworthiness are not limited to the critiques of quantitative researchers; debates exist amongst qualitative researchers as well. For instance, there are discussions about whether a study should be judged upon its trustworthiness or validity and reliability (Cypress, 2017). Whittemore, Chase and Mandle, suggested that the primary criteria of qualitative research should be credibility, authenticity, criticality, and integrity; while, thoroughness, explicitness, vividness, creativity, congruence, and sensitivity should be secondary (Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle, 2001). On the other hand, two of the most cited

authors in the areas of methodology and paradigms, Lincoln and Guba, suggested that qualitative studies should be judged upon their trustworthiness, which includes transferability (replacing external validity), confirmability (replacing objectivity), credibility (replacing internal validity) and dependability (replacing reliability), (Lincoln & Guba, 1986; Shenton, 2004).

Developing further those criteria, Yardley (2000) suggested that trustworthiness depends on four factors: commitment and rigor, sensitivity to context and transferability, the impact and importance of the study, and transparency and coherence. According to Davies and Dodd, (2002) rigor is often seen in a very narrow way, referring to the reliability and validity of research; however, it is suggested that it is not necessarily the case and that the criteria for evaluating rigor must be appropriate to the type of research and the methods used (Yardley, 2000). For instance, qualitative studies cannot be reliable in terms of replicability over time and across contexts, as they depend on the interpretation of the researcher, which was made at a specific point in time under specific circumstances. Instead, in qualitative studies reliability is based on consistency and care in the application of research practices, and can be identified by the visibility of research practices, and the reliability of the analysis and findings is evaluated from the account given about the limitations of the study (Davies & Dodd, 2002). In a phenomenological analysis rigor and commitment can be exhibited by effectively using prolonged contemplative and empathic exploration of the topic combining sophisticated theorizing; it is suggested that following such practices and triangulation processes can enable going beyond common-sense or obvious understandings and can contribute to the study's rigor (Yardley, 2000). The challenge in studying phenomena is when the researcher must decide what perspective to adopt, in terms of who will be served by the research, and simultaneously, to describe the phenomenon from the perspectives of those relevant parties; if this is not achieved effectively the validity of the study will be questioned (Van de Ven, 2016). To establish the focus and purpose of a research it is necessary to tell whose perspective is being addressed and engaging them in describing the phenomenon (Van de Ven, 2016). The transferability of a study refers to the potential of the findings to be applicable in other contexts. Qualitative studies are often accused of rushing to generalizations and/or to not be applicable to broader society; however, the purpose of qualitative studies is to *“provide a rich, contextualized understanding of some aspect of human experience through the intensive study of particular cases”* (Polit & Beck, 2010, p. 1451). To avoid such issues, researchers must take into serious consideration the various differences and similarities between the different

individuals, groups, cultures or systems, prior to suggesting that their research can represent anyone.

Overall, to build trustworthiness, literature suggests: respondent validation (verifying with the respondents whether their interpretation represents their views), providing detailed account on the methods used for data collection and analysis (Mays & Pope, 1995; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002; Yardley, 2000). Rolls and Relf (2006) have stressed the importance of identifying preconceptions prior and throughout the research. Identifying the role of positionality demonstrates that potential biases are acknowledged; also, if it is established prior to the research it could potentially give an opportunity to take a different approach or to use alternative techniques that would produce less bias (Bourke, 2014). Finally, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and Norris (1997) recommended asking critical colleagues or friends for their opinion on the analysed data; this could help researchers identify any biases and to reflect on their findings and discuss any omissions. The positionality of the researcher of this study is detailed below.

3.1.4 Me, Elite Swimming and this Doctoral Thesis

The positionality of the researcher refers to the relationship of the researcher with the participants, the culture, and any element that relates to the topic of interest. Its establishment is necessary because each researcher carries a different background and influences the study's outcome in a unique way; for instance, different researchers would interpret data in different ways. In addition, in qualitative studies, acknowledging and describing the positionality of the researcher offers transparency and enhances the trustworthiness and quality of the study (Bourke, 2014; Sanjari, Bahramnezhad, Fomani, Shoghi, & Cheraghi, 2014). Since the findings of qualitative studies are shaped by the researcher's interpretation, a picture of the factors which influence the researcher's perception (e.g. education, nationality and relevant historical background) will aid the readers to somewhat understand how the findings of the study were derived.

Beyond my role as the researcher of this study, I am also a female former elite swimmer of the national team of Cyprus for twelve years, which means that I am a cultural insider (Ganga & Scott, 2006); I am an insider to the Cypriot broader culture, but also to the Cypriot and the international swimming culture; nevertheless, these cultures may have evolved since my retirement. This characteristic had the biggest influence on all the parts of the research,

including: the accessibility to participants, the researcher's contextual pre-existing knowledge, the ability to engage in a swimming-specific conversation and to understand the context, and the comfortableness of the participants, as some knew of me already and in the analysis.

To begin with, being a Cypriot enabled me having in-depth understanding on the language, mentalities, traditions and socio-political context and happenings. Cyprus is a somewhat patriarchal country, with Western and capitalist functioning. Taking into account the gender stereotypes, my gender could have impacted the participants' perception and communication with me; nevertheless, neither during the data collection nor in the analysis, I sensed that my gender had affected the study. My ethnicity, had a key role in understanding the language and the context to which they referred to; I could fluently communicate with them and understand local expressions and I could also understand the socio-political situation with which their personal experiences were related to; for instance, talking about their lack of trust in the government referring to the economic crisis in 2013.

The most significant characteristic of my positionality was my swimming background. Firstly, I had pre-existing bonds with the main gatekeepers of the participants, the Cyprus swimming federation and the coaches, who permitted access to the participants. All gatekeepers have their own personal aims, purposes, interests and hold certain values and assumptions; when a researcher requests access to a population in order to examine and help in the matters they are concerned with whether the permission is easily attained (Clark, 2010). In this study, the gatekeepers were also interested in the progress and well-being of the athletes, and so they happily supported this study and did not raise any issues. Some of the coaches and I were members of the Cyprus Swimming National Team at the same period and ever since have held friendly relationships. Likewise, bonds exist with the Cyprus swimming federation as belonging in the team for eleven years enabled the development of personal relationships with the officials. It is also noteworthy to mention, that my father, after my retirement was elected to be and still is, the president of the federation. Being a president, or holding any other position in the committee of the federation, is a voluntary job that requires a lot of hours dealing with organizational tasks; therefore, there was no personal incentive, especially since his daughter is not a swimmer anymore. The participants were already aware of my relationship to the president of the federation but during their recruitment, they were reminded again and assured that this study had no relationship with the federation or their coaches' job, and that their confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

The participants already knew of me and my previous career achievements, and it seemed to have facilitated the recruitment and the conduction of the study. The parents but especially the swimmers appeared to be enthusiastic about participating in the research and being an insider has enabled engaging in sport-specific conversations, without having to distract the flow of the interviews to ask for contextual information (e.g. selection criteria for international events). At this point it is important to note that due to the time gap between the period of retirement (2012) until the beginning of the study (2017), the participants and I never competed together nor had the opportunity to meet; nonetheless it was noticed that all participants had a particular comfortableness in sharing their stories and opening up emotionally. It is believed that this is due to their ability to relate with me, as someone who has been there and understands their sporting experiences, but also in their faith that their accounts will remain confidential as promised. A significant example illustrating the participants' openness was when a father disclosed his depression, while his family was unaware. Nevertheless, the participants' ability to relate with me and feel comfortable, encouraged swimmers and parents (mostly), on a few occasions to ask for my opinion on swimming matters, which often raised dilemmas regarding how would be best to respond. Offering my advice would impact the study, as their experiences could later on become influenced by me, but also our participant-researcher relationship would get influenced; therefore, most of the times, I had to decline by responding in a way that would indicate my respect towards them. Questions included, how did I experience specific things, such as retirement or specific competitions or even things that they assumed that I experienced, like local competitors and the federation being unfair towards me, which sometimes, I had no similar experiences. To some of the personal questions, where I perceived that my respond could only impact my study in a positive way, by allowing the participants, getting to know me and feel comfort I responded giving a brief truthful answer, whilst at others I had to decline them. At other times, the participants asked for my advice on how they could communicate specific matters with their coach or child; being asked for such advices was particularly tricky, and all requests of this nature, were declined politely by reminding the participants that I could not offer any advices nor share information that other members shared with me. Such moments were challenging as, not only I was put in a difficult position in having to find a sensitive manner for declining their request, but also because sometimes I was developing negative emotions later on. At a few times, I felt that I was disappointing them, whilst they were kindly offering me their time and helping me with my study; also, as I was in contact (for research

purposes) with their other family members too, I often knew their emotions towards each other and often I felt that, just by sharing some of the information they shared with me, I could eliminate the distance between them. In coping with the negative emotions that sometimes occurred, after such occasions, I had to remind myself of my role in this particular study, and how this study is an exploration of FWB rather than a family intervention. In addition, talking about my experiences with my supervisors and close friends was particularly helpful. It is significant to mention that, as it was stated in the participant sheet, if the participants had shared information that indicated the presence of abuse, the confidentiality would be broken; there were no evidence of such a case in none of the interviews.

It is necessary to acknowledge that my preconceptions, past experiences and knowledge, have played a significant role in the interpretation of the data as well. Elite athletes often experience post retirement trauma or carry sport related baggage long after retirement (Lavalley, Gordon, & Grove, 1997); if the researcher was experiencing post retirement trauma whilst conducting the study the findings could be especially biased as the researcher might aim to protect the issues that were causing emotional distress. For this reason, it is necessary to mention that I had dealt with the transition with the support of a sport psychologist and thus it can be responsibly stated that the researcher had overcome the retirement long before the beginning of this PhD; nonetheless, it would be wrong to claim that I had no emotions towards the elite sport, that could influence the study. For instance, being a former swimmer, when the participant-swimmers were describing difficult sets, that they had to complete in sessions, I could understand the swimmers' physical and mental struggle. Likewise, the 'swimmers' language' was easily understood, which unless one is or was a swimmer can hardly understand; for instance, phrases like, "I couldn't catch / feel the water" make no sense, but for swimmers it basically means that they were struggling with their swimming technique and could not be efficient (more or less). Similarly, when they referred to other people, who belong in the swimming culture (e.g. other coaches or officials), it was often the case that I knew of them already. Therefore, although, reflective practices were practiced throughout the study (described below), my interpretations may have been influenced by what I perceived them. A very similar case to mine is the case of the former elite Australian swimmer, Jenny McMahon, who conducted various studies, including an autoethnography on the experiences of elite retired Australian swimmers (J. McMahon & Penney, 2013, 2015; J. McMahon, Penney, & Dinan-Thompson, 2012; J. McMahon, Zehntner, & McGannon, 2017).

Elias (1956) suggested that in order to be able to interpret the world people must become involved in the culture to experience what they are experiencing and understand what it is like; and then to become detached, meaning self-distancing, in order to be able to objectively provide an insight of what is happening in the culture. Elias' 'involvement-detachment' theory is reminiscent of Heidegger's argument against 'bracketing'; Heidegger argued that it is impossible to completely separate one's preconceptions and be absolutely objective (Finlay, 2009; Heidegger, Macquarrie, & Robinson, 1962). Research is never completely abstract; there is an intention, and this is what guides what is observed or being looked for (Allen-Collinson, 2009). A more balanced or thoughtful involvement-detachment though can be achieved; reflecting Elias' views, Mansfield suggested to critically examine and distinguish your own passions and personal interests, and then to critically examine how they could impact the study (Mansfield, 2007). During the longitudinal explorations, at the times when researchers are engaging with their culture and/or subject of interest, they must be aiming to retrieve as many insights as possible; however, during the intervals, they must be reflecting on their role. This point also relates to the participant and researcher's intimacy; as discussed above the researchers must maintain some balance for both ethical and validity reasons (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009). Taking into consideration of the implications of my positionality and the potential bias that could be developed, throughout the conduction of the study I kept reflecting whether my interpretations were an outcome of my personal passions; whilst absolute bracketing cannot be achieved, my relationship to the culture has also been detailed to also enable the readers to criticise the trustworthiness of the findings.

3.2 Section B: The methods of this study

This section describes and provides a detailed justification of all the procedures followed in this study. It provides a detailed description of the recruitment process and introduces details of the participants of the study, it thoroughly describes the data collection, which was conducted using semi-structured interviews and the analysis procedures, and discusses the ethical considerations.

3.2.1 Recruiting Cypriot swimming families

For this study, four of the top adolescent (15-18 years old) elite swimmers and their families were recruited. Cypriot swimmers within the age range of 15-18 belong to the category called 'Νεοί / Νεανίδες', referring to the elder adolescent boys' and girls' category. Swimmers older than 18 years old compete only in the two open age categories of 'Men' and 'Women', whereas younger swimmers compete in the age category they belong to, as well as in an open one. The selection was based on the swimmers ranking according to their FINA points. These points are established by the International Swimming Federation to enable fair ranking of swimmers despite whether they are competing at different events (further information can be found at <http://www.fina.org/content/fina-points>). The participants were identified through the Cyprus Swimming Federation's website (<http://koek.org.cy/>) where the public can have access to all results and rankings. Recruitment was planned to take place during the National Championship in Cyprus on the 6th-9th July 2017. This event was the last one before the end of the swimming season and thus the last chance for the results to change and impact the ranking of the swimmers. The plan was for the four swimmers with the highest ranking to be approached first and if anyone did not accept to participate then the swimmer with the next highest ranking was to be contacted.

At the competition, the researcher closely followed on the results of the races and once the ranking was clear, the coaches of the swimmers with the highest rankings were approached one by one. As described in section 3.1.4, the coaches and the researcher already knew each other; therefore, the researcher had easy access to the coaches and approached and spoke to them privately at the venue, during the breaks of the competitions. Initially the coaches were given an overview of the study and its purpose, and once they approved the study, were asked

to introduce the researcher to the swimmers. The coaches were approached first because the swimmers were younger than 18 years old and at the same time, it was perceived as a best choice to talk to the swimmers before the parents. As this is a family-focused study and parents have a power relationship over their children, they could have forced participation for their own reasons (e.g. believing that they could learn more about their children through the study, thinking that by talking to an 'expert' they could receive information on how to improve their children's performance); therefore, approaching the swimmers first would avoid such incidents allowing them to initially decide if they wanted to participate before negotiating with the families. It must be acknowledged that the researcher could also have a power relationship over the swimmers (Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009); nonetheless as the topics which were going to be discussed involve family matters, it was believed that they would potentially be more vulnerable in front of their parents (in case the swimmers did not want to take part). The idea behind this choice is that, essentially, the swimmers could turn down the invitation without their parents finding out and having an opportunity to force them to participate. None of the coaches raised any issues and so the researcher was introduced separately to the four swimmers in the category of 15-18 years old. The swimmers were then given a verbal description of the study and if they showed interest to participate then the family was then called to meet the researcher. All four swimmers showed interest and so their parents, who were already there, were called over, one by one family, for a private conversation at the cafeteria of the venue. All the candidates were given participant information sheets (Appendix A) and were given the opportunity to ask questions. In addition, they were asked to discuss with the rest of the family members whether to consider the invitation as it was important for all the members who complied with the criteria to take part.

The criteria were to be part of the nuclear family (discussed in chapter 1) and to be over the age of 12. The siblings were required to be a minimum of 12 years old and the cut-off age was determined by various methodological and ethical factors (Punch, 2002). As explained data would be collected using individual interviews to enable participants to speak freely without being afraid of another member's reaction; in this case children could be even more fearful of their parents. Also, some studies suggest that involving a child in group interviews can be unsuccessful, as children may chose to remain silent, let others take over the conversation and not share any of their thoughts (Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008). In addition to that, it is suggested that individual interviews for a prolonged time *"make children more vulnerable to unequal power relationships with the adult researcher as they sometimes*

perceive the adult as an authority figure, and consequently try to please him or her for fear of the reaction if they don't" (Einarsdóttir, 2007, p. 204). Bearing in mind that to explore well-being matters in depth does require a systematic and prolonged examination involving children which could be very risky. The literature also proposes that children's perspectives change over time and according to context and they can give contradictory responses if the methods used do not suit the child (Punch, 2002); for instance, *"A child could also say in an interview that she/he did not like a particular activity, but observations indicated that she/he often chose this activity"* (Einarsdóttir, 2007, p. 207). Lastly, at the age of 12 Cypriot youths enter secondary school where the classes encourage expressing thoughts and opinions, and therefore children aged 12 or above are better able to provide more detailed accounts of their experiences. Finally, for the parents there were no restrictions or any other criterion but to be of Cypriot nationality, as this study's aim was to develop an understanding of the well-being of Cypriot families. If any of the eligible members disagreed, then the entire family would have been excluded as to examine family well-being it was crucial to have the voice of all the eligible members of each family so that individual well-being can be initially assessed and then contribute to the understanding of the family's.

3.2.2 Participating Cypriot families

The participants in this study were four Cypriot families, which include an elite adolescent swimmer, aged between 15-18 years old. As discussed in Chapter 1 the term family refers to the nuclear family (2.3.3). The number of families participating was restricted as IPA studies are typically conducted on small homogenous samples in order to allow in depth examination of similarities and differences (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). It is important to note that the swimmers recruited are training towards Tokyo Olympics, 2020, and had already participated at major international events such as European Youth Olympic Festivals, Commonwealth Games (Youth and Open age) and European and World Swimming Championships. The demographics of the families are presented in table 1, while the next subsections (3.2.2.1 – 3.2.2.4) provide an insight of each athlete's family, offering a description of each family member and provides an insight into their family daily life. The aim of these descriptions is to allow readers getting to know each participant and to develop an understanding of each family's daily life and members' dynamics (Cyril, Halliday, Green, &

Renzaho, 2016). Provided that IPA studies seek to explore homogenous participants' experiences to develop and provide in-depth understandings of specific phenomena, it is suggested that for the findings to be better understood, it is important for the readers to be provided with some contextual background information regarding the families (J. A. Smith et al., 2009).

Families	Family Members	Age	Occupation
Family 1: Mark's family	Peter (Father)	55	Employer at a government organization (seasonal)
	Gloria (Mother)	54	Banker
	Beth	17	Student
	Mark (Swimmer)	15	National Team Swimmer - Student
Family 2: Natalie's family	Teresa (Mother)	56	Pharmacist
	Greg (Father)	56	Unemployed / freelance computer programmer
	Roy	32	Not interviewed – no longer a member of the nuclear family
	Harry	30	Architect
	Stacy	28	Not interviewed – no longer a member of the nuclear family
	Natalie	17	National Team Swimmer - Student
Family 3: Rachel's family	Matthew (Father)	46	Banker
	Jess (Mother)	46	Lecturer & Banker
	Rachel	17	National Team Swimmer - Student
	Ben	13	Swimmer – Student
Family 4: Ross' family	Adam (Father)	49	Banker
	Becky (Mother)	45	Business owner
	Tom	21	Student
	Ross	18	National Team Swimmer - Student
	Will	5	Not interviewed < 12years old

Table 1: Participants' demographics

3.2.2.1 *Mark's family*

Mark is a 15-year-old 1st year high school distinction student and the youngest child in his family. Keeping up with his goals throughout the year, he only referred to swimming while he stated that he does not have any specific career ambitions; nevertheless, he wants to carry on with his studies in the US, where he can swim. His sister Beth is two years older than him; she is a distinction student and throughout the year she was thriving, with the support of her parents, to get a place at the university of Edinburgh, where she wanted to study fine art. Receiving university education is particularly important in Mark's family and it stems from his father's, Peter, experiences. Peter is 55 years old and he is seasonally employed in a government organisation; in the 1st interview he was on a 9-month per year contract and 2 months later he received a promotion to 11 months per year. Sharing his beliefs, he explained that, if he had the opportunity to study, he would be in a better place and so one of his personal goals is to help his children to have a better future. Peter does not have an all-year income or a stable schedule and it often causes him anxiety and disappointment as he cannot offer as much as he would like to, to his family and sometimes they depend on his wife's income; Gloria, is 54 years old is a banker and works from 8am until 4pm, from Monday to Friday.

Throughout the year, Mark and Beth's schedules were a barrier to socialising, becoming involved in extracurricular activities or spending more time with one another, which they all often expressed to desire. Throughout the year, Beth had afternoon classes and Mark, during pre- and competition season was going to the gym 3-4 days per week, saw a sport psychologist once a month and a physiotherapist twice, while every day had one or two swimming sessions, depending on the training schedule. In addition, many of the weekends were spent at swimming competitions and this disabled the family doing things together or even individually. Gloria for instance wanted to start exercising for health reasons and to regain her figure but she did not due to the lack of free time. At the same time, Beth at times found it difficult to meet her friends as her parents were busy at the swimming pool and had no one to give her a lift.

The four members explained that according to their opinion, supporting each other and caring are core elements that should exist in a family. They described how sometimes the verbal communication between the parents and children is limited, but asking all the members in every interview to talk about how the other members are doing, it appeared that there was always at least a general understanding. They were always aware of each other's 'news' and although they tend to share their more positive thoughts / news and in many cases, hide their concerns, there was no occasion when something was going wrong in someone's life and remained

unnoticed; they pay attention to one another. In terms of communication, Mark was described both by his family and himself as an introvert because he does not easily speak about his emotions or thoughts. Mark explained that he likes having the control over what they know about him and at times finds it entertaining when his family having the wrong impression about things, but his stance often causes conflicts with his parents. Peter and Gloria feel unsure about how Mark feels sometimes and become frustrated and angry. Nevertheless, the need for sensing having control over situations is mutual amongst the members, especially for Peter who also characterised himself as a ‘perfectionist’ and as a person who wants to have the handle in his daily life.

3.2.2.2 Natalie’s family

Natalie is 17 years old and the 4th and youngest child in her family, after Roy (32), Harry (30) and Stacy (28). In the first interview Natalie was about to begin her final year at high-school and by the last interview she graduated and enrolled to a local university to do a pharmaceuticals degree. In the future, she plans to work with and later take over her mother’s pharmacy shop because as she suggested the three other siblings followed different paths and it would be a shame for the pharmacy to close or be given away to someone else. Roy, who has also created his own family, and Stacy live abroad and therefore have not been included in the interviews, but Harry is an ambitious architect, who throughout the year changed three architectural companies, looking for a good opportunity to progress. Teresa, Natalie’s mother is 56 years old and works at her pharmacy six days a week from 9am – 5pm, and the fact that Natalie would study pharmaceuticals pleases her. Natalie has a very close relationship with her mother, and both expressed that they are each other’s closest person; they share their thoughts and both explained that they have a friend-alike relationship. Natalie’s father, Greg, is 56 years old. He was born and raised in Australia by Cypriot parents and moved with Gloria to Cyprus in 1991 after having Roy and Harry. Swimming has always been his hobby and he was the one who initiated Natalie into it. Greg is a computer programmer who used to work at a bank but lost his job due to the economic crisis in 2013, and ever since he is a freelancer, striving to build a clientele. Not having many customers allows plenty of free time, which is spent on giving lifts to Natalie to her training, school and afternoon classes, and helping at the pharmacy; yet at the same time, undertaking these duties disables him focusing on his job and being

unemployed disables him to provide as many resources as he would like and feels disappointed and somewhat intimidated depending on his wife's income.

The well-being of Natalie's family is strongly supported by the sense of togetherness and presence in each other's daily life but also in living according to their inherited beliefs regarding how one should live their life. For the four members, studying, having a family and remaining bonded with their nuclear family are significant values. Being all together is rarely the case, usually the family 'outings' involve the spouse and Natalie, and sometimes Roy, depending on his schedule. Roy and Stacy usually visit their nuclear family home on holidays; but the four members expressed that they would be happier if they, especially Stacy, moved back to Cyprus. Natalie would like to have Stacy back because she perceives her as a close friend, while the parents feel concerned about her living alone in a foreign country and believe that if she does not return and create a family she will regret it. On the other hand, Harry expressed somewhat anger towards Stacy's choice to live abroad; he thinks that she should be close to her family and often, when Stacy visits, the two siblings have conflicts about it. Harry endorsed that he was furious with one of Stacy's previous choice to be in a relationship with someone from abroad, who knew nothing about Cyprus and could not understand the culture. Nonetheless, according to Harry and his mother's narratives, his relationship with Stacy has always been intense; yet Teresa justified their tension saying that this is what it is like with middle children. Regarding Roy, no one has expressed as strong emotions to return; they perceive that being a man, Roy can look after himself better and has also his own family with him.

Natalie, being the only child that is still depended on and lives with the parents, is perceived by the interviewed members as 'the little one', and along with the demandingness of her schedule and achievements, she is almost at all times the centre of attention, which influences the members' communication and relationships. The communication in the family could be described as somewhat complex as the members have different relationships with one another and different roles. According to what the members shared, Teresa is perceived as the main 'bread winner', Natalie as the 'little one' of the family, Greg as a 'low-profile man' and Roy as 'the funny guy' of the family. Harry tries to be the traditional older brother, who wants to be looking after his little sister. Greg shared that he often feels marginalised; although, swimming has always been his passion, Natalie limits how much she shares with him and she does not allow him to be as involved as he would like. Despite that every day they spend some time together with Natalie, mostly during the car journeys, Greg said that she does not open up

to him and he gets angry when he tries to give her an advice or learn more about how she is. In addition, according to the spouse's narratives, Stacy had expressed that there is no point in visiting Cyprus much as her family is constantly busy with Natalie, which made them feel guilt and to try showing her more how they feel. Moreover, Greg and Teresa explained that they often work as a team to help their children but at the same time, Greg shared that his unemployment status and Teresa's stronger bond with their children makes him feel intimidated and sometimes he avoids becoming involved. Teresa on the other hand admitted that often she feels that she can take control over family matters and takes actions without involving her husband.

3.2.2.3 Rachel's family

Rachel is a 17-year-old elite swimmer and the first-born child in the family. In the first interview, she was about to enter the final year of high-school and her goals, which were achieved by the 4th interview, included breaking her records and securing a place at a university in the USA where she would be able to combine her studies with swimming. Rachel was unsure about what course she wanted to do however, going to a university which allowed students have a year doing various courses and choose after, while allowing athletes to focus on their sport was important. The presence of elite sport in Rachael's family existed from her father, Matthew, who is 46-year-old, used to be a professional basketball player and during the interview year a basketball coach and banker. The sporting spirit was also passed to Natalie's 14-years-old brother, Ben who is involved in swimming and basketball. Ben was performing well at both sports and throughout the year he was trying to decide which sport to drop and in which one to specialise. During the swimming competition season, he achieved qualifying for the first time to an international event, which started influencing his decision in picking swimming over basketball. On the other hand, Natalie's mother, Jess, who is a 46-year-old banker and a part time lecturer was never involved in any sport while her adolescent years she was committed to her education. As she shared, not having any sport experience she struggles understanding it and at times she feels that she becomes strict with her children regarding their education.

The communication in the family could be described as open, the members stated that they share their thoughts and opinions despite that the children tend to communicate more with each other the matters that regard their personal lives; nonetheless, their parents are never left

completely on the outside and usually reach to them when they need help. The members were satisfied with their family life and feel very bonded. As they explained, this sense derives from their compassion towards one another's personal needs and simultaneously on sensing each other's desire to be close with them. They all shared that they would not change anything but that they would like to have more time all together. The daily life of the family was described as busy and physically tiring; during week days Natalie and Ben go to school at 7:45am and in the afternoons and sometimes before school as well, they have their training sessions. Jess and Matthew work weekdays from 9 until late afternoon depending on the lecturing schedule and basketball training respectively; the spouse revealed that they feel very content and in love and that although they both have hectic schedules they always try finding some alone time. The weekend plans depend on the Saturday's swimming session and on whether there are any swimming or basketball competitions, while quite often Rachael was spending days abroad for competitions. In addition, Matthew, just before the 2nd interview received a promotion but in order to take the new position at the bank he had to be travelling to another town, which limited his family time; however, by the 3rd interview he was had decided that as of the end of the basketball season he will stop coaching in order to be with his family. In addition, by the second interview Jess' mother was diagnosed with cancer, which influenced both her psychological well-being and her daily schedule as she had to devote time in looking after her and even less with her family.

The parents expressed wanting Rachel to be spending some more time with them when she is home instead of being all the time in her room chatting online. This matter was causing arguments, and despite that they believe that it is normal for teenagers wanting their own time, the sense that she would leave the household was distressing and make them wanting even more time with her. Rachel knew that her family wanted her to be spending some more time with them and tried to do so, but explained that her limited free time and her need to socialise with friends was making it difficult to find an equilibrium. At the same time her parents also felt that they could be spending more time with their children. As Jess shared, Matthew and her, at times are exhausted to do things that the kids want to do, such as going out for dinner.

The family's social life is limited due to their hectic schedules but they are sociable, they enjoy hosting big gatherings for celebrations and they also value highly their friendships. During the year, they hosted a big Christmas party for their friends and a 'good-bye' party for Rachel, before she left for the US. The fact that Rachel would be moving to the USA for her

studies was causing a sense of melancholy to all of them, but at the same time they expressed emotions of pride and happiness about each other's achievements.

3.2.2.4 Ross' family

Ross is 18 years old and the middle child of his family, after Tom, who is 21 and before Will who is 5, but was not included in the study due to his age. In the first interview, Ross was about to start his final year at high-school and Tom, who is a body builder, was about to leave for the UK to complete the final year of his bachelor degree in sport science. By the 4th interview both brothers had graduated; Tom after a difficult semester, had returned home, got employed at a gym and was considering moving in with his girlfriend, while Ross with the help of his parents was looking for ways to avoid his army service to focus on swimming. Throughout the interviews, Ross only expressed passion for his swimming, while his only goal is to participate in the Olympics. School was perceived as a chore and although he was neglecting studying he wanted to score good results in order to be able to later on to study at a university, where he considers studying to become a swimming coach. Ross' father, Adam, is a 49-year-old banker and his 45-year-old mother, Becky, owns a retail business. Both are devoted to their family and their personal goals mostly relate to their children's progress, while they also want their business to grow. Throughout the year, Adam was expressing dissatisfaction with his job but a month prior to the second interview, he was given the opportunity to leave as his branch released a plan for early retirement because there were redundant positions; his decision to stay was solely based on the belief that, with his monthly pay he would be able to offer more to his family for a longer period of time, rather than by accepting the offer and leave with a respectable amount of money.

The family's day to day routine begins at 5:30am with Ross' training, who gets a lift by his father or coach sometimes. Then goes to school at 7:45, returns home for lunch and then again in the afternoon goes for training; then coming back home, his mother has a ready cooked dinner. Becky works six days a week from 10am until 6pm with a three-hour lunch break, which she uses for preparing food for her family. Her free time is spent looking after the family, which she senses to be always needed, especially with Will, who is really young and has different needs; as the spouse explained, Will is hyperactive and constantly demands attention, which sometimes becomes challenging. Becky shared that she barely finds any time for rest and often feels exhausted and anxious; also, her desire to join the gym was not fulfilled during the year of the study as she did not manage to find the time. Adam who also shared that

suffers with anxiety, works on week-days from 9am until 2pm but also contributes in looking after the children and manages their shop's accounting books, and in his free time, he enjoys handcrafting. Both parents have repeatedly emphasised that their well-being and life satisfaction is depended on their family's well-being, and this year has been particularly stressful for them due to the various transitions that their children were going through, as well as due to health issues that Ross had to deal with. Moreover, Tom's daily life schedule varied according to where he was; he explained that when he was in the UK, he was not socialising much with the people there whereas when he was home he enjoyed spending time with his friends and family. Becky described how Tom did not communicate much about what he was up to and she regularly had to ask his girlfriend, with whom the family has built close relationships.

The communication in Ross' family varies between the dyads. The parents' personal struggles are not always fully communicated to their sons, yet Ross and Tom explained that they perceive it as "normal" for parents to be keeping some personal matters to themselves, and feel content with the amount of information they know. In contrast, the parents work as a team to always know what is happening in their sons' lives; when they suspect that one of them might be unwell, usually Becky tries figuring out what is happening and then shares the information with Adam. Everyone feels that their closest person in the family is Becky and that illustrates that her constant involvement and 'unconditional providing' enhances the others' sense of contentment. Moreover, Becky has a 'coordinator's' role in the family as she is the one who the one who arranges everyone's schedules (e.g. doctor appointments) and builds bridges when there is tension between other members; whereas Adam is a resource provider, therefore the family turns to him more when they need resources.

In Ross' family, there is strong resilience between the sons and Becky and between Adam and Becky; the couple claimed that they have a very loving relationship based on trust, respect and care; they both said that they share everything including their thoughts and finances. In contrast, Ross and Adam sometimes have an intense relationship; Ross feels that his parents would do and should do anything for him and that he is their "*little baby*". On the other hand, Adam shared that he expects appreciation and return of his support, and when he does not receive it, he becomes furious. Despite the conflicts that occasionally arise, all members expressed satisfaction with their family life at all times. The importance of seeing each other happy and healthy was illustrated at the more demanding moments, when they expressed their sympathy for each other's emotions; however, this support is not always

communicated between Ross and Adam. Ross and Tom have a close relationship based on the sense that they have each other's back and in the last interview, they both spoke with enthusiasm about how they will work together in the gym in order to help Ross achieve his swimming goals. Tom senses that as the older brother he is responsible in being a role model; he explained how he does not share with Ross the 'bad' things he did to prevent Ross from repeating them. At the same time, throughout the year Ross' well-being and life satisfaction appeared to be strongly related to sensing social acceptance and recognition; from being one of the best swimmers in the country to looking "cool" when going out with his friends and tough at all times. This need of Ross regards everyone, including Tom; Ross expressed that he wants Tom to be proud of him and look at him. This trait was also observed in Adam's narratives, as he mentioned, it is important for him to be sensing that he has control over situations and being socially accepted and recognised. Finally, they all expressed unconditional love towards Will and always had a funny story to share, which involved Will being 'naughty' and the boys playing or fighting with him.

Overall, the functioning of this family appeared to be based on patriarchal views, the members' need for feeling independent and fear of being taken into advantage. The men of the family feel that they can take justice in their own hands and sometimes become competitive, while the high sense of 'manhood' influences everyone's behaviours; for instance, Becky explained that being surrounded by men has influenced the manner she talks, saying that she even swears sometimes.

3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

In this project, semi-structured interviews with individual family members were used to collect data. This decision was based on the framework of IPA, which supports that to study a phenomenon it is required to examine in-depth qualitative data (J. A. Smith et al., 2009); but also based on the family literature (Beitin, 2008). Investigating family matters, Beitin (2008) suggested three possible interview approaches that could enable researchers to develop an understanding of families' functioning and well-being. These are: individual interviews, couple / family interviews and both individual and couple/family interviews. The individual interviews allow members to express their thoughts and narrate their experiences without being interrupted and without feeling susceptible to and fear of upsetting another member who is

present during the process. Additionally, this approach is suggested for when a researcher aims to compare accounts and when the topic discussed is highly sensitive, such as violence in the family. On the other hand, couple/family interviews enable members to interact, supplement each other's answers and can also provide the researcher with information regarding the functionality of the family; however, there is a risk of members overtaking the conversation disabling other members to present their point of view (Beitin, 2008). Furthermore, when couples or families are interviewed, there is a tendency of narrating experiences using "we", which does not always represent how events were experienced from everyone's perspective. Combining individual and couple/family interviews appears to be beneficial as the family members have the opportunity to expand on their experiences and emotions without feeling constrained by their family and at the same time they have the chance to discuss all together and maybe add information to other members' answers that potentially have been forgotten or ignored. This approach enables researchers to obtain a more holistic view of families' situations as the themes appearing from individual interviews can be further investigated in the group interviews. On the negative side, it is suggested that this approach requires more time for transcribing and analysing the data as well as more time with the families, which could be consuming and subsequently have a negative impact on the study; if the participants experience tiredness or any negative feelings towards participating they might become less engaging or even withdraw their participation (Beitin, 2008). Taking into account the benefits and the hazards of the different approaches it was found to be more beneficial to conduct individual interviews.

3.2.3.1 A year-long journey exploring the families' well-being and swimming experiences

Prior to the first round of interviews, the researcher met the four families separately in late August 2017 and discussed the details and requirements of the study. The meetings took place at each family's house, in Cyprus, and they lasted for approximately 45 minutes. All the eligible members were present and were given an overview of the study and their rights and another participant information form in case they did not remember all the details. They were given the opportunity to ask questions and if they were still willing to participate, were asked to sign the consent form; before beginning the interviews with the adolescent participants, a parent's consent was also required. All the members of the four families expressed satisfaction

with the procedures and demands of the study, and agreed to remain in the project until the end of it; though they always had the right to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with each member separately, on different days enabling the researcher to rest enough not to limit the quality of the data due to fatigue; within a day, the maximum number of interviews conducted was three. The interviews were conducted in Greek (Cypriot dialect), which is the native language of the participants and the researcher. Communicating in the native language facilitates and enhances the communication, and increases the quality of the study as people can express themselves in more detail and accuracy (Murray & Wynne, 2001). The participants took part in four rounds of interviews; the periods of the interviews were strategically pre-selected so as to give an overview of the athletes' main transitional phases that they go through within a year (off-season, pre-season and competition season). Transitions are important in the study of individual and family well-being as according to the literature, they could cause a change in the FWB (Lavee, McCubbin, & Olson, 1987). Moreover, following the participants' experiences for a year enabled exploring a variety of their experiences but also seeing the order in which their experiences took place. This approach allowed examining how the individuals and the families' well-being fluctuated according to various experiences and identifying the influence of sport on well-being at different times. In addition to this, "*interviewing participants several times is a strategy that retains IPA's idiographic emphasis whilst embedding any emerging patterns in a rich and detailed context*" (Eatough & Smith, 2017, p. 205). The duration of each interview ranged between 40 and 80 minutes, and all the interviews were audio recorded. In addition, during the interviews, the researcher was notetaking when the participants were making gestures while sharing their experiences; these notes enrich the data collected as they provide more evidence regarding the participants' emotions towards their experiences (Fade, 2004).

3.2.3.1.1 Interview round 1 – Pre-competition season

The first round was conducted between the 28th of August and 11th of September 2017; this period is important as families transition from holidays and off-season into the training season, taking place just before children go back to school. This means all members' daily lives will change suddenly; for instance, parents' schedules become more demanding as their

duties will increase (e.g. providing transportation for their children to school, training, afternoon classes etc.) and children have less free time than during the school holidays.

The aims of the first round of interviews were to: 1) Gather personal information about the participants (e.g. everyday life, hobbies, employment and relationships) to develop an understanding of what the participants are like and what they are involved in. This information would form the basis of the study as it would contribute to understanding the elements that impact their well-being (González Gutiérrez et al., 2005). 2) Explore their life satisfaction and perception of well-being, what contributes to it and what they need as individuals to feel fulfilled; this would enable exploring their well-being. 3) To explore their inter-family relationships, experiences and their family life satisfaction; to develop an understanding of how each member's personal well-being is impacted by their family and how subsequently the dynamics and FWB are affected. 4) To examine the role of swimming in each individual's life experiences and well-being; this examination builds the basis for answering the main aim of the study. Overall, initially exploring what contributes to each participants' well-being and their previous experiences and their feelings towards swimming enables developing an understanding, and then following the impact on their well-being throughout the year will provide sufficient information for achieving the aim of the study.

The interview schedule (Appendix B) was developed with consideration of the well-being and FWB theories outlined in Chapter 1. In this round of interviews, the participants were firstly asked questions regarding their personality, everyday life, social life, goals, concerns, morals, relationships, life satisfaction and everyday life routines. These topics covered the approaches of SWB, life satisfaction, self-determination, social well-being and psychological well-being. Questions included, "how would you describe yourself?", "what makes you happy?". "how is your social life?" and "can you describe to me an incident that annoyed you?"; these questions allowed learning about their perception and developing an understanding of what matters most for each individual. These open-ended questions were followed by prompts asking the participants to talk about specific experiences, to give detailed accounts of them so that in-depth information on their perceptions could be retrieved. This allowed further examination of the core elements that influence their well-being to be identified, but which perhaps were not obvious to them. For instance, having control was a factor that was found to be significant for all participants; when asked directly "what impacts your well-being". No one mentioned word-by-word that having control is significant, however, analysing their experiences enabled identifying the 'roots' of what is important for

each individual, but also understanding what could cause a sense of negative or positive affect, and having control was a significant factor.

Family life satisfaction and FWB were also explored through questions informed by the literature, examining their relationships, togetherness, satisfaction and resilience (Armstrong et al., 2005; J. Brown, 1999; Lavee, Mccubbin, & Olson, 1987; McCollum et al., 1988; Zabriskie & Ward, 2013). In the beginning, more open questions were asked to start the conversation, such as “how do you perceive your family” and “what are your relationships like?”, which then were followed by prompts exploring their emotions, experiences and perception in greater depth.

The role of swimming in each person's life and their family satisfaction was also explored using the same approach; initially open-ended questions, informed from family systems theories and from the sport literature (Armstrong et al., 2005; Bott, 2001; McMillan et al., 2016; Olson et al., 1994; C. E. Ryan et al., 2005; Satir, 1983), were asked. The questions included how they perceive the presence of swimming in their personal and family life, and how do they feel about their family. As for well-being and FWB, the participants were asked to talk about particular experiences in the different contexts (swimming and family life), in order to gain more insights on their perception. All participants, for example, were asked to describe the happiest and the most unpleasant moment that they personally experienced in swimming and to explain why those experiences were perceived as such. This enabled exploring how swimming up to that point offered moments of positive and negative affect (contributors to well-being) for each individual, understanding whether members experience swimming in a similar way.

Finally, the participants were asked to talk about what they are expecting for the following months; their goals, hopes and how they feel about what is coming. This information along with their experiences were analysed and the findings were used in developing the interview questions for the next rounds. Moreover, asking about what they believe would follow in the next months and how they feel about it, allowed further exploration of their well-being. In the follow-ups, how their emotions towards the following months might have affected what eventually happened and how they feel at the present about their ‘reality’, were also explored for the same purpose.

For rounds 2, 3 and 4, different interview guides (example included in Appendix C) were developed for each participant. The core themes remained the same (personal well-being, FWB and swimming participation), hence the interview guides included some standard

questions for everyone, such as “how are you doing lately?” and “how are you experiencing this swimming season?”, but the prompts were personalised following each participant’s experiences. These common questions were asked so that the researcher would be enabled to identify whether, and how, the same events (such as the National Championship) and transitions were affecting each individual. This enabled comparison to be made, to achieve the aim and objectives of the study. The prompts were developed from what the participants’ responses to the question of “what are you expecting from the following months?” and from the analysis of their previous interviews; since the participants were always going through different situations, their personal well-being and the contributors to it differed from one another.

3.2.3.1.2 Interview round 2 – Beginning of the competition season

The second round was conducted in January 2018; January is approximately the time when the competition season begins, thus, this period signifies another major transition. The interviews took place during the first three weeks of the month, just before the first competition of the year in Cyprus (held on the 19-21st of January) and the aim of this round was to explore the participants’ experiences that took place during the training season.

Initially all the participants were asked questions regarding their personal well-being, which were developed from their previous interview and followed their personal everyday life experiences, which took place since they were last interviewed. Some examples on followed-up experiences include: a sibling’s progress at her final year of school had to be closely followed as she was applying for universities and she was experiencing stress; and a father in September was unsure whether he would have a job during the winter season.

At the same time, as this study was examining the parallel relationship of the individuals’ well-being with swimming and their family well-being, the second part of the interview was focusing on swimming experiences during this second major transition. Although the competition season starts in January, an international swimming meet took place between the 1st - 3rd of December, and then on the 16th and 17th, December a national meet took place in Cyprus. The participants in this round were asked about their experience during the training season and of the first races, to catch up with their progress and to develop an understanding on what each person had experienced and why. This enabled building further

understanding on which factors in their personal life impact their well-being, and what led to their current state. The participants were also asked if they knew how their other family members were doing during that period; according to the literature family members often hold the wrong perceptions of each other's experiences (Dellaert, Prodigious, & Louviere, 1998); therefore, asking about their perception on the others' experiences enabled cross-checking whether they are aware of each other's emotions, how they are influenced by each other, how good their communication is and how bonded they are. In addition, they were asked if they participated in any activities with their family and through their descriptions, interpretations were made upon how satisfied they were with each other at that particular moment and what contributed to it. Significantly, not long before the interview it was the Christmas and New Year's holidays, so the researcher had the opportunity to explore whether swimming had an impact on how they experienced those events; findings from the literature have suggested that elite athletes often do not get to celebrate some events due to their sport's demands (Côté, 1999). Moreover, it was explored how each member (in each family) felt towards their family; the researcher sought to identify any similarities between the members of each family and detected the points that contribute to each family's well-being, and from the differences what causes disturbances. Finally, the role of swimming on each family during that period was explored through evaluating whether swimming had any impact on the participants' individual well-being and family life satisfaction.

3.2.3.1.3 Interview round 3 - The peak of the competition season:

The third round of interviews was conducted in May 2018, when as usual, it was the peak of the season. The swimmers had various international and national competitions coming ahead, and at the same time, like every Cypriot adolescent, had their school exams; therefore, this period signified the most challenging period as the participants had to deal with various simultaneous demands. As in the previous rounds, the aim was to explore each individual's well-being, their family life satisfaction and the role of swimming on their FWB. The participants were again asked about their personal experiences in their everyday life and their experiences and feelings regarding the competitions, despite whether they attended them or not; some family members did not attend the races, yet it was significant to attain their perception on how the other's experiences were brought (if so) in the family life and in return

how it was impacting their personal life. The researcher was able to explore the role of swimming in each person's life at that particular moment, and also the role in the family; this was achieved by examining the relationship of their emotional state with swimming, firstly by analysing separately each individual's narrative and then by connecting the findings of the different members and constructing an understanding on how they are affected as a system. In addition, this round was also conducted shortly after a celebration, Easter; Cypriots are generally fairly religious, and three of the four families strongly expressed their Christian Orthodox orientation, so the researcher had another opportunity to examine whether swimming was impacting the families' religious experiences and subsequently their well-being.

3.2.3.1.4 Interview round 4 – Off-season

Finally, the fourth and final round took place in August 2018, when the swimming families are experiencing the transition to off-season. The aim of this interview was to explore the role of swimming in their FWB during the last months of the competition season and during off-season.

As in the previous interviews, focusing on the three main topics, the participants were asked about how they experienced the previous three months; in this case from the peak of the competitions to off-season. At the end, they were called to reflect on the entire year; those reflections would enable the researcher to examine whether their anticipation of their upcoming experiences articulated in the first round of interviews differed from how they were feeling at the present moment. For example, a swimmer who in September 2017 perceived that the following year would be stressful, explained in August 2018, that it was not as difficult as she thought it would be. By following the participants throughout a year and gathering their subjective experiences, the researcher aimed to identify the factors that cause anxiety / fear / happiness etc. and subsequently impact their well-being. By having these data, the study has created a profile for each individual and family, which can potentially foresee what could be a threat or a benefit to their well-being. In addition, the role of swimming was examined parallel to their personal and FWB.

3.2.4 Interpreting family experiences of wellbeing and elite swimming

“Longitudinal qualitative data are intimidating in that there is no closure of analysis and the next round of data can challenge interpretations. Analysis and data collection are never finished; interpretation is always provisional” (Thomson & Holland, 2003, p. 237).

In this study, the data were analysed following the recommendations of Smith et al., (2009) on IPA. As reported earlier after each round of interviews the data were analysed to enable the development of themes that would be explored in each follow-up interview. Prior to proceeding with the analysis, the recordings were transcribed verbatim including in brackets notes on some of the gestures made while the participants were speaking; some of the noted gestures included lowering or raising their voice, having long pauses, laughing and physical movements. It is important to note that the interviews were conducted in Greek and were transcribed and analysed in their original language to ensure accuracy; nonetheless, to facilitate the communication with the study’s supervisors and ensure quality check, 15% of the transcripts were also translated in English. Moreover, the quotes that were selected to be incorporated in the findings were also translated to allow the non-Greek readers to understand the content. The transcripts were analysed one by one following the study’s epistemological stance and the idiographic approach of IPA, looking at every participant as a unique case (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). The analysis was conducted in Microsoft Excel as it allows unlimited space to work on; all the transcripts were copied in separate documents and each transcript was separately read multiple times, while the first time it was always read along with the recording to engage further with the data. Every time the transcripts were read, the participants’ experiences were analysed and comments were added in the columns next to the transcripts. While reading the transcripts comments including descriptions of the narrated events, conceptual linkages, linguistic comments, and interpretations of their emotional experiences, which were jotted on the next columns (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). Holding the IPA approach, when analysing in-depth the participants’ experiences, it can be seen that some narratives can provide insights on more than one topic; for instance, one could be talking about swimming but at the same time revealing information on family dynamics; therefore, the researcher needs to engage with the data and spend time analysing as well as reflecting on their interpretations. All the transcripts were analysed until there were no more comments to be made (a randomly selected analysed transcript can be found in Appendix D). The researcher, then sought to identify emergent themes and after for any connections across themes to create the

‘superordinate themes’. The emergent themes refer to topics occurring from the participants’ narratives and superordinate themes to the bigger and main topics, which summarise the findings; they are clusters of the basic themes and when put together describe the findings in an organised and coherent manner (Attride-Stirling, 2001). Once all the transcripts were analysed, the researcher grouped together the superordinate themes of the members belonging to the same family and created new superordinate themes, which represent each family as a system.

After each round of interview, the same procedure of analysis was implemented and completed within the time space before the next round of interviews (example of the themes developed from the four interviews of a participant can be found in Appendix E). Thomson and Holland (2003) questioned the most appropriate time, in longitudinal studies, to start making interpretations of the data and when to start writing findings. In their three yearlong study they interviewed their participants every nine months, while during the interval periods between the interviews, they conducted narrative analysis for each interview and summarised their observations. Then by the end of their entire data collection they brought together all the summaries and conducted cross-sectional. They suggested that analysing their data in-depth could have been more beneficial; however, the brief analysis method is more manageable within the limited interval period (Thomson & Holland, 2003). In this study, it was very important for the data to be analysed prior to the follow-up interviews so that the researcher would have adequate time to prepare the next interview schedules, including personalised questions for each participant, which would be following their well-being status.

The aim of the study was achieved by revising the findings of all the interview rounds and evaluating the meaning of FWB in Cyprus and presence of swimming in each family system (the master table of themes can be found in Appendix F) .

3.2.5 Presentation of findings

Following the analysis process described, the superordinate themes which were developed from the sixty-two interviews were translated into narrative accounts to present to the readers the findings in a coherent manner (J. A. Smith et al., 2009). According to Smith et al. (2009), IPA studies could be presented in two ways; the first one suggests presenting the emergent thematic analysis, and then in a separate section have the discussion, which links that

analysis to the literature. The second way is to dedicate a section to each superordinate theme, in which the themes are linked and discussed in relevance to the literature. Moreover, each theme needs to be described and illustrated with extracts from interviews, incorporating analytic comments from the researcher, while it is particularly significant, when writing the findings of IPA studies, to clearly distinguish the participants' responses from the researcher's interpretations. Presenting the participants' own words has two purposes; firstly, it allows the reader to assess the relevance of the interpretations, and secondly, it allows the voice of the personal experience of participants to be 'heard' (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The findings of this study are presented following the second strategy; each theme presented includes the voice of the participants, the interpretations of the researcher, a discussion connecting findings to the existing literature and arguing their significance.

3.2.6 Ethical considerations

Every researcher has a moral responsibility towards society and the participants under investigation (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). The main ethical issues regard: a) whether the participants could be harmed, b) whether they are given the opportunity to choose to be involved or not, c) whether the researcher invades the participants' privacy and d) if there is any deception by the researcher towards the participants (Bryman, 2012; Orb et al., 2001).

Ethical decisions are needed to be made carefully and sometimes on the spot, throughout the study. Before conducting any research, it is vital to examine the potential risks to the participants but also to the researcher and to ensure to take any possible preventive measures to avoid any kind of disturbance (Sanjari et al., 2014). Using individual interviews as a data collection method was selected because according to the literature it is the method which is less likely to cause conflict between family members (Beitin, 2008).

The ethical considerations in qualitative studies can be complex as they use more personal methods and often deal with intimate and intrusive matters (Sanjari et al., 2014). The nature of conducting qualitative research means that it is possible that a researcher and a participant will develop personal relationships; this can be beneficial if it is managed well, as the participants might feel more comfortable to disclose information to the interviewer. On the other hand, the intimacy between the participants and researcher must be carefully handled so that the participants will not develop further feelings towards the researcher. In some cases,

participants might start seeing the researcher as a friend or as a counsellor (Guillemin & Heggen, 2009). Although this is a very sensitive matter, it is suggested that there is no optimal, standard or right stance that a researcher should hold; *“The relationship changes according to the researcher’s personality, world view, ethnic and social background, perceptions derived from the researchers’ professional discipline, the qualitative paradigm, the theoretical base of the research, the type of the research and its goals, the research methodology, and the researcher’s own perception of the place and the role of the subject/participant/collaborator/core searcher in the research process”* (Karnieli-Miller et al., 2009, p. 280).

Moreover, when conducting interviews, the researchers are obliged to think through any possible outcomes which could potentially harm or benefit the participants, and must be fully prepared to be confronted with various ethical dilemmas. For instance, if a participant starts feeling upset the researcher must consider whether it would be ethical to continue with the interview to gain more insights or to stop and maybe refer the participant to an appropriate specialist (Orb et al., 2001). Social scientists have pointed out that sometimes people taking part in studies can be exploited by the researchers and subsequently participants’ reputation or that of others within their social group can be at risk to be damaged with the publication of research findings (Richards & Schwartz, 2002). The participants of this study were fully informed about the potential outcomes and it was also made clear that they do not need to respond to all questions, could withdraw at any time and that in the case of prolonged disturbance they would probably have to refer to counsellors.

The welfare of the researcher is also a matter concerned with the ethos of the study but it is often overlooked. The researchers are also vulnerable to various disturbances, such as anxiety. The literature recommends scheduling the interviews properly allowing sufficient time for the researcher to recover and lessen the risk of emotional exhaustion. Moreover, it is important for the researchers to be able to recognise the possible signs of fatigue and to be ready to take any necessary actions to recover (Sanjari et al., 2014). This advice was taken into serious consideration and was followed. Since the beginning of data collection, it was agreed that the maximum number of interviews that would be conducted per day would be two; however, due to the participants schedules on four occasions three interviews were conducted in the same day.

For this study, the ethical guidelines for educational research were followed, as indicated by Brunel University London and the British Educational Research Association. This study was approved by the ethics committee of Brunel University London (Appendix D). In

addition, the participants signed a consent form providing their consent to be interviewed, voice recorded and for their data to be included in the findings section of this thesis as well as in other publications, using pseudonyms. Parents also gave a written consent for their underage (12-17 years old) children to take part. This decision was based upon the suggestions found in the literature of family and child psychology (Einarsdóttir, 2007; Gallacher & Gallagher, 2008; Punch, 2002).

The interview recordings were kept securely in a password protected hard disc, and will be kept secure and confidential for the next five years, as required by Brunel University London, and then they will be destroyed.

In respect to the Research Integrity Code of Brunel University, and to ensure the security of the participants, prior to proceeding with recruiting, some precautions were taken. Firstly, a permission for recruiting at the National swimming championship was requested from the Cyprus Swimming Federation. The federation was informed about the purpose of the study and all the procedures which were going to be followed and provided a written consent allowing recruitments to be made (Appendix E).

Summary:

This chapter introduced the methodology of IPA and provided a thorough description of the methods and all the procedures followed in this study, justifying every taken step using existing literature. The following chapters present the findings of this study; chapters 4 the conceptualisation of FWB in the context of Cyprus swimming and chapter 5 the role of elite swimming of Cypriot families' well-being.

4 Chapter 4: Conceptualising Family Well-Being in the context of Cyprus swimming

Taking into account the literature on FWB, FQOL and FLS (reviewed in 2.2), which broadly suggests that the well-being of a family is connected to each members' individual well-being (Fahey et al., 2013; Zuna et al., 2010), the well-being of the four participating Cypriot families was explored through an inductive approach. The exploration included examining a) the meaning attached, and the elements that contribute, to individual and then family well-being, and b) the relationship between family members' individual well-being and the well-being of their family as a system. This chapter begins by presenting the newly developed conceptualisation of FWB in the context of Cyprus (section 4.1), followed by an analytical discussion of each component of the conceptualisation (section 4.2 and 4.3). Section 4.2 presents the contributors to the individual members' well-being and section 4.3 presents family members' mutual sense of well-being. The findings presented in this chapter are of particular significance as they provide an in depth understanding of the phenomenon under examination in a Cypriot context prior to presenting the findings relating to the role of sport on Cypriot FWB.

4.1 Towards an understanding of FWB in Cyprus

This study suggests that, the well-being of Cypriot families, which contain an adolescent elite swimmer, can be explored through and characterised by a dynamic interplay between each member's personal well-being and the members' mutual sense of FWB, which exists when the members feel content with one another and feel valued as members of their family system. As illustrated in figure 1 and explained in-depth in the next section, the members' personal well-being requires good physical health and happiness, which is influenced by self-satisfaction, social well-being, financial well-being and religious beliefs and sensing family well-being, including their perception of other family members' physical health and happiness, approving of their life choices and sensing that the family relationships are good. On the other hand, the mutual sense of family well-being requires members feeling content with one another which as illustrated is an outcome of reciprocal positive emotions, such as feeling loved, supported and a sense that there is an understanding from other family members, and interactions, such as having open communication, spending time together and

being actively involved when needed. The sense of acknowledgement, involves feeling important as a member of the family and it is developed when: a) members fulfil their duties and are acknowledged - e.g. being the ‘child’ that one is expected to be in a particular family; yet roles differ amongst families and in every case, need to be explored and b) members are perceived as valuable individuals for contributing to the society (e.g. good people / students / swimmers / professionals) in a way that is recognised by others. Acknowledgement is a contributor to members’ sense of contentment. This conceptualisation best reflects the well-being of Cypriot families involved in elite swimming, however, as it can be observed in sections 4.2 and 4.3, it could be used in future studies as a foundation for examining Cypriots’ personal and FWB as the participants are part of the culture and live by its rules and norms.

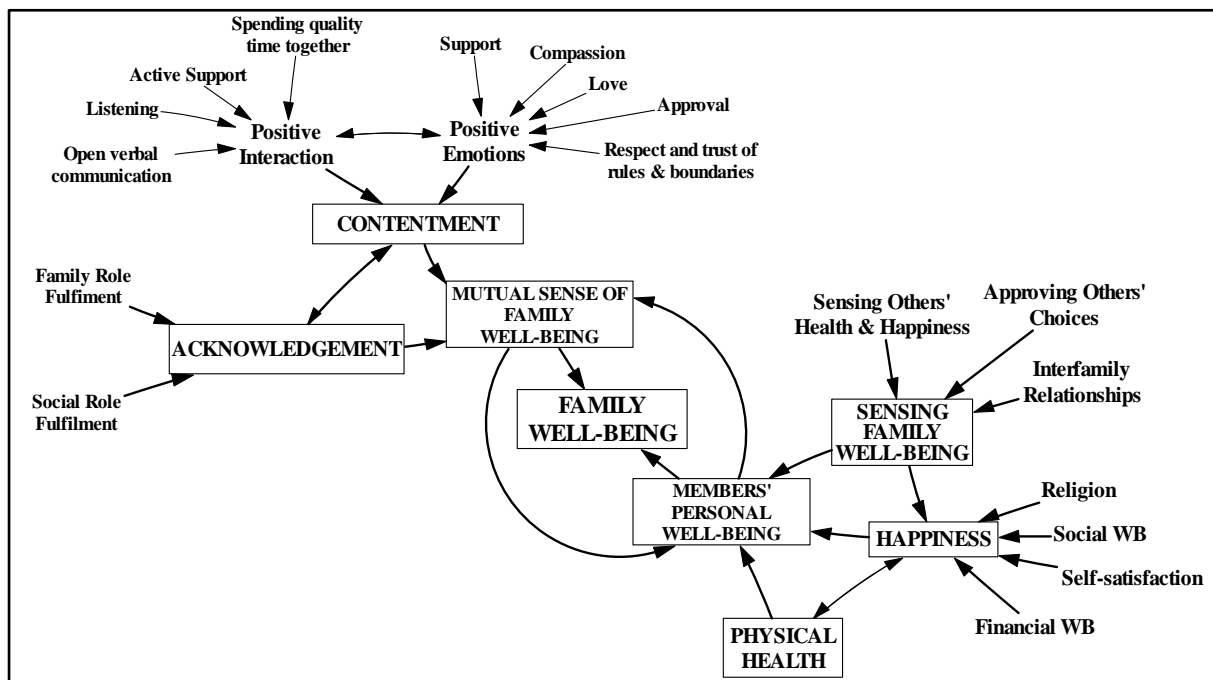


Figure 1: Family well-being of Cypriot swimming families

4.2 Family members’ personal well-being

In the study of FWB, it is important to consider the well-being of each individual member as part of an understanding of the members’ interconnection. Also as the literature suggests, the presence of any emotions of distress in an individual family member can be an indication of family malfunction, therefore individual narratives can be significant in understanding the family unit (Compañ, Moreno, Ruiz, & Pascual, 2002). In Cyprus, ‘Well-

being' most accurately translates to 'ευ ζην', which means good quality of life derived from ancient Greek; however, as a phrase it is not used in daily life. Therefore, in exploring the participants' perception of their well-being, they were asked to describe their priorities and values, and what a 'good life' and 'happiness' means to them, instead of being asked to define 'ευ ζην'. Some of the responses to the questions of what a good life is or what happiness means, included:

"you have to be... you have to... not feeling stressed like I do. Having a good job, a good family and health. These three things. Nothing else!" (Peter, R1, L412)

"the most important thing in life... the first thing that comes to my mind is having your family close to you. Now that I'm getting into this age, that's how I feel. Maybe because I was neglected of it..." *"Happiness... umm... well, not having much worries, not having any issues within your family. I always co... I always come back to the family."* (Greg, R1, L526)

"I believe that above everything comes... health and the family. That's what I believe" (Ross, R4, L671)

The participants' narratives illustrated that there are strong similarities regarding their perceptions of the key elements of well-being; in that everyone included: personal and family wellness, meaning every individual member of their family to be healthy, which they linked to physical well-being including the lack of pain, and to be happy, which they linked to pleasure and LS. This consensus in the participants' perception on what 'a good life' requires, illustrates how sociocultural influences shape people's perceptions (Lambert D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2016). Nevertheless, examining in depth the participants' personal experiences, values, ambitions and concerns, enabled exploring the importance of the three main factors they identified (physical health, happiness and sensing family well-being) and allowed the development of a better understanding of what contributes towards them, as well as to realise the interplay between them and the complexity of exploring Cypriots' well-being (illustrated in figure 1). The following sub-sections, providing quotes from the participants' narratives, discuss in-depth all the elements illustrated in figure 1 and draw links between them, demonstrating the complexity and multidimensionality of Cypriots well-being.

4.2.1 Happiness: self-satisfaction, social and financial well-being & religion

Happiness relates to the experience of affects (Diener & Chan, 2011; Diener & Seligman, 2004); it is the “*experiences of pleasure and purpose over time*” (Dolan, 2014) and “*the presence of positive affect combined with a relative absence of negative affect is regarded as indicative of subjective well-being*” (Lundqvist, 2011, p. 111). In seeking to define ‘happiness’, the participants presented some difficulty in defining what happiness is. However, most participants referred to circumstances that make them happy; some participants suggested:

“happiness is about feeling happy, like, trying to remove all the negatives, those things that don’t make you feel nice, and holding onto what makes you feel nice!” (Natalie, R1, L586)

“happiness is about not having any issues!” (Mark, R1, L876)

“happiness is about having a good time, with my family, my husband, feel that my kids are happy, this is happiness...” (Gloria, R1, L106)

“what’s happiness? Well, I’d love to see my children happy” (Greg, R1, L530)

Analysing the participants’ narratives, it was found that for them (and so for this study) happiness refers to a sense of pleasure and life satisfaction, involving emotions of joy, love and contentment, achievement, positivity, fulfilment and care-freeness, which broadly relates to Dolan’s conceptualisation (Dolan, 2014). The above quotes show how for the participants happiness is linked both to hedonic enjoyments, as Gloria mentioned “having a good time”, but mostly to the eudaimonic paradigm (Ross, 2005); as it can be seen more clearly in Natalie’s quote, happiness is an emotion perceived as an achievement while it sometimes requires an effort, “*trying*”, “*removing*” and “*holding onto*” (Huta, 2013). In addition, the analysis of their perception of happiness and their experiences, illustrated that the most significant contributors to their happiness are sensing self-satisfaction, social well-being, financial well-being, religion, physical health and sensing family well-being (figure 1). Significantly, these contributors relate to different conceptualisations of well-being including, life satisfaction (N.

Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004), PSW (Abbott et al., 2010; Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008) and the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011). The following sections, while drawing connections between them, present these contributors in the form of themes. Each theme includes a discussion on how they relate to sensing happiness and to previous theories and studies on well-being.

4.2.1.1 Self-satisfaction

The importance of sensing self-satisfaction on the participants' happiness was apparent in all their narratives while the main contributors to self-satisfaction mostly related to a) fulfilling duties, b) goal attainment and c) perceived control. As discussed in more detail below, self-satisfaction, as presented in this study, relates to elements of SDT (R. M. Ryan et al., 2008), the PERMA model (Butler & Kern, 2016) and strongly to Ryff's model of PWB, as it covers five of the six factors included in the model; these include: 1) self-acceptance, 2) environmental mastery, 3) autonomy, 4) purpose in life and 5) personal growth (Ryff, 1989). It is important to note that social and financial well-being were also strongly associated to self-satisfaction but are discussed in-depth separately in following sub-sections (4.2.1.2 & 4.2.1.3)

4.2.1.1.1 Deonance and fulfilment of duties

The analysis illustrated that the participants were fairly 'duty orientated' as the sense of duty, '*deon*' in greek, was strongly evident in their narratives and their behaviour was at most times guided by the morals and 'rules' of their identities (Cypriot, father, mother, child, student, employee, athlete, teenager, etc.). Being duty orientated is "*an individual's volitional orientation to loyally serve and faithfully support other members of the group, to strive and sacrifice to accomplish the tasks and missions of the group, and to honour its codes and principles*" (Hannah, Jennings, Bluhm, Peng, & Schaubroeck, 2014, p. 220). In addition, the sense of duty provides people with a sense of purpose in life (Van Dierendonck et al., 2008) .

Following the participants for a year enabled observing how the participants' affect was shaped by the presence of a sense of duty and the outcome of fulfilment of or failure to enact their duties. Some duties were short-term and circumstantial whilst others were more long-term. The more 'permanent' duties were the ones of the parents, which as Jess suggested "*for*

Cypriot parents [parental duties] last until their children get settled". Fundamentally, as described in another study (Kouloumou, 2004) these duties include ensuring their children are healthy, protecting them from engaging in 'bad habits' such as smoking and drugs and providing everything they need to have a good future such as funding their education until they acquire their own career; this comprises school, extra afternoon classes, higher education and all the expenses that would be required such as accommodation, fees and expenses, and hobbies.

"...Ross was poorly, and luckily, we discovered it soon enough but things were quite difficult... especially for me it was too difficult because I had to fight along his side, and he was low psychologically and I didn't know what to do [...] What did I do? Um... it took me ages to do it and ages to recover and take the decision that I had to do it - I called his psychologist!" (Becky, R2, L34 - 38)

Becky's quote illustrates how she sensed the duty "*to fight along*" her son's side when he was ill. Saying "*fight*", indicates that there was a sense of either winning or losing and a feeling of fear, whilst not knowing what to do was bringing about frustration, devastation, stress and feeling lost. Although the illness was physical she pointed out the psychological effect, illustrating the multidimensionality of and interplay between happiness and physical health. Moreover, her words reveal that she struggled and that she perceives that what they went through was tougher for her than for others, which perhaps is linked to having to deal with the multiple duties that she had to fulfil simultaneously, while also witnessing her son suffering. Despite her effort, the second quote shows how Becky felt an element of guilt and disappointment with herself for being unable to respond sooner; nevertheless, the findings suggest that this development is linked to her broader self-perception: "*I am very strict with myself, if I allow things to get to me I think the whole balance in the house with fall apart*". In support of this connection and significant to Becky's overall well-being is that having high self-expectations correlates with remorse, fatigue, uncertainty and pressure when it comes to easy goals (Wicker, Brown, Hagen, Boring, & Wiehe, 1990).

The children's duties were, 'as children', to be helping with the house chores and supporting other family members when needed, swimmers had to fulfil their sport expectations (e.g. training & competitions) and, depending on their age, most had to do school homework, Tom university assignments whereas the eldest, Harry, had to work. Importantly, the duties of

the children were more fluid than those of the parents as they were going through transitions more often. The following quotes present Tom's narratives, which illustrate how within a year he went from a final year university student to being a professional gym trainer, and subsequently, how his self-satisfaction, esteem and overall well-being fluctuated.

"Generally, I'm feeling well! The past few days I've been looking forward to going back (UK). I might not like the place but I like that I live by myself! It sometimes winds me up being here, I wanna go back, have my schedule. Do things by myself, my shopping, my stuff... my peace!" (Tom R1, L79)

"I must submit my proposal in a few days, I have my ideas in notes but I haven't started it yet. I hope I make it!" (Tom R2, L15)

"I'm even more stressed now because I must just wait for the results to come out and if I haven't passed then I'll have to take the exams again. And basically, if you don't pass then you're being delayed in getting the degree and then deal with the other problems... with jobs and having to start a new life... to see what you will do, from then on you aren't a baby anymore, it's over!" (Tom R3, L219)

"I have to wake up at 5:15 because at 6:30 I have to open the gym. I finish at 15:00, and because I do my work out after it gets to 17:00 until I come back home. I come home, eat and have a bath, and by the time I walk the dogs I have to go to sleep. So, the latest by 22:00 I have to sleep. I have no urge to go anywhere, I don't have the energy basically" (Tom, R4, L14)

In the first round, despite that he was not keen on life in the UK and that he knew what would be involved in the final year of his studies, Tom was excited to return to his routine, where he would also enjoy his independence living with his girlfriend, and finish his bachelor degree. In round 2 and 3, the reality of having to deal with the writing of assignments and the uncertainty of the results, and planning his career development, took away the positive affect, which was replaced by a sense of fear of failing, stress and self-doubt. In the last interview, being on duty for the opening and running of the gym, Tom appeared exhausted and somewhat isolated as he was socialising significantly less than before and had to live in a different town

to his girlfriend, who throughout their relationship has been a significant contributor to his self-esteem. According to the analysis, in the 4th interview his self-satisfaction and esteem were at an ‘odd place’ as for the first time his career development was the contributor, but his reduced social life was an inhibitor.

Overall, the findings suggest that the participants’ perception and handling of duties depend on the existence of parallel benefits (e.g. Tom having his own space), the significance of potential outcomes of fulfilling their duties, and theirs and others’ expectations. In addition, compared to the parents’, it was observed that the children’s duties were more short term, as the younger they were, the more regularly they were facing transitions, and the different roles they were acquiring were bringing different duties. Considering that transitions are known to impact people’s well-being in various ways (Praherso, Tear, & Cruwys, 2017), this study argues that the self-satisfaction of younger people could be more volatile and susceptible to change.

4.2.1.1.2 Goal attainment

Agreeing with the PERMA model and SDT (Butler & Kern, 2016; R. M. Ryan et al., 2008; Seligman, 2011), the findings of this study illustrate that a sense of accomplishment was an important contributor to the participants’ well-being. Nevertheless, it can be argued that having goals indicates one’s purpose in life, which is significant to PWB. This finding stemmed from the analysis of each participant’s ambitions and from the occurrence of experiencing positive affect, when feeling that they achieved something. As Ross stated:

“Happiness is, fulfilling my goals. Knowing that I became better and feel pleased with what I achieved” (Ross, R4, L653)

Similarly, to their duties, the goals and the sense of success for the parents of this study related both to their personal and to their children’s achievements, whereas for the children goal attainment was solely based on their personal achievements.

“you want to be progressing in your career too. But now, I think that my goals from now on are to raise my children, go to study, to... to... because, for the parent, for the

Cypriot parent let's say, it's all about settling their children and then (look at themselves).” (Jess, R1, L61)

Jess' narrative illustrates how her career has a secondary importance, while her children's development becomes a priority. She suggests that her approach reflects all Cypriot parents' views and although it is an overgeneralization to make such a claim the other parents of this study have made similar comments.

“I am a working mum, of course we love our kids just like all Cypriots, we sacrifice ourselves and we live for them. We get stressed we worry” (Teresa, R1, L4)

Peter, who did not have the opportunity to study and perceives that if he did he would have had a better job and would have been able to provide more, believes that a university degree would be a key to his children's happiness and wants to support them to achieve it.

“My goals, my dreams are to send my children to the university, because I couldn't go [...] we were working since we were kids. I don't want this to happen to my children. You need a job, which will guarantee security” (Peter, R1, L33)

It could be argued that Peter's perception of the relationship between education and happiness is based on his dissatisfaction with his job and his unfulfilled desire to study. Many studies have illustrated that indeed nowadays education does contribute to happiness (Cuñado & de Gracia, 2012; Michalos, 2008). As the studies have shown, receiving a higher education enables earning a higher income, which can be used for fulfilling needs and desires, and it increases self-estimation and confidence (Cuñado & de Gracia, 2012; Michalos, 2008). Significant to such a generalisation though is to consider the variability that can exist regarding definitions of education and happiness.

Moreover, in this research, it was observed that parents sensed personal success whenever their child illustrated any kind of progress, and this relates to the devotion and effort they put into their children's goals. The sense of Beth's parents' accomplishment, pride and happiness was evident in her experience of being the flag carrier, as the top student, for the annual parade celebrating a national day.

“they (Mark and her mum) were cheering loudly and they were very excited! When mum came to school and saw me picking up the flag, she got emotional! Then dad, because he couldn’t get a day off from work, felt regrets. He wanted to come!” (Beth, R2, 307)

For the parents, when their children’s achievements are visible to society, it is reflected in their personal social well-being; they receive and sense social recognition and acceptance as ‘a good parent’.

For the children, the sense of success was revolving around their personal achievements.

“I would like to take part in the Olympics and at least get a good scholarship for the US or for another country. Regarding basketball, I would like to get into a European team, which could help me without needing another job. And for school, I really want to become a doctor and so I put a lot of effort in biology, chemistry...” (Ben, R1, L169)

“I wanna come back (to Cyprus), find a flat to live in, find a job and slowly slowly make money to have my own gym. Then, build my own house and then have a family. Nothing else! [...] I want two kids, one boy, to be the first kid, and a girl. Having a big house with a garden and be a bonded family!” (Tom, R1, L87)

“I want to remain an important associate in this company for years, because I need stability [...] um... within the next years perhaps a relationship, a... child, a family” (Harry, R1, 107)

Ben’s goals, who was 13 years old at the time, could perhaps be described as too ambitious as he would like to have two different professional athletic careers and to become a doctor; these ambitions may have been inspired from his family, however as it appeared, Ben was passionate and genuinely happy with swimming. Tom who was close to finishing his studies, had specific career and personal goals; on the other hand, Harry, who was at a different stage of life wanted to maintain his job status but hopes to have his own family. As can be seen from their narratives and their goals, the sources that could contribute to feeling success, depend on the stage of life they were at; the children’s long-term goals in later stages are similar to the long-term goals

their parents had prior to having children, e.g. having their own family. Jess shared: *“I have what I always wanted! A husband who gets me and who’s there for me and having a family!”*. This identification shows the existence of many multigenerational transmissions (Bowen, 1976) and of the strong notion of ‘familism’ (Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016), which is discussed in depth in 4.2.3.

4.2.1.1.3 Perceived control

The analysis of the participants’ experiences illustrated that perceived control is a key contributor to their self-satisfaction and well-being (Paulhus, 1983). In the literature the notion of perceived control has been divided into three categories: (a) personal efficacy, which relates to control over the non-social environment as in personal achievement, (b) interpersonal control, referring to control over other people, and (c) sociopolitical control, referring to control over social and political events and institutions (Paulhus, 1983). The most significant sense of control for the participants of this study was self-efficacy as it concerned everyone; whereas the importance of sociopolitical control and interpersonal control was evident mainly in the parents’ narratives. The parents often expressed uncertainty and concern about their future due to the economic crisis, which links perceived control with financial well-being (4.2.1.3); they appeared to be unhappy with the government’s morals and economic decisions, and also felt let down with how people are unable to influence politics or have access to legitimate facts to inform their decisions. As Gloria narrated:

“they want to change the way that we’re getting paid. Before we had a contract, which said that you get an increase of salary according to the years that you worked there. Now they want to change that and pay according to the evaluation they do and the bonus that you receive at the end of the year, but who guarantees you that the evaluations they do will be fair for all and that they won’t just benefit those few... well it’s become clear that now there are foreign influences... [...] I’m thinking of not voting (for the presidential elections). I can’t see anyone of the candidates having values, they’re all there for the ‘chair’, they don’t care about people” (Gloria, R2, L415)

The necessity of personal efficacy on the participants' well-being was observed both in the effort they put into creating and maintaining schedules and in the impact of schedule distractions or when they had to deal with uncertainty.

"For me, having a routine is really important... the truth is that, when anything, either a good or a bad thing, happens that distracts my routine disorganizes me a bit". (Jess, R1, L101)

Saying that even 'good' distractions cause disorganisation, demonstrates that Jess' schedule is quite strictly prearranged and does not include any free time or flexibility to rearrange her duties; even the 'good' things that can happen which would perhaps cause positive affect, could potentially be perceived as a burden. Unless there is adequate time, full joy cannot be attained. Her narrative also reveals that she tries not to allow routine disruptions to influence her but, as she admits, she becomes disorganised. Moreover, it seems that Jess perceives this disorganisation as a failure to control her emotions, and these experiences were observed in others' narratives as well.

"I am stressing out about getting things I started doing done. I have to finish what I began doing [...] I don't want to keep things waiting. This is what causes me stress. Well, and sometimes I pass it on to... (the family)" (Peter, R1, L45)

For Peter, it is important to not have pending tasks, and perhaps a personal expectation; he explained that when he keeps "things waiting" he develops stress, while his words also reveal emotions of frustration, anger, disappointment and guilt; not only because he failed to achieve completing the task within a specific time frame but also because he cannot control his stress and transmits it onto his family. According to the literature, perceived control over stress increases optimism and subsequently increases well-being (Fontaine, Manstead, & Wagner, 1993).

The need to have control over their daily life, did not only regard parents; emotions of negative affect were evident in children's narratives, when they had to deal with uncertainty, making the 'right decision' or lack of ability to control their future, but more often they were seen to be withholding information from their parents in order to have control of what they know and perhaps control their stance. As Ross shared:

“I might have a problem with my friend and not tell her. But it gets too much I might tell her. It depends... I don’t talk much but if I find myself in a dead-end I talk to her [mother].” (Ross, R1, L129)

His narrative illustrates that he senses safety and contentment to open-up to his mother when things get out of his control but, it also shows how having control of his personal matters is important to him. This is a sign of a need for independence and autonomy. Theories focusing on psychological well-being suggest that being autonomous provides self-satisfaction and self-worth, which promote positive affect contributing to well-being (Gagné, 2003; Van Dierendonck et al., 2008). Moreover, according to the literature, during teenage years there is a tendency to seek autonomy and the discovery of identity (Boykin Mcelhaney, Allen, Stephenson, & Hare, 2009; Stuart & Jose, 2012); therefore, this distance is somewhat expected.

Overall, it can be argued that perceived control relates to Ryff’s notion of environmental mastery, which refers to the ability of forming or choosing environments that would benefit one’s psychic condition, and autonomy, which also appears in the SDT (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryff, 1989). This suggests that the theories of SDT and PWB would agree that perceived control is a significant contributing factor to well-being.

4.2.1.2 Social well-being

As discussed in the literature review chapter, social well-being involves the dimensions of social integration, contribution, coherence, actualization and acceptance and it is tightly linked to psychological well-being and happiness (Keyes, 1998). The findings of the analysis agree with the literature, yet acceptance and social contribution appeared to be most relevant to the participants’ well-being. According to Keyes (1998), social acceptance relates to being perceived as trustworthy, kind and being wanted to be part of social groups, while social contribution refers to the society’s faith in a person that they can be valuable for the world. The findings have illustrated that for the participants, receiving social recognition, trusting others and fulfilling moral expectations are core to their social well-being.

4.2.1.2.1 Social recognition

Relating to social contribution and acceptance (Keyes, 1998), social recognition in this study refers to receiving positive feedback and appraisal for being perceived by the society as a valuable individual. The analysis illustrated that the participants experience positive affect when they receive social recognition, which on a more family level was more apparent in Ross' and Natalie's family, as members of these two families were more actively seeking recognition. The members of Ross' family, especially the three males, sought social recognition related to being better than others; often for being physically stronger or better at what they do (e.g. sport or work).

“it was me and Rachel from the younger ones, and the others were a bit annoying... as in, we are the 'old guys'... I was about to fight with one of them because he was being very patronising... He was teasing me and acting smart and so on... because I am young he thought he could do it and at some point, I can't remember what it was, I think I pushed him... I can't remember exactly, and then he realised that it was bothering me and he changed his manner” (Ross R3, L105)

“I'd do whatever I have to. If it's something I need to buy I'll try to buy it, I'll try to find money and buy it. If it's something I need to do, I will keep doing it until I make it! I can't accept anyone having something better than me!” (Tom, R1, L179)

“I don't forgive easily, I hold a grudge... I can't say that I am a quiet person but nor the opposite either, I'm somewhere in the middle. I always do what I want, despite what I am told or if I am right or wrong! Okay... um... when you're nice to me I'll be ten times nicer towards you, but if you do anything (bad) to me then it's over! With the first opportunity, I'll hit you back.” (Tom, R1, L43)

Ross' narrative shows how he felt intimidated and humiliated when an older team mate was teasing him, he felt intimidated and humiliated in front of others and choose to respond with violence; this attitude was not only seen in this interview, but rather it appeared that there is a family trait of using such an approach in challenging situations, especially when they feel that others are behaving as though they are superior. Ross develops emotions of victory when he

manages to handle such situations with violence and it appears that his self-worth and self-confidence is based on his strength and ability to commandeer situations by being physically violent. Moreover, it appears that he does not try to verbalise his emotions before starting a fight but rather expects people to understand him, without him explaining to them how he feels. Ross saying that the other teammate "*then realised...*", indicates that perhaps before being pushed, the other teammate was unaware of Ross' annoyance. Similarly, Tom described that he does not "*accept*" not being the best and that he puts in endless effort until superiority is achieved; his narrative reveals a need to be in the spotlight and it appears that every time he attempts to win but experiences failure, he develops emotions of disappointment and his self-esteem becomes wounded. The importance of social recognition is also manifest whenever he feels offended or treated unfairly, in his revengeful reactions; according to the literature (Eaton, Ward Struthers, & Santelli, 2006), such reactions are a result of feeling devalued. This means that for Tom, feeling valued and receiving positive social recognition is a significant contributor to his social wellbeing. Overall, based on the literature (Eaton et al., 2006) it could be suggested that the members in Ross' family display some narcissistic traits, as being perceived as superior contributes to their self-esteem, and when their public image becomes challenged they all reported to respond with aggression and often performing masculinity (Marcos, Avilés, Del Río Lozano, Cuadros, & Del Mar García Calvente, 2015). As Becky shared: "*even I came to the point of swearing and saying things that... because I have boys. If I had a daughter I wouldn't talk like this*".

In Natalie's family, the need for social recognition manifested differently; it was more about being liked and accepted by others in society.

"I want people seeing me and thinking, "he is a good guy" ... "he is an honest man". That's what I want. "Someone who's trying for his family and can help others"" (Greg, R1, B461)

Greg's narrative shows how important it is for himself to be perceived as the 'good guy'. He needs to experience being socially accepted and respected; it seems that the emotions he develops when he is 'seen' as the good guy enhance his self-worth and psychological wellbeing (Van Dierendonck et al., 2008).

“I try to be good with everyone, with my kids as well as everyone else, I wouldn’t like it if tomorrow let’s say you stopped talking to me, it bothers me, I will try to make everything better. [...] I don’t like it for anyone to pass me by and not say hello and I realise that I did something to them but I don’t know what that is. I wouldn’t beg but I do try [...]. I do research and sometimes they go to 3-4 different doctors and come to me and tell me “you are the last hope”. I am satisfied, some people just think you have a shop and that’s it but I do more, like social media, happy birthdays to customers, little things like that so I am quite fulfilled” (Teresa, R1, L8 - 12)

Teresa receives pleasure from her work and her customers’ response makes her feel proud, which probably motivates her to continue *“trying”*; nonetheless, putting effort into being *“good”* implies that at times she behaves in a manner that does not reflect what she feels, solely to maintain good relationships and avoid conflicts or distancing. Although using impression management can benefit social well-being, it is suggested that such tactics are adopted when there is a pre-existing sense of negative affect (e.g. low self-esteem), and at the same time engaging in impression management could cause anxiety as it requires suppressing emotions and acting (Sadler, Hunger, & Miller, 2010). Moreover, sometimes they adopt behaviours that can make them feel shame and try hiding them; as Tom said *“if they [family] found out... [they wouldn’t be proud]”* (Tom, R1, L347). Therefore, seeking social recognition can create a vicious cycle of negative emotions, and have a negative effect on LS and PWB. Nonetheless, it was apparent in the findings, as well as in the literature (Renger & Simon, 2011), that social recognition works as a reward, and by receiving it many people are motivated to continue doing what they do. Significant to the Cypriot culture, the narratives presented above indicate the existence and continuity of values and discourses of previous generations; the significance of being a ‘good citizen’ and being remembered (even after death) relate to the notion of patriotism and social expectations in ancient Greece (Christ, 2006). Having observed these elements in the participants’ narratives, the findings of this study suggest that in studying well-being in the context of Cyprus, the consideration of multigenerational transmissions is significant (Bowen, 1976; J. Brown, 1999).

4.2.1.2.2 *Trusting people's intentions*

The participants often spoke about their friendships and about how socialising contributes to feeling joy; nonetheless, as other studies have found, a supposition to benefiting from socialising was sensing trust towards people's intentions (Van der Horst & Coffé, 2012). The members of Mark's family appeared particularly cautious and alert for people who might want to take advantage of them; Mark's father shared:

"You'll see in time, after years, how they are during your good moments and bad moments... some might seem that they are friends and after years to realise that... I don't easily let go. You might be giving chances and later on to realise that they are trying to take advantage of you... you might be trying to help someone and they might be trying to take advantage of you behind your back, and sometimes not even behind. And that's why I am a bit cautious. [...] I tell the kids that they will get to hang out with good, bad, ugly people, but always to be careful... not everyone is the same and you have to be careful. I can get on with everyone but you have to be careful." (Peter, R1, L129)

Peter appears to be investing in his friendships but at the same time holding some reservations; although he shared that he enjoys his friends company and seeks out opportunities to spend time with friends, it appears that at the same time he does not trust or feel content with them fully, as he would not be surprised if "after years" they betrayed him. Similar emotions were evident in Mark's mother (Gloria) and sister's (Beth) narratives:

"I like having people around. I hardly make friendships although I do like socializing and hanging out with people, I have to be certain and it takes some time. Um... but I like maintaining the relationships with the people that I am bonded... okay." (Gloria, R1, L30)

"We became friends with the other mums with whom we went together on the previous trip and now we are arranging to go for a coffee, or one night to go out just the ladies" (Gloria, R1, L250)

“in general I don’t tell them (friends from school) personal stuff ... I’d tell my friends from outside school, because I trust them. They are my childhood friends and we know each other more than them from school” (Beth, R2, L233)

Gloria and Beth shared similar emotions with Peter, while their narratives also suggest that having friends with similar interests and backgrounds makes them feel content. The literature provides an explanation for these emotions, as *“lower heterogeneity of the friendship network is related to more social trust, less stress, and a better health”* (Van der Horst & Coffé, 2012, p. 509).

Unlike the other family members, Mark did not express any particular concern about his friendships, however, at times, he appeared to be cautious about the information he was sharing and the purpose of the questioning during the interviews.

Mark: *Um... I believe you know that I’ve changed club and everything about it?*

Anastasia: *Not really if I’m honest but I would like it if you could tell me a bit about what happened?*

Mark: *Tell me what you know first haha!* (Mark, L648)

Significantly, this conversation took place during the first interview, while in the following interviews Mark was somewhat more open; this perhaps relates to what the other members were saying regarding the time needed to get to know someone but it might have also been Mark trying to draw personal linkages in order to feel trust to share his experiences (Van der Horst & Coffé, 2012). Although, after sharing what I knew, Mark shared his story without any hesitation, it was perceived that he wanted to have control over the conversation, perhaps to protect himself; this also relates to the finding on the importance of perceived control. Mark was investigating what I knew already and wanted to have an understanding before responding, which seemed to be a characteristic trait of Mark, as he has this stance towards his parents as well.

4.2.1.2.3 Fulfilment of moral expectations

In the narratives of the participants it was evident that they were trying to lead their lives based on their personal and sociocultural morals but they also expected others to do the same. Living based to the moral expectations contributes to their self-satisfaction (4.2.1.1) and can lead to receiving social recognition (4.2.1.2.1); on the other hand when other people did not behave in their perceived social manner it was creating a lack of social coherence, acceptance and integration (Keyes, 1998), while also the negative affect was influencing their sense of happiness. Significantly, the alignment of their behaviours with their morals was significant to their experiences when socially interacting with others. Ross' father explained:

“Many times, I leave from work and I am fuming. For instance, I am an employee for 28 years, and while I was giving a presentation a 24-year-old employee was resting his legs on the table. He should respect my position and my age.” (Adam, R1, L11)

“It’s unacceptable (Ross) passing by me saying a simple hi and leave, whilst I am doing housework! And not even ask if I need any help. It bothers me, and I ‘attack him’ I won’t let it go!” (Adam, R1, L53)

Adam's quotes show how he sensed negative affect when his expectations and moral values were not met by others. In the first incident, he was “fuming” because he felt that the body language of his younger colleague was offensive towards him; for Adam, age and workplace seniority should be respected. Similar emotions were also present in the second incident, however in this case Adam presented the morals he expects children to have towards their parents; not offering help to parents is perceived as unacceptable. It could be suggested that Ross' behaviour made him feel a lack of interpersonal control relating to his son and perceived lack of personal efficacy as a parent (Paulhus, 1983). Notably, the description of his and Ross' interaction provides further support to the previously argued (4.2.1.2.1) presence of narcissistic traits (Eaton et al., 2006) and to the contribution of social recognition to the well-being of Ross' family members.

The notion of being a good person in society, which was apparent as a trait in Natalie's family and discussed earlier, was very important for other participants as well, especially for

the parents for whom it was about being good people but also raising their children to be good people too. As Mark's father said openly:

"I want them to be good people in the society, that's all I want." (Peter, R1, L265)

Peter's narrative presents wanting his children to be good people as an ultimate desire, and similarly Rachel's father, Matthew said:

"I am not expecting anything from anyone, neither someone to tell me "well-done!". I do whatever I wanna do and think it's right. I'm not expecting recognition and I never wanted any [...] I am strict but I try keeping some moral principles. For example, the basic things I want, are for them (children) to have good characters, to be honest..." (Matthew, R1, L88).

For Matthew, it appears that as acting according to his morals, without seeking acknowledgement, makes him experience self-satisfaction. Nevertheless, it can be argued that caring about Rachel and Ben's attitude towards others could be linked to how his children's actions reflect on his parental ability; for instance, having good characters and being honest may be perceived by others as a credit to his parenting. For Matthew, it might not necessarily relate to social recognition, but still, his children's attitude and behaviour aligning with his values will be self-fulfilling. For Mark's parents and participants from other families, the notion of being 'good', either 'good parents' or 'good people', was found to also relate directly to social recognition (Coakley, 2006; Romagnoli & Wall, 2012; Shiakou & Belsky, 2013; Symeou, 2007).

"When teachers tell you that your children are role models you get satisfied!" (Peter, R1, L93)

"I took her [Beth] to the beautician and then when I was left alone with her she went, "Gloria your child is smart, down to earth" and that "don't worry about her, everyone would wish to have such kids!". And said the same for Mark as well, "congratulations for his character, that he's down to earth, he wouldn't bother anyone..."" (Gloria, R4, L298)

The finding of Cypriot parents wanting their children to be good people was also illustrated in the narratives of participants in another study (Shiakou & Belsky, 2013). Examining this study's participants' narratives in relation to Cypriot culture and history, it can be suggested that the notion of 'being a good person' in Cypriot society stems from ancient Greece, where Patriotism, the sense of duty, pride, honour and the importance of being remembered as an honourable person after death were significant moral values. Ever since, these morals have been taught at schools and are passed on from generation to generation (Christ, 2006). Finally, the small size of Cypriot society allows people to be more easily identifiable and thus subject to criticism; bearing this in mind it could be argued that as a country, for many people it provides the opportunity to become recognised more quickly. However, in challenging situations, when their 'good reputation' is called into question, it has a significant negative impact on their well-being.

4.2.1.3 Financial well-being

Financial well-being is about experiencing security in relation to having adequate money to meet needs. The importance of financial well-being was highlighted extensively in the parents' narratives, as for them, it is an ongoing matter of concern as they perceive it as essential for being able to have and provide the basic needs and, as discussed above, fulfil their duties and children's desires. It is significant that the participants of this study were living at a house they owned and that none of the parents were unemployed; nevertheless, the fear that their income could be insufficient to meet their families' needs was causing a negative impact on every parent's psychological well-being and self-esteem.

“when you see that there's things that are a must in a family but you can't offer them, in brings you down” (Matthew, R1, L71)

A significant factor that was found to be shaping some parents' sense of financial well-being was the economic crisis that the country went through and the closure of two of Cyprus' major banks in 2013 (Katsourides, 2014). The financial condition of Gloria, Greg and Adam who were bank employees, was significantly shaped by these events, whereas for Matthew and Jess,

these events were arguably less significant at the time of this study as did not refer to them during the interviews. Adam, who at the start of the study had a senior position at a bank, prior to the second interview he was given the opportunity to leave his job and be made redundant; making a decision was described as painful, as on one hand he felt fed up with the staff and was unhappy, but on the other hand remaining in employment at the bank was perceived as a safer choice in maintaining the ability to support his family.

“I am a mess... psychologically I’m a mess” (Adam, R2, B184)

Taking into consideration the strong relevance of money to the children’s well-being and the children’s well-being to their parents’, it could be argued that for the Cypriot parents, money often can ‘buy well-being’.

Similarly, Greg and Peter felt alike, but in their case despite the crisis, their wives had better jobs than them and often Greg and Peter were dependent on their wives, which made them feel somewhat inferior.

“I used to make good money at the bank. Now, sometimes... sometimes, I have to ask her for money. If I want to buy any accessories or something. Or when someone wants to buy a computer from me and I don't have the money to buy parts haha... Okay, well I feel a bit... where I was independent, I now depend on Teresa. It's not as if she ever told me... she always asks me “are you are okay?”” (Greg, R1, L138)

Greg’s words revealed emotions of embarrassment and disappointment; he felt the need to share that in the past he was not in the same situation, sounding like he wanted to justify himself. His emotions towards his financial situation are likely to be linked to an inability to fulfil his parental duties and often to cover his personal needs. Losing his financial independence makes him frustrated, sad and embarrassed; although he perceives Teresa’s stance to be supportive, it appears that he still does not feel comfortable asking for money and subsequently feels limited and restricted. Greg’s emotions are very similar to unemployed fathers as they have historically been socially expected to be the breadwinners (Forret, Sullivan, & Mainiero, 2010); nonetheless, the persistence of these emotions could lead to depression and could harm FWB (Frese & Mohr, 1987).

The importance of money was also evident in the children's narratives, but its significance seemed dependent on the stage of life that they were in. Harry who, being the only sibling in this study who was employed and independent from his parents, perceived financial well-being differently from the others.

"I went through a time when it was quite depressing, driving every day to work and getting a salary that did not satisfy me [...] surely when you're doing well at your job and you get a salary that's respectable, you feel that... how can we say this? Um... you feel valuable let's say, and from there on, what can I say? Everything starts from there, that's the truth." (Harry, R2, L33)

Harry's narrative portrays how he senses negative affect due to the low income he was receiving; it appears that income counts towards his motivation for work, life satisfaction and self-satisfaction, as financial ability allows a sense of autonomy and achievement. Furthermore, the not "respectable salary" makes him feel offended and unappreciated, which influences his social well-being (4.2.1.2). For the other children, money was significant to them but in a more indirect manner as, as individuals they did not have any income, other than the swimmers funding, and were financially dependent on their parents.

"I could have done the same things being more relaxed and not having so much stress and sending applications to universities that will accept me. I also had in mind the money that my parents would pay, that's why I invested more for Scotland" (Beth, R3 L129)

"I decided to go to that university because there was a good scholarship that I could get for my medals, and it would also save us some money." (Natalie, R1, L462)

"I hear them talking about it (financial issues), they might get a bit a bit louder sometimes, I assume, I'm not sure, I don't like intervening in such matters." (Ross, R2, L327)

Agreeing with other studies (e.g. Lim & Sng, 2006), these narrative illustrate how parents' financial anxiety can be transmitted to children. On one hand, it could be argued that some

financial struggles can enable the development of financial awareness which can be important in children's lives and can also enhance the children's compassion towards their parents. Additionally, by controlling their demands it may also offer active support and contribute to their personal well-being and the members' mutual sense of contentment and FWB (figure 1). On the other hand, children's aspirations (e.g. Natalie's and Beth's) were shaped by their parents' perception on the value of money and their financial ability, which may suggest that the goals they pursue may not fully reflect their desires, which depending on what they negotiate, can then negatively impact their LS. Overall, the financial ability and satisfaction of individual family members can impact the present and future of the other members' well-being as well as their FWB.

4.2.1.4 Religion & well-being

Living in a collective culture makes it easy for people to have shared morals and beliefs (Uchida et al., 2015), and Cyprus is one of the countries which has a national religion, and bible studies has always been part of the compulsory modules at Greek-Cypriot schools (Papadakis, 2008; Zembylas & Loukaidis, 2018). In this study, all participants were Orthodox Christians and most of them expressed strong faith in God's will, especially Matthew, Adam, Peter and Beth. During the first interview with Beth, she found it important to mention: *"Another thing about me is that I attend the Sunday school (religious Sunday afternoon school). Mark was going as well but he stopped. But I am closer to church."* Her eagerness to share this information illustrates how important religion is to her identity and social life. Moreover, in exploring the participants' experiences and perception of well-being and life satisfaction, it was found that they relate significantly to their religious beliefs. In all participants' narratives, it can be seen that they feel appreciation towards God for what they have but also for the problems they do not have; sometimes they appeared appreciative for not having 'big' problems like others. As Teresa and Matthew shared:

"my job? Thank god it's going fine, there aren't any issues" (Teresa, R2, L553)

"you're always on the go, for instance you leave the house at 6:30 and you return at 8-8:30 at night. You know... exhausted, tired... for example I didn't have lunch today, I

didn't have time [...] as you can understand the daily life is a bit intense so... but thank God, these aren't real problems!" (Matthew, R2, L111)

The phrase 'thank God', which is often used casually implying that things could be worse, for the participants was at most times in a literal manner and stemmed from an inner sense and that there are bigger issues in life; hence when evaluating their satisfaction with life, the participants hold a more 'simplistic' stance. Although health was declared to be an important determinant for having a good life, when evaluating their own well-being, exhaustion was not accounted as a 'good enough' reason to evaluate their well-being as low. Taking into account that the participants are Christians, this approach to life can be found in apostle Paul's gospel: *"I have learned to be satisfied with what I have. I know what it is to be in need and what it is to have more than enough. I have learned this secret, so that anywhere, at any time, I am content, whether I am full or hungry, whether I have too much or too little. I have the strength to face all conditions by the power that Christ gives me"* (Faull, 2013, p. 511). Therefore, as Greek-Cypriots are raised according to the bible, it could be suggested that they embody that wanting more is a weakness, whilst appreciating and being satisfied with what they already have, is an achievement and a requirement for a good life; subsequently, hedonic pleasures have often associated with greediness and sin (Newhauser, 2004).

The relevance of religion to the participants' well-being was also apparent through a number of participants appearing to perceive their experiences and condition, as a part of God's plan.

"I hope that she will remain under control and that she'll fight it (cancer) and stay as she is now. But Anastasia, God is the one who decides" (Matthew, R2, L290)

"...I'm telling you, God will take care of it" (Teresa, R3, L295)

The participants' narratives illustrate how in difficult times they sense fear that things might not turn out the way they want to, but remain hopeful for a resolution. Perceiving life as one of God's plans allowed them to be more resilient as they are able to place a justification on unfortunate events, set closures and carry on with their lives hoping that God has a better plan for their future. This finding is consistent with other studies, which have suggested that religious people can be significantly more optimistic in difficult times (Becchetti & Rossetti,

2009; Frantz, Trolley, & Johll, 1996; Schafer, 2013). Moreover, the gospel of John “presents ζωή (the divine life) as a “Christian” version of εὐδαιμονία, which can be achieved through believing (πιστεύειν) in Jesus. The Johannine virtue of believing is related to or informed by the cardinal virtues of prudence, courage, justice and temperance. Thus, John places the meta-virtue of believing between the common cardinal virtues and the ultimate good of being in a life-giving relationship with the Father and Son” (Bennema, 2013, p. 168). This gospel implies that, believing in God’s power and plan will result in having a good life. Nonetheless, having this belief perhaps makes them feel that sometimes do not have the power to control their future; which is a paradox because as it was discussed (4.2.1.1.3), having control over their life has been identified as a factor that influences their sense of positive affect.

4.2.2 Physical health

For the participants of this study physical health, was reported as one of the most significant contributors to well-being as it enables them to do the things they desire. The findings, as presented in the following subsections, suggest that the Cypriots’ perception of physical health, relates to body functionality as defined by Alleva, Tylka and Kroon Van Diest (2017). From the analysis of their experiences the key themes of a) systematic care and b) physical health and ‘happiness’ were identified.

4.2.2.1 Systematic self-care

The participants’ narratives revealed that physical health is essential to life; this was illustrated when some of the participants were often seen to be taking precautions to ensure they would remain healthy.

“without being told by anyone, Gloria and I, every 2-3 years we do our tests, blood tests, heart tests, a general check-up.” (Peter, R1, L190)

Having routine check-ups is commonly viewed as essential for early detection and prevention of health problems (Oboler, Prochazka, Gonzales, Xu, & Anderson, 2002) and Peter and Gloria appear to align with this view. The manner in which he named all the tests they take illustrates

the significance of health to Peter, a consideration of many of the possible dysfunctions that could occur, but also a sense of fear of not having good health. At the same time, Peter reveals a sense of being wise for taking the tests instead of waiting for someone to tell them, as that could be too late. His perception of health relates to Crawford's (1980) concept of 'healthism', (2.2.4); Peter feels morally responsible for the monitoring of his well-being and prevention of illness by knowing and avoiding the risk factors associated with ill-health, but also by investing in choices and practices that are health monitoring. This discourse appears mostly in contemporary capitalist societies, of which Cyprus is one, and has contributed to the belief that good physical health is the primary condition for the achievement of well-being (Crawford, 1980; Epaminonda, 2016).

Greg perceives swimming as a “*good thing*” for health and to maintain it, he goes for a swim in the sea no matter of the season, “*both winter and summer!*”.

“I always knew how to swim because the good thing with the schools in Australia is that it is compulsory to learn how to swim [...] I love swimming! Despite of whether I have to take Natalie for a session or to school, once doing it, every morning I go for a swim in the sea” (Greg, R1, L122)

Being born and raised in Australia, and having spent around half his life in Cyprus, Greg often drew comparisons between the two countries, and his quote somewhat illustrates the expectations he developed towards the duties of national bodies but also an obscured sense of dissatisfaction towards the Cypriot education system for not promoting physical activity and its essence. In contrast to Australia, swimming is not a part of physical education in Cyprus, and although it is a common hobby for young children, parents have to pay for their children to participate (Winterton & Parker, 2009). He appeared grateful towards the Australian education system for providing his introduction to swimming, which for him is a vital daily activity; despite his other daily duties or the weather, he never skips swimming. Besides the physical health benefits, throughout the year, swimming appeared to be one of the most significant sources of positive affect for Greg; it made him feel happier but also somewhat proud as there are not many people who can take the winter cold and go for a swim in the sea. There are numerous studies (Cummins, 2018; Daykin et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2012) that have suggested that physical activity is a contributor to happiness and Greg's narrative provides some further support as well as a deeper understanding on the finer elements that count / matter

towards taking physical activity for well-being; for instance, it can be argued that, for Greg the close proximity to a physical activity friendly environment (the sea), his education, which contributed to embodying the essence of physical activity, but also the availability of time due to his unemployment, facilitated his involvement and subsequently benefiting his physical health and overall well-being.

Overall, the findings suggest that taking a systematic care of their physical health is significant to their well-being as it contributes to their physical health (Cummins, 2018) and as discussed further below to their sense of self-satisfaction and happiness (figure 1).

4.2.2.2 Physical health and ‘happiness’

The vitality of physical health was also illustrated in the relationship it has, to the participants’ sense of happiness, which as it is discussed in-depth in the following section is as well a key contributor to the participants’ well-being. Physical health appeared as a contributor and a means to happiness.

“it’s health above everything, happiness and then the rest. If you have these two you can have whatever you want! [...] health is about having a healthy body above all and of course when you are ill or something, to be able to fight and get over it, not having much that impact you negatively” (Natalie, R1, L582)

Natalie has stated with confidence that having the ability to physically function fully and being happy are respectively the number one and two essential elements that can enable fulfilling desires, which for her appears to be the ultimate goal. This view was also evident in the perceptions of other adolescents as well; Ross, Mark and Beth but also participants of other studies, have also related health and good life to the ability to carry out their desires in their daily life (Senior & Chenhall, 2013). Moreover, for Natalie health is about the physicality of the body; a good physical condition, not being “*ill*” and having the strength to “*fight*” if needed. Being an elite swimmer, it could be argued that Natalie feels this way due to her sporting experiences and the mentality she developed through sport; having a healthy and strong body is a determinant of a good performance (Theberge, 2008). Moreover, her confidence along with the unanimity with her father’s (Greg, mentioned above) and other participants’ views

regarding the essence of physical health and happiness may suggest that these values are passed from generation to generation; as referred to in family systems theories as ‘multigenerational process’ (Bowen, 1974; J. Brown, 1999).

The interplay between physical health and happiness was illustrated in the participants’ sense of negative affect that was experienced as a result of not having enough time for self-care while striving for goal attainment and the embodied notion of healthism (Crawford, 1980). Following from the previous subtheme, although Gloria and Peter monitor their health, at the same time, on a day to day basis, they were also observed to be neglecting themselves in other ways. Like Greg, they also find exercise important for physical well-being; however, their daily routines do not allow adequate free time.

“I have to find those two hours to finish and find the time to relax. There is not enough time to wake up in the morning and take a walk or work out” (Peter, R1, L81)

“There’s just no time for myself... I always say that “next year I will start doing some walking”. In the past I used to be an athletic person. I used to go to the gym, the pool, I used to do aqua aerobic... but then with the kids, I stopped and this is why I became like this (fat)!” (Gloria, R1, L94)

Gloria was slightly self-sarcastic and humorous when referring to her appearance but at the same time revealed a sense of disappointment, self-guilt and shame for becoming “*like this*”; like something else that she does not want to identify herself as, especially as it does not reflect her previous “*athletic*” identity. Guilt was a significant emotion as it is an emotion relating to moral transgression (Tilghman-Osborne, Cole, & Felton, 2010). Her quote indicates what other studies have also explained; how body shape and size impacts self-satisfaction and happiness (Webster & Tiggemann, 2003). She explained how her “kids” take away all of her free time nonetheless, saying on the first and second interview that, “every week I keep saying “*from Saturday I’ll start going for walks*”” and “*I keep saying that every afternoon I’ll go for a walk and I never find time*”, and then again on the 4th “*my personal goals are to start walking this year*”, may suggest that, despite her indeed busy schedule and her duties as a mother, there might also be a lack of intrinsic motivation, which according to the SDT literature, is important for change to take place (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Looking in another family system, wanting to exercise but not having the time due to the parental duties was also Becky's issue; describing her daily life she shared:

"I am basically home- work, work- home. I don't have the time. I would LOVE to go to the gym and am trying to put it in my schedule, now that the little one will go to school I want to go to the gym and I want to believe that I will find some time because it's good for our health as well. It's all started now, with having a pain here, a pain there and then I need to pick that up (toys and other things left on the floor) and that kind of thing". (Becky, R1, L11)

Becky's narrative reveals her parental duties disable her in engaging in other activities and cause a sense of monotony in her daily life; tiredness but also a sense of concern for her physical health, which she voiced is deteriorating. For Becky, going to the gym would be a 'bad routine breaker' but also an action to improve her physical health and subsequently psychological well-being. Pains are associated with impaired body functionality and have a negative impact on people's overall well-being, as functionality is related to autonomy, self-satisfaction and affect (Alleva et al., 2017). Moreover, the impact of monotony has mostly been examined in workplace environments, yet it became synonymous with burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Ebbinghaus, 2002) and according to a study mothers who engaged in exercise indeed found a significant improvement on their psychological wellness (Huntsman, Parker, & Lovell, 2018), whilst in other cultures the concept of leisure did not quite exist for women (Demirbaş, 2020). According to surveys, Cyprus is one of the most inactive countries in the EU with 59.9% of inactivity in adults in 2008, while at the same time it has the largest gender gap, with women being 19.50% more inactive than men (British Heart Foundation, 2015; Health Organization & Office for Europe, 2013; Van Tuyckom, Van De Velde, & Bracke, 2013). This study helps explain these statistics by illustrating how mothers' devotion to parenting allows no time for exercise nor self-care, highlighting the power of parental roles and duties as well as the potential implications of these duties on their sense of happiness and general well-being.

Jess was a mother who had one of the busiest schedules amongst the eight parents and who felt that she was not very physically active, but in contrast to the other parents, would sometimes make time to exercise. For instance, at the end of the 3rd interview with Matthew, which took place around 9:30pm, he mentioned: "to give you an understanding as soon as we

finish (the interview), Jess and I are going for a walk, we'll do 2-3km for exercise” (L499). The narrative of her husband may be indicative that for Jess, walking is important and so she makes time for it but also that the amount of exercise she does is not adequate for her to feel that she is indeed physically active. Nevertheless, as with the other parents, her narrative illustrated that she also felt like she was neglecting her self-care but in a different way.

“The only thing I’m missing is rest! You’re doing everything you can to cover those two (children), the ones that are most important... and you neglect yourself a bit, meaning that, you’re not resting, that... yeah. I’m not resting as much I should. We’re lacking sleep, we’re lacking it! That’s it haha!” (Jess, R3, L12)

Jess’ words indicate that she felt overall satisfied with her life and that, if she could have some rest she would sense like having everything she needed. Saying that she rests less than what she should and repeating it, shows that she feels the impact of a lack of sleep and indicates exhaustion. In addition, Jess’ approach demonstrates the individuality of what people perceive as self-care and their unique needs in sensing LS; this highlights the importance of using subjective approaches to examine well-being (Diener & Chan, 2011).

Sleep deprivation and physical exhaustion in the pursuit of happiness was observed in some of the children’s narratives as well; for instance, the swimmers who daily spent hours in their sport and in Beth, who was dedicating most of her free time to studying, aiming to be offered a place at the University of Edinburgh.

“The nicest part of the day is when I go to sleep haha!” (Rachel, R3, L34)

“I’m exhausted! I finished with physics yesterday and I thought “finally now I only have the three other modules” for which I know that I’m good at and I’m sure that I will do well... but then remembered, I have the foundation that I need to finish as well...” (Beth, R3, L431)

Beth expressed exhaustion and being fed up with studying, nonetheless, at the same time she wanted to do well at her exams and did not want to, or felt like she could not, give up. Beth’s and the other participants’ narratives illustrated the importance of achieving their goals and how neglecting rest is one of the first sacrifices Cypriots make whilst pursuing success.

Being able to have more rest was often mentioned to be a need and indeed, in the interviews that took place during a break period the participants were observed to be more physically relaxed and also happier. For instance, the only time when Gloria went out for a walk, as she wished for, was just before the second interview, when she was abroad and felt relaxed.

“if you go away, get out of your house, even for 3-4 days you feel different. You wake up in the morning, there’s no chores to do, you’re relaxed, you can go for a walk. When I went to Thessaloniki I did quite a bit of walk, yet now I keep saying that every afternoon I’ll go for a walk and I never find time.” (Gloria, R2, L281)

Gloria’s words illustrate that being home relates to doing chores and being tired, while being away provides an opportunity to rest and do what she enjoys, such as walking. Similarly, her daughter in her 4th interview shared:

“Now that it’s the summer holidays I feel way more relaxed than the year’s gone (meaning school term), because I was taking art classes almost every single day. I definitely feel more rested!” (Beth, R4, L46)

Overall the findings demonstrate how for Cypriots, physical health is perceived vital for a good life and well-being, but also how complex the relationship between physical health and happiness is. As the literature also suggests, physical health and positive affect are interconnected, but can both have a positive and negative relationship (Huppert, 2009); for instance, increased positive affect could bring about a higher sense of physical wellness but also in striving for happiness people can cause their physical health to deteriorate. Moreover, physical health is associated with functional and bodily well-being, self-satisfaction and PWB (Alleva et al., 2017; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Van Dierendonck et al., 2008). For the majority of the participants, pursuing goals allowed limited time for rest, which negatively influenced their physical health and their sense of wellness, which in turn impacted their sense of functionality as they are physically tired. On the other hand, it did not impact their satisfaction of life as the evaluation of it was based on a wider range of factors. For instance, when the parents perceived that their children were doing well, they felt satisfied with life despite their exhaustion. This stance towards life could be explained by the ‘Liveability’ theory and ‘Comparison theory’

(Hagerty, 1999), but it could also be challenged, as according to the literature, people sometimes claim life satisfaction due to biased reporting and / or biased appraisal of life (Cummins & Nistico, 2002).

4.2.3 Sensing family well-being

Whilst measures and understanding of well-being are dominated by individual metrics, relationships including those in the family are central to how well people feel they are doing. The participants' narratives illustrated that the notion of 'familism' or 'filiocracy' is particularly strong in Cypriot culture (Crocetti & Meeus, 2014; Hernández & Bámaca-Colbert, 2016; Minas, Mavrikiou, & Jacobson, 2013); filiocracy refers to "a system dominated by family", where family is "predominant in social and economic life of the society" (Minas et al., 2013, p. 4). For all the participants, their nuclear and for some parents even their extended family, had perhaps the most central role in their lives and well-being, especially for parents whose priority was their family and this was apparent throughout the year. It was evident in their description of 'ideal' life, in how they evaluate their life satisfaction, in how they perceived their daily experiences, in the emotions they revealed whenever they referred to a family moment or member, but also in the great extent that the emotions of one member could impact the experiences of the rest of their family.

Greg: Happiness... umm... not having too many worries, not having problems in your family... I always come back to the family!

Anastasia: Well if this is what it is for you...

Greg: Yeah... being happy with your wife, your children... that's it!

Anastasia: And if I asked what's family well-being?

Greg: Family well-being... um, family well-being... It's the same thing, its happiness haha! (R1, L540-546)

As demonstrated in figure 1, sensing family wellness is directly linked to the individuals' happiness and overall well-being. The following themes illustrate how others' a) physical health and happiness, b) choices and c) family relationships can be significant determinants in individuals' well-being.

4.2.3.1 Sensing others' physical health & happiness

Distress and distraction were observed in all four families when members were going through a difficult time.

“The same happens when Beth faces an issue or is ill. The same happens, it’s not as if... like the other day, she had a cold, and I was telling her for instance, “take a multivitamin, a paracetamol...”. She doesn’t take any medication [...] and she makes me mad, hearing her saying that she’s in pain but not being willing to take anything. I don’t accept it! And with the rest of the family, want anyone to be ill... and the relatives... I had an argument with my mother in law, because she was ill and wasn’t listening [to take medication]!” (Peter, R2, L210)

Peters’ descriptions illustrate how worried and distressed he becomes when a family member becomes ill, showing how related others’ physical health is to his happiness. As discussed in 4.2.2.1, Peter has embodied the notion of healthism (Crawford, 1980), and therefore he is fearful of illnesses and gets angry when people do not do anything to protect themselves, especially their health; he does not want to see them suffer, as that would make him suffer too. In addition, his anger may not relate solely to his fear but also to his self-esteem as he takes it somewhat personally that they do not listen; he feels like he has the power to help, illustrating faith in himself, but he does not receive recognition, which makes him feel ignored, angry and anxious as he remains stressed about his beloved ones’ health deteriorating.

Peter’s emotions reflect the response that all parents had when they had to deal with health issues or matters that were causing negative affect to other members of their families, which arguably relates to their duties and embodied sense of responsibility as parents and spouse; nevertheless, children also experienced negative affect when seeing other members struggling.

“When you hear her saying that she is too tired and that she might not swim well, which she only said once because she was extremely tired, you can’t be alright with that –

knowing that your sister is extremely tired and sensing that she feels sad!” (Ben, R4, L346)

Ben’s narrative illustrates how he was surprised to hear Rachel saying that she is tired and that she might not swim well and how his sister’s exhaustion and sadness was transmitted to him. In addition, saying that as a brother “*you can’t be alright with that*” indicates how he expects every sibling to have felt the same, and illustrates the expectations he has from his family; to feel compassion. Similarly, Ross’ concern about his father’s health can be seen through Adam’s quote:

“whenever he’d leave anything on his plate, I’d eat it, but then (when Ross was ill) he wasn’t letting me! And I was telling him [bantering], “come on let me have twenty days or so off from work! But again, he wouldn’t let me!” (Adam, R2, L130)

Adam’s narrative reveals how his son’s gesture made him feel looked after and loved; but on a deeper level, as an incident, it shows both the importance of Adam’s health for Ross but also the meaning that Ross’ caring has towards Adam’s sense of happiness.

Overall, as demonstrated, one’s well-being impacts the others’, sometimes directly and other times indirectly, while the impact that one has upon the other has a fluid nature and affects the entire family. What should be realised in studying families and any other systems / groups, is the chain reaction that one’s state or behaviour impacts others and then how those others respond; in other words, the impact on the dynamics.

4.2.3.2 Approving of others’ choices

Following the above section, it could be argued that the higher an individual’s well-being, the more likely it is to contribute to others’ individual and the family’s WB; nonetheless, one of the reasons why this is not the case, is due to the difference amongst the individuals’ subjective perception on what ‘wellness’ is, and often on the ineffective communication of emotions (discussed further in 4.4.1.1.2), which disables understanding each other and being compassionate. For the participants in the study, feeling that other members’ choices in life

were in their best interests seemed to be significant to their personal well-being but also a factor that was shaping family relationships.

One of the most significant examples of this appeared in Natalie's family, in which Stacy's choice to remain in a foreign country to work after completing her studies, was a matter that was causing disruption. Although Stacy did not take part in this study, all family members made numerous references to that matter. Greg and Teresa have repeatedly mentioned that they would be happier and less concerned about her well-being and fully satisfied with their family life if Stacy returned. As illustrated in Teresa's narratives below, these emotions were present throughout the year, and their well-being was observed to be fluctuating throughout based on Stacy's choices and thoughts.

Teresa: I'm relatively pleased with my life, well, maybe it was my fault that I sent them to study abroad, I should have thought that... maybe they would like it. I'm not complaining it's just that, with Roy it's fine, he has his wife, they're married... with Stacy, I'm just worried because she's alone.

Anastasia: What if she was married too?

Teresa: If she was married, but married to a Cypriot it would be fine.

Anastasia: What if he was a foreigner?

Teresa: If it was a foreigner I wouldn't like it because that would mean that Stacey would never come back, and that's my issue... If she was married to Cypriot it would have been ok. They would both come back at some point... I'm not a racist it's just that... we, Cypriots, are different, and the end of it all, because I've seen many couples who got married to... other races... it's not as if it's their fault or ours... We are just different! We see things in a different way, we have differences in the way that we were raised up and in the way that will behave. I might not like the things that a lady from another country might be doing and she might not like the things that I like doing. (Teresa, R1, L408)

In the 3rd interview they started coming to terms with the fact that Stacy may not return; however, it appeared that they felt somewhat 'defeated' and disappointed:

“I wish that she’ll be well, I’ve accepted it, okay... sometimes I think, what is she doing all alone there and I get anxious, because she’s alone, but if she feels alright... I wish that she’s well and happy and she can visit us whenever she wants” (Teresa, R3, L309)

Nonetheless, in the 4th interview they shared that Stacy was almost convinced to soon come back to Cyprus:

“I think we are getting there [convincing Stacy to return] ... it’s not that I mind... I only want her to be happy but if she doesn’t come back soon, it will be too late after and she will regret it in the future [...] if she manages to build her clientele there, then she won’t be coming back, she’ll stay there. But if she returns and does that here she’ll be better off. Because she has us, her family here. She’ll be bored being alone there” (Teresa, R4, L186)

In the above narratives, it can be seen how Stacy’s choices, striving to build a career and live abroad, were causing distress to her family. Similarly, parents of other studies who have also witnessed their child becoming more independent and leading their own lives felt rejected and have also expressed regret for not intervening in their children’s choices, which have led them to live their life more independently (Kloep & Hendry, 2010). Although, the family members insisted that it would be better for Stacy to return to Cyprus, suggesting that they are solely concerned about her well-being, the analysis suggests that their dissatisfaction related to a variety of other factors as well. Firstly, their morals and perception of gender roles, which want a lady to remain close to her nuclear family and having her own family with a Cypriot (Domic & Philaretou, 2012). As Stacy’s brother, Harry said:

“I wouldn’t like it if she was with a foreigner, who wouldn’t even know where Cyprus is, who’d have a different mentality, different... all sorts, and try to be a family [...] she was with someone and none of us liked him. He was telling us that he visited Ayia Napa with his parents when he was younger, but he hadn’t realised that was in Cyprus... this much ignorance!” (Harry R2, L335).

Harry’s narrative demonstrated the presence of patriarchal attitudes that still exist in Cyprus, including set beliefs about gender roles, xenophobia and a sense of being offended

(Hadjipavlou, 2006; Karamanidou & Bush, 2017); in addition, although the statistics are showing a decline in such attitudes, for Cypriots, marital ‘homogamy’ especially for women was a requirement to be socially accepted, while it was a taboo to marry foreigners (Domic & Philaretou, 2012). Secondly, their collective perception that the members of a good family should be bonded and remain close to each other, and thirdly, to their personal needs; for instance, for Teresa and Greg, it is a personal need to sense that their children are safe but also, maybe, to hold on to their parent identity for longer (Kloep & Hendry, 2010).

Similar examples were observed in the other families, for instance, Adam disagreeing with Ross’ choice to have a night out in another town and having to drive in the early hours, and Peter not wanting Beth to study abroad; however, the emotions and handling of these disagreements differed amongst the four families, highlighting the uniqueness of each family and the need for more individualised tools when assessing FWB in any context. Families where members feel pressure to experience similar emotions to their family members are described by FST as fused, and the more fused families are, the more likely it is for emotional autonomy to be experienced as abandonment (Bowen, 1976). Significantly, in Harry’s family, abandonment was experienced by the parents, Harry but also by Stacy according to the others’ narratives. Similar examples were observed in the other families, for instance, Adam disagreeing with Ross’ choice to have a night out in another town and having to drive in the early hours, Peter not wanting Beth to study abroad; however, the emotions and handling of these disagreements differed amongst the four families, highlighting the uniqueness of each family and the need of more individualised tools when assessing FWB both in the context of sport and in any other one. In the families where members feel the pressure to sense similar emotions to the others are described by FST as fused, and the more fused families are, the more likely it is for emotional autonomy to be experienced as abandonment (Bowen, 1976). Significantly, abandonment was sensed both by the parents and Harry but also from Stacy, as seen in the others’ narratives, but it was not seen in the narratives of all the others.

4.2.3.3 Interfamily relationships

For the participants, sensing that their personal relationships with family members as well as other members’ relationships with one another are good, appeared as a significant source of happiness. Looking firstly at the relationships between parents, all parents shared that they have occasional arguments with their spouse; however, they perceived this to be

normal and expressed satisfaction with their relationships. Of the four couples, Rachael's and Ross' parents spoke with particular admiration about each other and expressed how important their spouse is to them. Rachel's parents narrated how happy they feel with one another and expressed how important they are for each other.

"I don't want anything else from life. I have what I always wanted! A husband who gets me and who's there for me and having a family!" (Jess, R1, L308)

"My wife is my pillar of strength! So basically, without her I couldn't have been... let's say, let's just say, I'd be lost! Because first of all, you have to be happy with your wife! Your kids will go away at some point, it's with your wife that you'll be holding hands when you get old" (Matthew, R1, L297)

They both revealed emotions of completeness and almost luck for finding someone who has the qualities they looked for, such as being understanding and supportive. As it can be seen, for Jess, having the support of a man specifically, with whom she would get married and have a family has been a life desire. She feels fulfilled with Matthew and her family and does not require anything else to be happy. The importance of marital satisfaction on well-being is not just a factor that impacts well-being when married but it is a factor that the participants believe is significant for a 'good life'. Matthew's narrative revealed the same emotions but his narrative also showed how he perceives the parent-child relationship; in contrast with Natalie's parents, Matthew perceives the children's moving away as a natural process and is prepared for it, despite that he finds the 'together' time with the family important (discussed further in 4.4.1.1.1).

Agreeing with the family literature, one of the most significant dyadic relationships within a family is the one of the spouse (Jekielek, 1998; Newland, 2015) as it influences the well-being of the children too.

"we are very bonded and I think that, that's why there's nothing bad between us, we share a lot of love I think. There's only a few times when we'd argue but still, 5 minutes later we're absolutely fine!" (Ben, R3, B122)

Ben's quote reflects his parents' emotions; it reveals contentment with his family as he senses that they share love and that they are resilient to conflicts. A different example of how other family members' relationships are impacting children includes Mark's family members.

"I told them... that they are exaggerating a bit and that, let's say... not to bug him all the time since he is doing the things that they... let's say, my dad would ask "have you taken your iron tablets?", "no!", Mark had taken it already but he does that to annoy him!" (Beth, R2, B247)

Beth's narrative shows how she felt when witnessing her parents 'bugging' her brother; her quote reveals annoyance and frustration with the triad's relationship and her emotions led her to intervene in their argument to bring back harmony. In addition, it is evident that Beth is more aware about how Mark behaves than their parents, and so she can separate her brother's joking from the truth.

Significantly, all the children who took part in this study appeared to be bonded and very supportive to one another, which had a positive impact on theirs and their parents' sense of happiness. As Adam shared:

"There's a lot of chemistry! Even if one sneezes the other one will know! They know what each other does! [...] we [Jess and him] see their relationship, It's very obvious, they are very bonded! God forbid not to jinx them!" (Adam, R2, B118)

Peter's narrative revealed emotions of happiness and somewhat pride, as it is a parent's duty to raise up their children to be bonded, especially in places where familism is dominating the functioning of the cultures (Dunn, Slomkowski, & Beardsall, 1994); therefore, their relationship reflects positively on his self-satisfaction. As mentioned earlier, only Natalie's siblings, Harry and Stacy, were facing conflicts; nevertheless, Harry shared that the members' relationships are important for him.

"I am a guy who always prioritises his family and the bonding of it, that's how I am and I think it's going fine. Looking at others I make the sign of cross and think "thank God" [we are better]!! [...] as I said, with Stacy, the more far away we are, the more... quiet things are, without arguing!" (Harry, R3, B155)

Harry's narrative, besides demonstrating the importance of family relationships on his well-being, also illustrates that harmony demands boundaries and prerequisites; for him, 'peace' can exist when Stacy and he are kept far from each other; yet this attitude clashes with wanting Stacy to return and the need for togetherness, which is discussed later on (4.4.1.1.1). Significantly, the clash between Harry and Stacy occurred to be evident to the other individual members; however, arguing appeared to be somewhat normalised in their family:

“well, they are the ‘sandwich’ children [middle children – 3rd & 4th] ... nothing serious, for example, Stacy might put on a couple of kilos and Harry would tease her hah! Not wild arguments... its between joking and being serious [...] at some point Stacy thought that I didn't love her because I was giving more attention to Natalie [...] I think it was since they were born. (Teresa, R3, L255 – 263)

Teresa expressed emotions of sadness and guilt towards her two children's relationship; at the beginning, she tried to explain by rationalising that the relationship between Stacy and Harry is based on the fact that they are the middle children; however, she then admits that she may have a blame in Stacy's distance, and reveals emotions of guilt. Her narrative illustrates the meaning of other's relationship on her day-to-day experiences and feeling happiness but also on her self-satisfaction as a parent.

Overall, the strong notion of familism in the Cypriot culture makes it impossible for people to remain indifferent to happenings between family members (Powell, 2017), which sometimes creates conflicts, either because members are too similar or different, or because sometimes members are expected to fulfil their gendered role (Domic & Philaretou, 2012; Skapoulli, 2009). The individuals' perception on how the other members are feeling now and perhaps in the future (assumed by their choices), and the family relationships influence their personal sense of happiness and as illustrated in the following section (4.4) the mutual sense of FWB (figure 1).

4.3 Summary: Individuals' well-being

Conceptualising the participants' personal well-being, this section has demonstrated the vitality of physical health, happiness and family wellness, as well as the strong interplay

between them. The contributors to their personal well-being, and more specifically to happiness, identified in this study relate strongly to factors that appear within the concepts of SWB, PWB, SDT and PERMA (Butler & Kern, 2016; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2011); nonetheless, these factors relate to the Cypriot culture. For instance, religion (Christian Orthodox), which is broadly associated with spiritual well-being and FWB, are elements that were found to be important in the context of this study but which are not incorporated per se in the aforementioned models. This study supports the essence of using subjective measures as well as maintaining cultural awareness (Uchida et al., 2015) to avoid generalisations being made, especially when the studies seek to influence policy. Positive family relationships are significant to people's well-being (Fahey et al., 2013) but in the Cypriot culture the notion of familism was highly visible; sensing that others are physically healthy and happy, are taking the right decisions and sensing that the family members maintain a good relationship was essential to their personal happiness. Based on the findings presented in this chapter it is evident that FWB in Cyprus cannot simply mean that the members are individually doing well with their lives. Such a view could only exist in emotionally disconnected systems. In the context of Cyprus as well as in other cultures (Lambert D'raven & Pasha-Zaidi, 2016), where the notion of family and the religious commands want people to remain close to their families throughout life are fairly dominant, that could not apply.

4.4 Family members' mutual sense of FWB

As illustrated in 2.3, the great majority of the family literature including the FST, agree that FWB is not solely the well-being of the individuals but that it also involves positive dynamics and positive emotions amongst the members, such as harmony and belongingness (Fahey et al., 2013; McCarthy, 2012; Zabriskie & Ward, 2013; Zuna et al., 2010), while sharing mutual experiences is known for contributing to family well-being (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2003).

To develop an understanding of the elements that generate a mutual sense of FWB, throughout the data collection year, the participants were being asked about their FLS and to share their family experiences. To facilitate an understanding of whether family members perceived FWB and family life in a similar way, the participants were asked to narrate how they experienced events in which all the family members were present (e.g. Christmas dinner, Easter, National swimming championships, etc.). This method enabled observing what shaped each individual's experiences and the development of an understanding of their perception of family dynamics, including the members' communication and relationships. Having explored each member's narratives separately, a comparison between the narratives of the members of each family was conducted to identify common needs and to develop an understanding of the elements that contribute to a mutual and consistent sense of positive affect for being members of their family. For instance, if all members enjoyed an event, then the characteristics of that occasion were closely analysed to develop an understanding of the ideal 'circumstances' and emotions and vice versa. The length of the study permitted re-examining primary observations through the four data collection rounds to develop an informed conceptualisation.

The 'mutual sense of FWB' in this study refers to a collective positive perception about and emotion towards their family; it includes cognitive evaluations of satisfaction with the family life as well as positive affect. Presented in detail in the following sections and in figure 1, the findings suggest that a mutual sense of FWB is developed when the members feel content with and acknowledged by one another.

4.4.1 Contentment

Relating to Ferguson and Ryan's (2019) definition on social contentment, "feelings of satisfaction, happiness, and confidence regarding their social relationships and social

interactions” (Ferguson & Ryan, 2019, p. 343), the participants had similar needs and expectations from their family.

“it’s a small, a small tighten together team. This is what family is for me. Just that. Its having someone that you know that they will be happy with your happiness and sad with your sadness and being there for you.” (Jess R1, L276)

“Family means everything! When things get tough they help you. Whenever you want them they are there! Its them who help you become the person you are... um... they help you become the best you can and they prepare you for the future” (Ben, R1, L459)

Jess’ and Ben’s quote show how they almost equate family with contentment, as they both highlight the notion of happiness and security. As illustrated in figure 1 and discussed below, contentment, in the context of Cypriot families’ well-being, is an outcome of positive family relationships, which includes both positive emotions and positive interactions between all members. In this study, positive emotions refer to the mutual sense of positive affect within the family, and positive interaction refers to the behaviours that are essential for sensing positive emotions. Although in theory interactions and emotions can be differentiated they are hard to separate in practice, as emotions and interactions motivate / trigger one another (Tamir & Bigman, 2018); for this reason, their contribution to FWB is presented in a conjoined theme.

4.4.1.1 Positive emotions and interactions

The core emotional needs for participants to feel content in their families were found to be love, support, compassion, approval, respect, and trust of rules and boundaries, whilst the behaviours that facilitate sensing positive emotions include open verbal communication & humour, listening, active support and having fun time together (figure 1). These behaviours are relevant to one another as listening, having open verbal communication and spending quality time together creates bonding and subsequently enhances FWB.

4.4.1.1.1 Spending quality time together

As also explained in other studies togetherness is a core aspect of FWB (Nash, O'Malley, & Patterson, 2018). Although the 'together time' of these families was limited due to the swimming demands (discussed in Chapter 5), all family members expressed a desire for spending time together and revealed a sense of expectation towards the other members to want the same. In addition, the together time was a criterion when evaluating their FLS.

"I think we are a good family, and many would be jealous that we are such a bonded family! Since they were born we never went anywhere without them, nor when we would go for a holiday abroad or in Cyprus! [...] We would always eat together, the majority of times, except the times when work doesn't... For example, one day I came back from work at 1pm and I was tired so I told them not to wait for me to eat and instead they waited until 4, when I got up" (Peter, R1, L169)

Like Peter, the participants spoke fondly about their own family rituals and expressed the importance of the 'family time'; however, the amount of time that would satisfy each individual appeared to vary. In the cases where members had different needs and desires it was more likely for conflicts to occur (example from Rachel's family included in 4.4.1.1.2), whereas when their needs were consistent, emotions of personal happiness as well as collective contentment were evident.

As illustrated in 4.2.3.2, in Natalie's family, the absence of James and especially Stacy, was a factor that was impacting all members' individual well-being, and subsequently shapes their FWB. Although, Harry expressed anger regarding his sister's absence, he appeared willing to let it go in case she returned:

"I am waiting for Stacy to come back and I have to find the strength let's say, because now I'm a bit knackered from traveling to Canada, the weddings and this and that... to find the strength to help her out open up her own business doing Pilates. She likes it and it would be a great idea for her to do it!" (Harry, R4, L342)

Besides the negative relationship, Harry had with his sister, Stacy, and his physical exhaustion, Harry appeared willing to help his sister settling in Cyprus, which as seen throughout the year was vital to sense FWB.

The significance of the absence of members was evident in Ross' family too:

"Now that Tom is back too, our home is complete! And sometimes when we don't get to see his girlfriend for a day or two, I always look for her!" (Adam, R4, L349)

The bond of the members in Ross' family was evident throughout the study, while examining how the members of Ross' family experienced the Christmas holidays, it was evident that the family members felt contentment, as their mutual need to all be together was fulfilled.

"I had a good break! Because I don't get many opportunities to see them (family), and now Tom is also back to Cyprus for Christmas. For us Christmas means being all together! [...] We were home all together, playing games, baking cakes, even the boys helped me! Mostly Tom, Ross only eats! On New Year's Eve, we wanted to spend it alone (just the nuclear family), we did it one year and ever since we didn't stop, we're playing... playing cards, playing games, it was loads of fun. Unfortunately, such days pass quick quickly!" (Becky, R2, L14 - 18)

"We had the party at my house, Tom's girlfriend joined us as well, and it was more 'just us together' this year. We didn't spend too much time with others... we were also going into town for walks and stuff with the little one. [...] One of the two best moments of these months was when we had the party here on New Year's Eve, when Tom's girlfriend was also here. At some point dad said that he'd go to walk the dogs because 'he had too much food and wanted to digest it.' Anyway, but he got dressed up as Santa Claus and came in, and basically just by looking at the kid smiling so much, I felt complete!" (Ross, R2, 659)

"We preferred staying alone. Because I'm away all the time and they don't see me much, so we decided to stay... And I stayed home all night! I didn't even go out for a little wonder. It was nice! We had food, played cards, the easy games so that the little one could play too!" (Tom, R2, L239)

The narratives above show how being in each other's company and sharing those moments created a mutual sense of contentment. Describing individually how they experienced the holidays enabled seeing that the four members of Ross' family had a positive interaction and mutually sensed positive emotions; they all enjoyed the holidays but were also happy about seeing each other happy. In Cyprus, it is common to celebrate with the extended families and on New Year's Eve for young adults to meet their friends after the turn of the day; as described though, in Ross' family, it was a mutual need and agreement to spend the New Year's Eve 'alone', meaning without any other relatives. In addition, bearing in mind their age, the fact that Ross and Tom did not spend any time with their friends illustrated the extent that they enjoyed the evening and perhaps the need they had to be together as a family. In line with this, although it would somewhat be expected for the teenagers to be more interested about spending time with their friends, the young participants instead, shared how they also craved time with their family.

"having a day in with the family, without having to do anything [...] watch TV or movies, I'd love that" (Ben, R2, L287)

"it doesn't feel very nice because I see them all feeling stressed, and running around to get things done and we just see each other in the evenings [...] I'd like it if we could go more often to the marina let's say... or to the mall. Anywhere!" (Mark, R3, L474)

It is suggested that the desire of the children who took part in this study for more family time related to the notion of familism, their parents' busy schedule and, to a great extent, to the demands of swimming, which in other families do not exist and therefore could explain why perhaps other children feel the family contact is adequate and desire more time with friends; this observation is analysed in depth in the following chapter (5.4.1.1).

As the literature suggests, having fun is important for developing family bonding, nonetheless, as suggested: *"Togetherness involves more than being in the same space and sharing fun times. It also incorporates family members learning about themselves and each other, teaching moral lessons and encouraging an appreciation of the importance of family"* (Nash et al., 2018, p. 2017). Agreeing with this statement, the following section illustrates how

open communication appeared to be a key element in sensing contentment and developing FWB.

4.4.1.1.2 *Open verbal communication*

Communication is perhaps the most significant determinant of family satisfaction as it enables members to express needs, worries, ambitions, desires, etc. and to resolve problems (Akhlaq, Malik, & Khan, 2013; R. Peterson & Green, 2009; C. E. Ryan et al., 2005). Although communication is not solely verbal, FSTs suggest that overt verbal communication is essential for families to maintain harmony and progress in life (C. E. Ryan et al., 2005; Satir et al., 1975). As it could be also seen in the descriptions of the four families (3.2.2), the communication patterns appeared to differ between the family systems, as well as amongst children and parents. For instance, Ross did not express an opinion in his father's decision about whether to leave his job, but Ben, who was even younger, did express an opinion when Matthew was promoted to a better position, as due to being required to travel every morning to another town, Matthew would not be able to take him to school. Nevertheless, as is illustrated in the following paragraphs, the more open the communication was amongst the members, the most content the members felt.

In Mark's family, Mark rarely expressed his thoughts and feelings, which was often annoying for Peter and Gloria and often caused disturbance to the family dynamics.

"I want him to look at me as a friend not a father. Or if he doesn't want to talk to me, I would like him to talk to his mum about stuff." (Peter, R1, L157)

Peter's quote illustrates his frustration towards the lack of communication with Mark and the uneasiness and urge to enter his train of thought even through his mother, as well as his wish to become closer and have perhaps a less formal and strict relationship, be more like friends.

"Beth said we (Peter and her) should stop arguing... I was like, "my love" ... I mean, I was wondering why was the little one saying that we were arguing... I told her... I said, "don't expect everything to be sweet every day". But also, "when we're discussing, we aren't quarrelling, despite that we might raise the tone of our voice. There are times

that you do raise the tone of voice. It's something that you need to be prepared for... That is to say, when you will have your own family, the first six months might be perfect... The second six months... The first year, the second year, third... At some point, it stops being perfect... As soon as the hardships of life start coming, you start having ups and downs. But it doesn't mean that because we discuss with your dad that I hate your dad, or that your dad doesn't love me! We both love each other, it is only these difficulties of life that bring these obstacles.”” (Gloria, R4, L465)

The fact that it was a surprise for Gloria to hear Beth telling them to stop arguing illustrates too the presence of ‘dysfunctional communication’ (C. E. Ryan et al., 2005; Satir et al., 1975); firstly because of the arguments between the couple but mainly for the absence of understanding of where Beth’s request came from. It can be argued that if Beth’s concern was communicated or / and Gloria realised what Beth witnessed and felt, this surprise would not take place. In contrast to the negative affect that Peter and Gloria develop due to their communication with their children, looking at Beth’s and Mark’s perception on their family relationships it can be seen that although they also share the same views, this dysfunctionality in their communication had not (at least within the year of data collection) caused a negative impact on their sense of contentment.

“there is no perfect family because no one is a perfect human being [...] there might be arguments etc. but if there weren't any how could you become stronger? [...] I would like them (parents) to stop moaning and I'll be happy” (Beth, R1, L276)

Beth did not perceive their parents’ arguments as a serious matter, despite feeling annoyed at them. The physicality in the way she says, “*to stop moaning*” illustrates that she feels that it is simply a matter of stopping and not a complex issue that needs more fine handling. Overall, she reveals a sense of FLS, which appears to be based on her belief regarding the notion of ‘perfection’ and the acceptance of the impossibility of becoming perfect, but also on the feeling she has regarding their continuous growth in terms of becoming stronger as a family.

In line with Beth’s beliefs, the analysis of the participants’ narratives illustrated that the normalisation of arguments amongst family members is common for Cypriots, as they perceive that arguments are part of life. Arguments were mostly evident between the spouses, and between parents and adolescents. Literature suggests that arguments between parents and

adolescents are common and almost ‘natural’, as it is the time that youngsters start exploring their identities and bringing new ideas into the family (Koepeke & Denissen, 2012). In Natalie’s family, there was also dysfunctional communication, nonetheless, the members tried drawing boundaries to secure the family’s harmony and well-being.

“Teresa: He might have got upset when I told him not to tell her, but I explained that it’s different because I am the mother, whereas you’re the dad and it’s different.

Anastasia: Do you have a conversation about it or do you simply tell him not to?

Teresa: No no, I tell him, “it’s better not to do it, because, let me do it because I am the mother and that’s how it goes”, “but it’s not that serious”, “yeah, but if you talk to her about it she might get upset, or whatever.”. Greg and Natalie have this issue, they argue and I might see them both grumpy haha! And I can’t haha... I can’t be grumpy towards anyone. But what could I do? I tolerate them until they stop” (Teresa, R2, L312-316)

“I don’t feel nice... I’m not saying... I wouldn’t impose anything or be like, “whatever I say is correct and do as I say! I don’t want that!” I just want us to communicate. Let’s say, “what have you done in the session? Have you changed anything?” I would like us to chat in a friendly manner, nothing else. I just feel that I can’t... for example, I don’t want to be initiating conversation... not that I don’t want to, I do but...” (Greg, R3, L169)

“with Stacy, the further away we are, the more... quiet things are, without arguing!” (Harry, R3, L159)

Literature indicates that boundaries are important and useful for the functionality of the family as long as they are communicated, comprehended and agreed upon (Minuchin, 1974), which in Natalie’s family, they are not. Teresa prioritises Natalie’s emotions and takes the initiative to stop Greg from trying to talk with Natalie about her health issue and swimming; Teresa’s action and Natalie’s stance towards him, make him feel unwanted and inadequate, so he distances himself from the mother-daughter dyad. In addition, as mentioned in 4.2.3.3, Harry draws boundaries as to the amount of contact he wants to be having with Stacy. These

communication patterns carried on throughout the year, and as a result, Natalie's family was observed to be constantly having to deal with various arguments.

Rachel's family provided an illustration of the positive impact of open communication on the members' sense of contentment and FWB.

"With my mum, I usually argue because she says that I do nothing at home, that my room is untidy..." (Rachel, R1, L786)

"We fight, but the reason we fight is clear, it's for clear things. That is, we do not quarrel because... we quarrel for everyday stuff, not cleaning... so, so an example was when for the whole summer... summer! The few days of August when they were resting she was in her room all day watching movies and not coming out... these things, while we are arguing that... "come out, sit down to eat as a family", it's that... and yeah... okay, I understand that they are growing up... um... I understand this thing. But, I hear from others who have kids who are at their age and are still following their parents. Ours don't follow us as much... these are our only issues basically. We do not quarrel per se... it is everyday stuff." (Jess, R1, L164)

Jess' narrative illustrates some signs of a modern family in a 'Cellular household', where members become disconnected as a result of becoming absorbed by technology (Pomfret & Varley, 2019). Jess expressed mixed emotions towards Rachel's stance regarding the amount of time she spends away from the family; she felt disappointment and anger, however she was aware of how Rachel's behaviour is associated to her age. She appreciates that the reason they "fight is clear" and is pleased that open communication exists between them, which potentially illustrates an awareness of the influence of open communication on FWB (Galvin, 2015; Satir et al., 1991). Being aware of this importance Jess might be pursuing open communication and not becoming alienated could be an outcome of her efforts. Literature suggests that open verbal communication enhances understanding and compassion, and in Rachel's family, where open communication existed, those effects were evident in all the members' narratives throughout the length of the study. An example can be found in the 4th interview with Ben, when he shared the conversation he had with his parents over the phone, when they went abroad with Rachel to help her settle at the university.

“they told me “we are having a good time, it’s really nice here but we are very sad that we’ll be leaving soon and leaving her here”” (Ben, R4, L287)

Often parents do not permit their children access to their negative emotions, to avoid upsetting them (Castro, Halberstadt, Lozada, & Craig, 2015); however, as illustrated in Ben’s narrative, in their family open communication is maintained at all times and has enabled Ben to be compassionate towards his parents. As it was seen in other cases, when parents do not allow children to know how they feel, the parents are less likely to receive support from their children and more likely to feel isolated.

“Ross did not take much part in it [decision to leave his job] and I didn’t wanna add more on him with this [...] he didn’t know much about it he had enough problems of his own” (Adam, R2, L88)

“everyone lives in their own little world haha! [...] I think they are struggling [with their jobs] a bit but they’re managing. I hear them arguing sometimes and so assume, I don’t like getting involved in such matters” (Ross, R2, L327)

As seen in the above quotes, while Adam withholds what is happening in his workplace, Ross remains almost oblivious and as a consequence, Adam becomes restrained as to when he can share his feelings and to whom in order not to ‘burden’ his son. This example illustrates how, in combination with Ross’s will to remain outside of his parents’ matters, Adam’s protective measures also restrict communication and bonding with his son, and disable embracing fully mutual emotions of compassion and contentment (Minuchin, 1974). Though this outcome negatively impacts FWB, when the parents’ effort to ‘protect’ their children by hiding information fails, the children who are more inclined or curious to know what their parents are doing often develop more sophisticated emotional recognition children who had more insight into their parents matters, which contributes to their personal development and well-being (Castro et al., 2015).

4.4.2 Acknowledging each other

This theme is related to social recognition (4.2.1.2.1), but it deals with each family as a microsystem or a ‘microsociety’, where recognition is received and given to its members for the roles they have inside their family. While acknowledgement and compassion are linked (Van Der Cingel, 2009), studies have illustrated that acknowledging other family members’ contribution to the family and their abilities (e.g. how good they are at their job) impacts positively their well-being and their motivation to continue providing even more (Barbic, Mayo, White, & Bartlett, 2014). Likewise, the present study found that as family is so important to each family member, other members’ opinion of them plays a significant role in how they feel about themselves and on the family’s togetherness. Therefore, this study suggests that acknowledging each other contributes to FWB in a similar way that social recognition contributes to individuals’ self-satisfaction and esteem (discussed in 4.2.1.1), but also rejuvenates members’ mutual sense of contentment, including feeling positive affect and increasing motivation to interact more. Within the four families, acknowledgement was obtained by fulfilling their family and social role; for example, being a good mother and a good professional. Important to acknowledgement is the role of communication, as for members to offer or receive acknowledgement they must effectively communicate their emotions (Van Der Cingel, 2009).

4.4.2.1 Family role fulfilment

In each family, there were three different roles that each participant could have, mother, father or child, and as seen previously, the duties of family members in Cyprus are fairly rigid. Nonetheless, as this section demonstrates, for FWB it is important that family members feel acknowledged by each other, as the consequences of being deprived of recognition cause a negative reaction on the other family members, resulting in conflict and distance.

In Ross’ family everyone mentioned that Becky holds a ‘coordinator’s role’ and that she is the closest person to each other family member; from the analysis, it appeared that Becky understands their emotions and enjoys the recognition.

“On one occasion Will reacted to something his dad said, saying “be quiet, mum rules the house, and when she is away it's Tom!” haha! [...] I felt proud” (Becky, R2, L436)

Becky's narrative illustrates how her youngest son thinks of the members in a hierarchical order; for Will, Adam is not the most 'powerful' one as it would be expected from a family that projects patriarchal and masculinity practices, and not even the second. This quote illustrates that there is respect towards Becky and it enhances her self-satisfaction, sense of pride and pleasure. Moreover, the fact that all the members share the same emotions towards Becky is a factor that likely contributes to their sense of contentment and their resilience as a family (Walsh, 1996). In addition, in contrast to previous studies (Perrone, Webb, & Jackson, 2007), which found that parenting satisfaction is not directly relevant to life satisfaction, this research suggests that for Cypriots, 'good parenting' does contribute to the children's and spouses' happiness.

Besides that, she is a great mother and a great wife, she always puts her family before her” (Matthew, R1, L305)

Matthew's words show that for him, a great mother and wife, is one that prioritises her family's needs. While he senses that his wife does so brings about positive affect; his narrative reveals admiration and a sense of appreciation and luckiness for having a wife who *“puts her family before her”*, but also pride.

Being a child in a family as mentioned in 4.2.1.1.1 also comes with duties and expectations, which involve providing active support in their family; the following quotes show the consequences of Rachel not fulfilling her family duties.

“With my mum, I usually argue because she says that I do nothing at home, that my room is untidy...” (Rachel, R1, L786)

“we share a lot of love! [pause] ... basically, I could have been a bit better haha! But I think it's got to do with my age! For example, now I spend all the time on my pc or iPad, and mum will be like “talk to us a bit” (angry voice), but I don't do it on purpose. I just get distracted!” (Rachel, R1, L803)

Rachel, by not tidying up her room and not socialising with her family much, is not fulfilling all her family duties. She experiences some guilt in relation to not fulfilling her family duties but at the same time she is self-aware; she recognises that as an adolescent she needs some private time and, as it was observed, she was not too hard on herself. Having open conversations, or even arguments, with her mother could be the reason why Rachel is aware of what she 'should have been doing' but also the reason why her behaviour is reasonable and maybe even acceptable. This example highlights the importance of communication on family contentment and feeling acknowledged; as demonstrated, having open communication, Rachel remains content with the arguments she has with her mother, whereas Greg feels rejected and Natalie is oblivious.

Children's duties also include looking after their siblings, which was more evident in the in the cases of Harry and Ben, who felt that as boys they should protect their sisters.

"I am the silly thirty-year-old brother, who makes her laugh to forget, to take her mind away from this routine." (Harry, R3, B39)

"because you are the man and... how can I say this? You must be more protective towards her than her towards you" (Ben, R4, L523)

The findings suggest that despite the birth order, which often relates to family duties and dynamics (Salmon, 2003), being the brothers of a girl they feel like it is their duty to look after their sister; this finding highlights the presence of patriarchal views in the Cypriot culture.

4.4.2.2 Social role fulfilment

Recognising each other's talents or qualities and communicating it, appeared to be significant for the well-being of the four families; a family can reinforce positive or contradict hurtful beliefs that society has placed on them and enhance individuals' self-esteem and well-being. The most outstanding social role that was apparent in all the families, was the one of the swimmers; the four swimmers were receiving endless support and acknowledgement for their efforts and achievements by all the members of their families, which, in most cases, created a sense of bonding (see section 5.4.2.1).

Being her school's top student, Beth was selected to be the flag carrier at the town's parade, which, as described earlier, was a moment of happiness for the family and self-satisfaction for the parents. However, recognising Beth's achievement, develops her sense of being a valuable member of her family and potentially includes the feeling of family acceptance and encourages togetherness and contentment.

"they (Mark and her mum) were cheering loudly and they were very excited!! When mum came to school and saw me picking up the flag, she got emotional! Then dad, because he couldn't get a day off from work, felt regretful. He wanted to come!" (Beth, R2, 307)

Beth's words reveal that her experience at the parade was made special by her family's emotional reaction, but also show how all members shared emotions of happiness and pride. As discussed further in 5.4.1.1, shared moments of pride are evidently significant for family members to come closer and create stronger bonds.

Another example of offering acknowledgement for a family member's social role includes Adam demonstrating his admiration towards his son Tom:

"I was waiting to see whether he'd like me to set up a business for him, but he preferred going elsewhere for a year or two and then... we know... he wants to, I believe in his potential, I believe in Tom!" (Adam, R3, L1057)

Adam's words reveal a sense of pride about his son but at the same time disappointment that he did not accept his help. Nevertheless, Adam's gesture could have a significant impact on Tom; being a newly qualified trainer and having someone who is willing to invest a substantial amount of money to set up a business for him can be flattering and enhancing to his self-esteem and confidence.

Although the need for acknowledgement of their social roles, within the families related more to children needing parents' recognition or between spouses, it can be suggested that receiving acknowledgement for their social roles is also beneficial as it is closely related with a sense of compassion (Van Der Cingel, 2009). Moreover, as discussed in the literature review, everyone holds various identities and at times the combination of different identities can create conflict, both for the holder but also for others who do not know how to approach those

individuals, without offending them (Haslam et al., 2008; Sanchez et al., 2007). Leading to the next section, the roles and duties of four adolescent-elite swimmers-students and children, were often creating confusion as to how they should be treated in their family; roles included: as hardworking and tired elite swimmers who need to rest, adolescents who need to spend time with their friends and children who need to be told to study and help with the house chores. This confusion was often creating conflicts as their social role clashed with their family's.

4.5 Summary: Family members' mutual sense of FWB

The findings of this study suggest that besides the need for individual members' personal well-being, for FWB to exist it is essential that a mutual sense of FWB is also present. The 'mutual sense of FWB' was defined as a collective positive perception about and emotion towards their family; it includes cognitive evaluations of satisfaction with the family life as well as positive affect. As described, the mutual sense of FWB is developed when the members feel a) content with one another, which requires positive interactions and positive emotions, as well as b) acknowledged and valued for their family and social role by one another. Highlighted in the findings and in the literature (Akhlq, Malik, & Khan, 2013; R. Peterson & Green, 2009; C. E. Ryan et al., 2005; Satir et al., 1975), is the role of communication; the more effective the communication is amongst the family members, the more likely it is for them to maintain a mutual sense of FWB.

Having conceptualized FWB in the context of Cyprus, discussed all the elements that were found to contribute to it, and illustrated the different dynamics that exist in the four families, the next section proceeds to the findings that responds to the main aim of the study, shedding light on the role of elite swimming on Cypriot families' well-being.

5 Chapter 5: The Role of Elite Swimming on Cypriots' FWB

In exploring the role of elite swimming on FWB, a central purpose of every interview was to examine how participants perceived swimming in their personal and family daily lives and to explore their experiences that took place during the periods between the four interviews. This longitudinal exploration enabled identifying unique and common experiences amongst individuals and families, detecting how at times the norm of the swimming culture overruled the family systems. These findings contribute to understanding how the experiences of Cypriot sporting families could be improved during their involvement in elite swimming, by making policy changes that assist families (Figure 1).

This chapter firstly describes the context of elite swimming in Cyprus (5.1), and following a similar structure to chapter four, provides an analysis and discussion on the role of elite swimming on each of the major components of FWB, as presented in figure 1; Individual member's personal well-being (5.2), including sensing happiness and physical health (5.2.1) and sensing FWB (5.2.2), and the family members' mutual sense of FWB (5.4), including contentment (5.4.1) and acknowledgement (5.4.2).

5.1 Elite swimming context in Cyprus

Being an elite adolescent Cypriot swimmer, requires combining school and swimming duties. Every year, swimmers have approximately one month to rest in summer, before their swimming duties begin in early September. Swimming duties include 3 – 4 hours a day of swimming, strength and conditioning training, as well as competing at national and international events, for which often they need to qualify. Their duties end around July / August, depending on the competitions they qualify for; in the year of the study the last competition was the European Championships, which took place on the 3-12 August (2018), in Glasgow. As also in some other countries, in Cyprus it is the responsibility of the adolescents' family to pay for most of their swimming gear, as well as paying for their physiotherapists, massages, psychologists, doctors, etc., and some also pay club fees. Moreover, the transportation to and from the venues where they have their sessions is not offered by the clubs and often nor to the venues where the national competitions take place; swimmers are required to arrange their transportation, which usually is provided by the parents.

Finally, depending on their performances in the competitions they participate in, they accumulate points and at the end of the year they receive funding from the national swimming federation; the rules and regulations regarding the funding procedures can be found online at: <http://koek.org.cy>.

5.2 The role of lite swimming on members' personal well-being

FWB is to a great extent dependent on individuals' well-being, which involves happiness, physical health and sensing FWB (4.2 and figure 1). This section analyses and discusses the implications of participating in swimming on Cypriots' personal well-being, offering an interpretation of how the influence of swimming on individuals could influence FWB.

5.2.1 Elite swimming on members' sense of 'Happiness' and 'Physical Health'

Sensing happiness and physical health is significant for Cypriots' personal well-being as well as for their family members', as one's happiness is transmitted to one another and generates a mutual sense of FWB (Chapter 4). The findings of this study illustrate how all members, individually, were influenced by their participation in swimming, both positively and negatively. For instance, successful races, receiving positive recognition, spending time with 'swimming friends' were at all times a source of happiness; whereas 'failed' races, the tension leading to an important event and the stress of coping with the sport demands had a negative impact on their happiness. The following sections discuss how elite swimming was reflected on individuals' self-satisfaction, social well-being, financial well-being, religious rituals and physical health.

5.2.1.1 Members' self-satisfaction

Section 4.2.1.1 illustrated that fulfilling their duties (social and family duties), achieving goals and perceived control are some of the important contributors to Cypriots' self-satisfaction and subsequently to their personal well-being. Significantly, participation in elite sport adds further duties and alters participants' priorities, while the completion of daily duties

and the attainment of goals are inseparable; sport success could not be achieved without complying to the sport's demands. For instance, without training and racing no one can win the Olympics. Nevertheless, swimmers' goals and purpose in life is not only succeeding in sport, it is also developing a future career. Although sport can contribute positively to members' self-satisfaction, self-esteem and development of persistence, which can be significant in their future (J. L. Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2005; Newhouse-Bailey et al., 2015), as discussed below, it often imposes implications in managing to maintain control over their lives affecting their current and future sense of self-satisfaction.

5.2.1.1.1 'Train hard – play hard'

In elite sport training / working hard is considered a duty, and as the saying goes, unless athletes train hard, they cannot 'play hard', implying that hard work returns joy; nevertheless, studies have illustrated how these mentalities can bring about opposite results on their well-being instead of joy (Smith et al., 2010). In this theme, training hard involved all the efforts that members to achieve their goals and fulfil their swimming duties (e.g. parents, who had to assist with the transportation, swimmers' demanding training sessions and need to 'win'), and playing hard refers to emotions of self-satisfaction and happiness (4.2.1.1).

The swimmers' self-satisfaction was to a great extent dependent on swimming as their main short-term goals in life were related to swimming accomplishment; therefore, training hard, despite its intensity, was linked to their self-satisfaction.

“the hours that we train at are difficult, but they are the best ones! Because I have my friends there as well, and I am doing what I love, so...”. (Rachel, R1, L113)

Rachel's narrative shows how intense it can be to fulfil her swimming duties, but also how at the same time it contributes to her self-satisfaction. She characterised the training hours as “*the best*”, based on the fact that she feels pleasure in the company of her friends, illustrating the importance of social well-being and the contribution of swimming to it (further discussion in 5.2.1.2), but most importantly on the fact that swimming is what she loves. This suggests that despite training being difficult, she is fulfilling her desires; literature suggests that, like

Rachel, when people do what they love and receive recognition for it, it contributes to their well-being and longevity (Coughlin, 2010).

For swimmers, their performance was often perceived as a criterion for actualising their physical ability, which in return defined their self-satisfaction.

“I feel that I’m in the best condition that I could be! Because I’m doing well at the sessions, I feel that I can do well [at the races]. I’m not getting exhausted with the slightest set anymore... I used to swim X-time whereas I was supposed to swim 3 seconds faster and I was getting exhausted. Now I still get exhausted but I swim the times I should and even faster.” (Mark, R2, L393)

Mark’s quote illustrates how connected his well-being is to swimming, as the better he performed the better he perceived his condition to be. He assessed his condition by comparing the level of physical tiredness to his swimming results and as can be seen in his quote, tiredness can be unacceptable if it does not ‘match’ performance; a slow swim should not be causing tiredness. Such actions are also referred to in the literature (J. McMahon & Penney, 2013) as self-surveillance practices. Mark’s mentality according to the literature can have a negative impact on his well-being as it could lead to ignoring his physical and mental exhaustion and pushing himself to a burnout (Coakley, 1992; Lemyre, Hall, & Roberts, 2008; Malina, 2010). It could be argued that such a result could influence his self-satisfaction for longer than perhaps a bad race, as that would be part of sport, whereas exaggerated training includes cognitive decisions and therefore in the case of burnout it could be as a personal mistake and regret (Amorose et al., 2009; Gustafsson, Sagar, & Stenling, 2017; Lundkvist et al., 2012; Wilding, Hunter-Thomas, & Thomas, 2012).

“we all have our days when we’re not feeling that great and so, there’s days when I’m tired from swimming, but I try remaining happy” (Natalie, R1, L174)

Natalie’s quote suggests that she perceives swimming as a part of her daily life which, like other participants (the other swimmers) is something that can sometimes make her unhappy; however, her words also show a normalisation of the sense of tiredness and unhappiness in one’s life but those emotions do not indicate self-satisfaction. As for Mark, adolescent elite athletes need safeguards to monitor their well-being as often they do not express ‘weakness’

and get fixated with success (Lemyre et al., 2008). Moreover, as athletes know better than others how they feel, it would be beneficial to educate them on drawing limits on both physical and mental tiredness, to be able to autonomously safeguard themselves.

The parents' duties in relation to their child's sport have also been explained in other studies, which referred to parents being called to provide of resources and support (Dukes & Coakley, 2002; Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes, & Pennisi, 2006; Knight & Holt, 2013; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008). The present study suggests that parents' self-satisfaction can be significantly affected by sport, as it imposes additional difficulty in fulfilling their duties.

“One day she told Matthew, “dad I wanna go for training at 5:30am”, and he was telling me how he was about to get mad but then he thought, “Rachel is willing to be jumping in the pool at 5:30am and I will deny that?” so... you know” (Jess, R3, L139)

Jess' narratives illustrate that Matthew was placed in a difficult position when his daughter asked him for transportation in the early hours, as initially he wanted to deny it due to the impact that it would have on his physical well-being, due to reduced resting time. Nevertheless, he perceived that it would be unfair not to support her, when in fact she would be the one getting more tired; and as seen in Jess' narrative she felt compassion towards her daughter too. Denying Rachel the transportation could have caused arguments and would have impacted the sense of contentment in the family but also on an individual level, it would have also made Matthew and Jess feel neglectful as parents, as it would imply that they were not fulfilling the duties of a Cypriot parent (4.2.1.1.1).

To accommodate the swimmers' needs, families need to maintain disciplined on-going schedules (Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Newhouse-Bailey et al., 2015; Thompson, 1999) as to 'play hard' requires prolonged involvement and effort.

“If I go to work in the morning, I'll go at 4:30am, finish at 12:30pm, be home at 13:00, I'll cook something for them [children] to eat, anything if Gloria doesn't have anything prepared already from the night before – usually she does and I prepare it. Beth returns [from school] at 13:30-13:45, after she has lunch I take her to her afternoon classes, then I come back get Mark's stuff that he has prepared from before, I prepare some fruits, cut, peel etc and get in the car by 15:30 to get him from school at 15:45. He jumps and changes clothes in the car, to be at the gym for 16:00. Note that as soon as

Gloria finishes from work she picks up Beth and takes her to her next class and then after to her drawing class. Then I take him to the pool at 17:00 and I stay there and we return back home together around 20:00 - 20:15. Now if my shift is in the afternoon [...] if my shift is in the evening ...]” (Peter, R2, L62)

As with the other parents’, Peter’s narratives often revealed physical and psychological tiredness deriving from the demanding swimming schedule, which allowed limited time for physical rest and a lack of family time. His narrative shows how much care and detail Peter and Gloria had put in to organising their schedules, to be able to accommodate both their children’s needs. As Peter works shifts, they have three different plans so that despite his work schedule, all their parental duties would be fulfilled. These schedules allow the spouse to experience control regarding their duties and to sense self-satisfaction when they complete their tasks (4.2.1.1.3). On the other hand, Peter revealed mixed emotions regarding his ability to coordinate and fulfil his parental duties; a sense of self-satisfaction and pride for being able to maintain such an intense schedule was experienced alongside self-dissatisfaction for “neglecting” his daughter and being unable to fulfil all his parental duties (4.2.1.1.1).

“Beth might want to go somewhere and you can’t... it’s almost as if we are neglecting her... umm because we are constantly at the swimming pool we end up neglecting her... although she has her own achievements with her art, we are neglecting her [...] she hasn’t expressed it. But I can tell. She is happy about her brother but I can feel it” (Peter, R1, L451)

His words reveal emotions of guilt towards his other children. This experience of guilt appears to be particularly common in the literature (Knoetze-Raper et al., 2016; Thompson, 1999; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008) and was also evident in Greg’s and Teresa’s narratives. Peter’s narrative suggests that in Beth’s case, swimming did not intrude in her development as she also had her own achievements, but it was intruding in Peter’s parenting; not being able to dedicate as much time as he wanted to Beth caused Peter to feel somewhat disappointed with himself, for not being able to fulfil his parental duties. Overall, parents’ self-satisfaction appeared volatile to sport participation, as to be able to maintain it, includes ‘training hard’ meaning juggling with the sport, family and their professional duties, which amongst others challenges their physical health. Moreover, the findings of this study illustrate that, the strict demands of

elite sport and the consequences that failing in their competitions could have on the swimmers' happiness, do not allow much flexibility in regard to fulfilling their duties (e.g. swimmers attending their daily sessions and performing well); hence participants always ensure punctuality, despite neglecting other needs (e.g. rest).

Whilst agreeing with the literature on the relevance of success in life, self-satisfaction and well-being (Butler & Kern, 2016; Deci & Ryan, 2008; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Seligman, 2011), the findings of this study also show that many of the daily practices that sport participants follow to succeed could be classified as risky / dangerous. On a philosophical level, all participants explained the importance of a healthy body (4.2.2), however, exploring the experiences of these four elite sporting Cypriot families, it was apparent that, their actions do not always align with their values, nor with what the well-being literature or policies would describe / prescribe as ideal. It was apparent that the participants recognise the negative impact of sport on the parents and siblings' personal well-being (e.g. lack of rest and social life); however, less recognition is paid to the swimmers, for which this study suggests that, it relates to the discourses that exist in the sporting culture; the discourses of 'work hard, play hard' and 'no pain, no gain' function as motivators but also as a 'scale' for athletes, as sometimes, pain is perceived as a sign of improvement (Sheffield & Stutts, 2020; Tynan & McEvilly, 2017; Weinberg, Vernau, & Horn, 2013). In more detail, the target of their daily training, is to improve their myoskeletal and cardiovascular system, yet for this desirable outcome, intense training sessions are designed to push everyday these systems further and further, with often the risk of causing damage. In addition, whilst during this process athletes experience pain, this feeling often remains silenced, either unreported by athletes or even ignored by the coaches. The literature on pain in sport has paid significant attention on the issue of athletes not reporting pain, suggesting that athletes hide these emotions on the mentality that, reporting pain would be a sign of weakness or even, that pain is sign of improvement (e.g. thinking that they are gaining muscle mass); yet these practises are considered risky, as often they lead to injuries and could have long-term physical and psychological negative impact on athletes (Dekker, Groothoff, Van Der Sluis, Eisma, & Ten Duis, 2003; J. McMahon & Penney, 2013). Therefore, what is often experienced or perceived as a 'healthy' and 'strong' body in elite sport, can in reality be an injured body, or a burnt-out athlete. Looking at the findings from another perspective, it can be argued that these intense swimming demands can also contribute positively to self-satisfaction. As shown, swimming almost obliges family members to take control over their daily schedules and have a routine, which as previously discussed (4.2.1.1.3)

is beneficial to personal well-being as it enhances the sense of self-efficacy and autonomy (Davey, Hampton, Farrell, & Davidson, 1992; Fontaine et al., 1993; Paulhus, 1983). With training schedules being almost the same every year, participants, mainly parents and swimmers, needed to be arranging their duties around training in advance; this could raise emotions of lacking freedom but could also give a sense of structure and stability. For example, knowing the swimmer's schedule for the year ahead months in advance, allows members the freedom to organise their duties and plan how to spend their free time. Overall, the role of elite swimming on Cypriots well-being, is complex as it has the potential to be both a positive and a negative contributor; yet, what is certain and regards on a global level the well-being of sport participants, are the threats on physical well-being, as the training demands are always high.

5.2.1.2 Members' social well-being in the context of swimming

Numerous studies have discussed the influence of sport on the socialisation of athletes and parents, illustrating how their involvement in sport could create bonds with the culture and shape their social life (Kirk et al., 1997; Knoetze-Raper et al., 2016; Malina, 2010; Neely & Holt, 2014). The following subsections discuss the findings on the role of swimming on the participants' social well-being, including its implications on their self-satisfaction.

5.2.1.2.1 Swimming success & social recognition

One of the outcomes of having success in sport on the families, is receiving social recognition, which can be a contributor to members' personal happiness (4.2.1.2.1) and FWB. Elite athletes often receive positive recognition from the society for their personal achievements and the other members for their child's or sibling's success. Receiving such recognition, the participants developed positive emotions, including pride, either for being perceived as a talented athlete, good or successful parent, or even as a lucky person closely associated to a successful athlete. This positive feedback contributes positively to their social well-being as they sense social recognition and acceptance, and to their self-satisfaction (figure 1). From the swimmers' perspective Ross shared:

“there won't be another guy who can be the first Cypriot who swims under X minutes... I don't know. No matter what it's a historic [achievement]... it will be remembered. Hahaha!” (Ross, R1, L213)

Ross' narrative illustrates a sense of superiority and pride deriving from achieving to be the first Cypriot to break the border of x minutes (time cannot be stated as it would reveal the swimmer's identity); his success can objectively never be taken away, as although others can swim faster than that time in the future, no one can ever become the first person to swim under x minutes, they will be the second, third, etc. As illustrated in other studies (Holland & Andre, 1994; Stier, 2007), for Ross swimming provides opportunities to gain a social status and become memorable and respected; influencing the way people look at and behave towards him. Achieving or not managing to achieve such accomplishments impacts their self-satisfaction, and influence their motivation to continue. Significantly, the duration of the recognition appeared to also be significant; as it was illustrated, a failure to keep up with successful performances has a negative influence on their social well-being and self-satisfaction, as people, most often the competitors, become 'bullies' and judgemental.

“I was 'the topic' on the stands, everyone was talking what could be going wrong with me... I think my mum felt a bit embarrassed” (Ross, R4, L327)

Social recognition was evidently not only an outcome but sometimes a desire or even an expectation; they feel that the society should recognise and respect the athletes' efforts, ability and contribution to the nation (e.g. when representing the country). The findings suggest that receiving recognition or being overlooked reinforces parents' sense of ego, however, they try suppressing their desire for recognition or find more delicate ways to share their pride with others, as they do not want to appear as 'braggers' as such behaviour would be considered socially unacceptable (4.2.1.2.3). Ross's parents, provide an example of how parents sense negative affect whenever their child's accomplishments were not recognised.

The PE teacher... she called my son a loser! My son who's breaking records!” (Adam, R1, L66)

“Last year a teacher of his came, and I liked it but I am not expecting... for example a colleague of mine comes to see her son and she never congratulated me... I don't want it though, I only want it from people who understand the struggles of athletes and when they say congratulations they mean it! If it's just for the sake of saying it I don't want it!” (Adam, R2, L18)

“She thinks that her daughter is it! And no one else exists! Whenever she sits next to me at competitions I'm always trying to find a chance to move away because she always starts going "my daughter, and my daughter, and my daughter, and my daughter!" gosh mate have I ever told you anything? You'll never hear me bragging "Ross did this and did that...!" And she was laughing and was being sarcastic that they won Ross, and he was second... and in the end Ross finished first, despite of his time, I don't care about his time! I wasn't there, I was at work. I watched it on the video and when I heard it I said, " why so much meanness?". It bothered me, I got hurt! Because I thought, what if he was around there and he saw her or heard her? Well everyone tells me not to pay attention. [...] I keep telling Ross " be careful mate because as it is hard to get high it's as easy to fall back down! Don't ever say I am... or I did so and so, because easily things can get twisted. God punishes these things". And he gets angry "Urgh!! Do you even know me...??", but no, he's not like that and I am happy! Sometimes when we meet up with other people and I may mention that Ross is gonna go abroad for a competition and you'll see that...” (Becky, R2, L106)

Both Adam's and Becky's narratives reveal disappointment and hurt from people not recognising their or their son's efforts. For Adam, when Ross' PE teacher called him a loser (after not taking part in her class), disregarding that his son is someone important and not being offered congratulations made him feel personally offended and angry, as he feels that his son's achievements are worth of recognition. On the other hand, Becky's narrative illustrates the presence of rivalries between some of the parents of the elite swimmers and how those emotions can be transmitted to the swimmers and consequently influence their relationships with their peers. Jess's narrative illustrates the existence of what is referred to as 'sideline behaviours' (Dorsch, Smith, Wilson, & McDonough, 2015; Omlil & LaVoi, 2012), and the presence of socially desirable behaviours; although Jess finds the other mother's 'bragging' and need for recognition unacceptable and irritating, influencing negatively her competition

experience, paradoxically at a different context she shared with others Ross' achievements, which illustrates that all sporting parents need some social recognition for their role in the athletes' success. Moreover, Jess telling Ross not to become like them illustrates her disapproval and that it would be embarrassing if he became as such. Similarly, based on Jess' narrative, Ross endorses this view, while he perceived his mother's comment and the possibility of being seen like them, as an offense to be viewed as the 'others'; yet again Ross' wants to be "remembered" (R1, L213).

Mark's mother (Gloria) on the other hand, who had been receiving positive recognition for her son felt positive affect and self-satisfaction; however, the society's feedback triggered emotions of frustration towards Mark.

"it worries me [that Mark is not putting enough effort in his races] because the feedback I get from other coaches is that he is an athlete with a lot of potential [...] without asking for feedback, a Cypriot coach came to me and said that he is born to be a swimmer. The other day at the x international competitions, the Russian coach told the dad of another girl that the one who's talented and has the skills to develop is Mark. I don't want to be pushing him, what for? I have nothing to win or lose. But now it's his chance to benefit from it... travel, gain experiences, see other countries..." (Gloria, R2, L213 - 217)

Explaining that she did not ask for feedback, Gloria appeared to be explaining herself in order not to be perceived as a parent who seeks for complements, as that would be socially 'unacceptable' (4.2.1.2.3), illustrating the importance of being perceived as a good sporting parent. As seen, Gloria received significant attention from people belonging in the swimming culture, which on one hand makes her feel proud for her son but on the other, people's feedback reinforces her beliefs regarding the amount of effort he puts in his races and becomes irritated. Significantly, this pride and irritation, as well as other emotions that can arise from social recognition, are reflected in their sense of happiness but also on their family dynamics and FWB; as will be illustrated 5.4.1.4, Gloria's emotions relating to swimming recognition have led to family conflicts.

The siblings, in contrast to their parents, appeared open to sharing with other people their sibling's achievement.

“they always come to congratulate me for my sister and I thank them and I feel awesome at such moments!” (Ben, R1, L267)

“They [her friends] know that he is a swimmer, that he is breaking records, that he started travelling now... They always congratulate me about my brother!” (Beth, R1, L12)

“Sorry I think I’ve going on for too long! Whenever I talk about my sister, I end up doing a monologue! And that’s because I’m proud and it’s a topic [swimming] that I kinda like ‘bragging’ about [giggling]!” (Harry, R2, L195)

The above narratives illustrate how siblings become socially associated with success and how that contributes to personally receive attention and admiration. The society’s response evidently creates a sense of pride for the siblings, which contributes to their happiness (Hallmann, Breuer, & Kühnreich, 2013).

One of the uniqueness in Rachel’s family, was that her sibling, Ben, was also a swimmer, who it is important to note that by the 3rd round of interviews entered the junior’s national team; therefore, both children were receiving social recognition for their personal achievements as well as for each other. Although in most studies (Blazo et al., 2014; Côté, 1999; Knoetze-Raper et al., 2016; Nelson & Strachan, 2017), siblings who participated in the same sport expressed jealousy towards the more successful sibling, in Rachel’s family, Ben was being inspired by his sister.

***Anastasia:** what’s the role of swimming in your family?*

***Ben:** Well that’s where get to spend more time with Rachel! Um... let’s say if I achieve something special, they’ll put down [in the newspaper] as in “Rachael’s brother”. They won’t say “Ben”. My coach and everyone is teasing me about this [giggles]! And in another occasion, it was “Rachael and her brother!”*

***Anastasia:** And how does that make you feel?*

***Ben:** I don’t mind! I don’t mind at all! I hope that by the time she’ll be back from her studies it’d be Ben’s sister! That’s my goal! (Ben, R4, L363-366)*

Ben's quote shows how he is developing as swimmer under Rachel's shadow but at the same time how that is a motivation for him to become better. Although in writing his words may be revealing somewhat bitterness, his expression during that moment and all his narratives throughout the year, revealed only warm towards his sister. Ben expressed admiration and pride that his identity was connected to Rachel's, and wanting the media one day to refer to Rachel as 'Ben's sister' illustrates that he perceives his sister as a top athlete. The influence of the elite swimmer (Rachel) on Ben was positive, as it had an inspiring effect, which contributed to his self-satisfaction (4.2.1.1). Moreover, as illustrated in more depth in 5.2.2.3 and 5.4, for their sibling dyad, swimming has been a meet point for the members of Rachel's family and a contributor to developing mutual sense of contentment.

5.2.1.2.2 *Friendships & sense of belongingness*

Friendships are one of the main contributors to one's social well-being and as discussed in different studies, athletes' friendships are influenced by sport (Carr, 2009; Côté, Baker, & Abernethy, 2003; Weiss & Smith, 2001); for many their closest friends come from their sport environment, while maintaining social relationships outside sport, as Peter explained, can be difficult due to their limited time.

"We're running after him all the time, you can't visit relatives, go somewhere, and if you do it would be on a Sunday and that's if I'm not working. [...] That's all we do"
(Peter, R2, L26)

The participants of this study revealed a variation of feelings regarding the impact of swimming on their personal social life; for instance, Natalie's narrative illustrates how her non-swimming friends have remained present in her life and actively supportive.

They [non-swimming friends] told me numerous times how proud they feel. And definitely... we talk about my training sometimes and they support me they're always by my side. [...] for example, although the two of the girls became a bit distant from the group, that day they all came to watch me racing! (Natalie, R1, L254)

Highlighting that even the two friends who became distant from the group went to support her racing, she revealed feelings of gratitude and contentment. These emotions illustrate that her friends' presence have a significant contribution to her happiness; agreeing to other studies (Côté et al., 2003; Kristiansen & Roberts, 2010), non-sport friends contribute to her social well-being by offering her acceptance and recognition, and subsequently to her motivation to remain involved in swimming, which for her is significant for her self-satisfaction (5.2.1.1).

For Rachel swimming was the main source for socialising, nonetheless it was not always a source of positive affect.

“the hours that we train at are difficult, but they are the best ones! Because I have my friends there as well, and I am doing what I love, so...”. (Rachel, R1, L113)

Rachel: *I want them to treat me as I treat them.*

Anastasia: *How do you treat them?*

Rachel: *First of all, whatever I wanna say I don't just say it behind their backs, I say it in front of them as well. I don't want them to be talking behind my back or being twofaced, because I am not twofaced with them... I mean... because I'm always good with people and sometimes they tell me that what I'm doing isn't fair... In general, I don't have any suspicions, I always think that everything is fine. Someone might do something to me and I won't pay attention to it. But they tell me that sometimes I ... what's the word? Umm... not naïve... um... if you do something to me it might hurt me but I am not gonna hold it against you. And I don't want people being like that towards me...*

Anastasia: *Were you thinking of a specific incident?*

Rachel: *Umm... in general... basically this happens mostly at swimming* (Rachel, R2, L84-88)

The first quote shows an example of an athlete who has built new friendships through sport (Carr, 2009; Weiss & Smith, 2001) and their significance for Rachel in terms of finding motive in the early hours to get up for training as well as a joy in it despite of its difficulty. Nevertheless, following Rachel's experiences throughout the year it was evident that her social relationships were somewhat unstable and were often causing some disturbance in her social well-being, as she sensed betrayed and vulnerable, which cause a negative impact on trusting

people (Van der Horst & Coffé, 2012). Moreover, feeling that as she was doubting her ethos and ability to understand people and protect herself reflect on her self-satisfaction (Amorose et al., 2009; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Sheridan, Boman, Mergler, & Furlong, 2015).

Rachel's father also found friends in the swimming culture:

“Now I have more responsibilities, there's more stress at work [...] I finish later than before and where I was the one who was picking them up from their session, now I can't [...] I was one of the parents who were everyday on the stands, on the side, just in a corner. The last year I've been absent, I rarely go and when I do its just to pick them [Ben and Rachel] up. [...] I hope that soon when I'm done I'll be back to my place, there with my friends, the ones that are still going [to the pool]!” (Matthew, R3, L75)

Matthew's narrative illustrates how a change that took place in his career affects both his individual well-being as well as the family's daily routine and well-being. This finding suggests that although sport does have a great impact in families' lives it is not always the definer of their well-being. Each member brings in the system their personal life (e.g. career problems) and depending on the timing, they take the analogous space in the family system.

Similarly, to Matthew, other parents' social well-being was also benefited from being involved in the swimming culture. For Gloria, having friends in swimming made competitions being perceived as social events.

“Well to be friends with someone, you must match with the other person, have the same interests, be... um... for instance I am married so the other person must... have kids... have... for instance at the moment, our circle is from swimming. My best friend with whom we are friends for years... we got a bit distant the last few years” (Gloria)

“its happiness, now that he changed club... we started building friendships. They'd invite us to theirs' for food, or we'd meet at the club's restaurant... the previous month Mark was going there for playing volley, swimming... and a couple of times my husband and I went as well. We became friends with the other mums with whom we went together on the previous trip and now we are arranging to go for a coffee, or one night to go out just the ladies.” (Gloria)

It seems that Gloria finds comfort in socializing with people who share the same experiences as they can understand each other better; this relates to social acceptance, cohesion and integration (Keyes, 1998). Using the word happiness to describe how she feels about the new friendships she developed through swimming illustrates the importance of social life on her well-being and the role of swimming on developing one. It seems that Gloria's well-being is benefiting from sensing belongingness in the company of the other parents as well as somewhat autonomy (Jetten et al., 2014; Keyes, 1998); having her own group of friends to go out without her husband, as usual, creates a different sense of independence.

Siblings are usually not involved enough to be able to develop their own personal relationships, nevertheless, Rachel's brother (Ben) who is also a swimmer and Mark's sister (Beth) have.

"Recently I went to watch the national championship, when he was with the new club, and I met the rest of the team. They were very friendly, they are really nice people!"
(Beth, R1, L119)

It is evident in Beth's words that she already met some of the team members and that recently she met some more, which illustrates that her social circle keeps extending whilst Mark remains active. It appears that this contact has evoked sensing positive affect as emotions of excitement and joy are revealed through her words. Moreover, although the siblings who took part in the study, except Ben who was also a swimmer, did not create their own friendships with people within the swimming culture, sensing positive affect while being present at the venues counts towards their social well-being; they are hedonic moments. Furthermore, the siblings social circle extends indirectly through the friendships that their siblings (swimmers) and parents create, while also the other family members' social experiences influence them and their FWB (Figure 1).

Moving to the next section, for some participants, elite swimming appeared to be causing mixed, or rather negative emotions regarding their sense of contentment in the social environment.

5.2.1.2.3 *Loneliness and social isolation*

Elite sport can contribute to athletes experiencing social isolation and loneliness. In Rachel, Mark and Natalie's families, the members did not appear to be unsatisfied with their somewhat limited social life outside sport, and spoke about their swimming friends too. In contrast, Ross and his family, except his sibling, had only close bonds with people outside sport, and expressed some negative affect regarding the social aspects of sport.

"I feel isolated... because supposedly to achieve some things you gotta remove some things and because I can't have both I am forced to distant myself from the friendships etc. because I want to succeed in swimming" (Ross, R1, L264)

Feeling isolation indicates that Ross lacks sensing social integration and feels lonely, which relate to low social well-being (Keyes, 1998). Saying that he is "forced" to distance himself from friendships demonstrates the importance of his friends and his strong desire he has for success. It appears that for Ross, having a limited social life is a conscious sacrifice and it can be argued that since his success contributes more to his happiness, his well-being does not depend much on his social life. However, even if so, a bad performance can reinforce the negative affect regarding his social life and affect his sport satisfaction and SWB. As Lundqvist (2011) explained, athletes' LS is related to sport satisfaction, and to maintain that and avoid burnout it is important to have a balanced life-style (MacCosham, Patry, Beswick, & Gravelle, 2015) ; therefore, for all swimmers it is important to maintain a balanced social well- being.

In contrast to the other families, in the narratives of the members of Ross' family, it was evident that participation affects negatively their social well-being as they do not enjoy the company of other parents; they sometimes find the culture somewhat fake.

"I hate lies and twofaced people incredibly! [...] And this is why, sometimes, I prefer talking to the coach on the phone and avoid going to the pool. Some (parents) see me as a bad person and that I stir things around with the club's manager, and I heard from others that some say that I am not good for the club and that I'm not a nice person."
(Adam, R1, L13)

This narrative illustrates how the culture of swimming creates annoyance and anger to Adam and these emotions enforce him to limit his visits at the pool, while being at the pool creates emotional disturbance. Knight and Holt, (2013) also suggested that the interaction with other parents affects their experiences. In contrast with Gloria's experiences (5.2.1.2.2), Adam seems to find it difficult to associate with the other parents; he senses rivalry and injustice and feels unwelcomed and dissimilar to others. Visiting the venues makes Adam feel uncomfortable and negative affect, illustrating that he does not sense social coherence, acceptance or integration by being part of the swimming culture (Haslam et al., 2008; Jetten et al., 2014). As he described, competitions can be particularly challenging for him:

“breaking the border of X minutes in X country, the one that was not recorded. And that was my biggest grievance, because it was a setup, a big set up. The federation recognised it [national record] but then some other people, who are 'friends' of mine strived to put it down. One of the parents came to me and said, "how much hate do they have for your child?". And they had this grimace and yelling “hatred, hatred” [enacting their words with intense voice], they carried on screaming “how dare they? They have so much hate! Hate for your son!!!”. And I was surprised! “for my son? The one who’s always humble one, saying hello to everyone and just sits on the pool side quietly”. It was people from X town, not of the X club though. And I was pleased when he broke it again at their swimming pool! I got up and said, “Here!” and I held myself from saying more! And the people who were involved into withdrawing his previous record, were ‘friends’ of us, with whom we went abroad with for competitions!” (Adam, R1, L80)

Adam's narrative illustrates that, up to a point, he felt that he had made friendships through swimming, and the competitions had the meaning of happy social gatherings; nonetheless, after the incident described above, the positive affect he was receiving was turned over. Finding out about their involvement in taking his son's record down he initially felt shock and could not comprehend their behaviour feeling that his son did not deserve their hate and then felt disappointment, injustice and anger, and competition settings became more like battle areas. His quote illustrates that, the competition when Ross swam again *“at their swimming pool”* was highly demanding as his opponents were at more favourable ground; as in football, hockey and other sports, playing away creates other tensions, especially in the cases where the game

takes place at a long-lasting enemy's home; studies showed that playing home has a significant impact on athletes' psychological and physiological (hormonal) state, placing them in a more beneficial position, as playing away increases somatic and cognitive anxiety (Carré, Muir, Belanger, & Putnam, 2006). Moreover, his son's performance ended up being a proof of strength for the other spectators and his reaction, which he perceived as somewhat collected, was an illustration of superiority. Feeling that he had control over his emotions and not responding to their actions in the way he felt that they deserved made him better than them and boosted his self-esteem, which is significant to his well-being (discussed in 4.2.2.2.1); he did not become 'nasty', he just proved them wrong with actions and barely said anything. Nonetheless, it could be argued that if Ross did not re-break that record in that race, that experience could have been devastating and would have enhanced the feelings of injustice. Overall, from the competition at country X to the moment Adam spoke with his friend until the 'away race' and Ross' breaking the record, his psychological well-being swung from high to low and then back to high as a result of the disappointment he received from the swimming social circle and the emotion of devaluation (Eaton et al., 2006). As previously discussed (4.2.2.2 and 4.2.3), moral living and family members' well-being are contributing factors to Cypriot individuals' and families' well-being, and in this incident caused significant disturbance.

Similar to Adam's experiences, were his wife's:

I'm telling you, Jess gave me a shout and came and sat next to me [at the stands] and she was crying. And she went, "why dear? Why? Rachel started crying too when she saw me". For that 'why'! And seeing the others [rivals] cheering and being happy because the 'beat him'... big deal. You 'beat him' because he was going through something. (Becky, R4, B740)

Becky's narrative illustrates how the spectators' behavior, caused her distress, which led in breaking down in tears. Evidently, similarly to her husband, Becky felt emotions of disappointment, injustice and loneliness amongst the crowd. She was grateful for Jess' response and care, and her description allows to observe how the intense sporting context can sometimes, encourage friendships to develop. Nonetheless, Becky's social well-being was overall impacted in a negative manner, rather than positive.

Interestingly, relating Becky's and Adam's sporting relationships to Ross', FST would support that the fact that Ross does not have any particular bonds with his swimming peers, can either be related to the fused family bonds and lack of members' differentiation (Bowen, 1976) or as often viewed in sport, a result of parents influencing children's sport socialisation perceptions (Brown, 1999; Maccoby, 1992; Palffy & Martin, 2008).

5.2.1.2.4 *Dissatisfaction in the Cypriot swimming culture*

Talking about their experiences, the participants often expressed negative emotions towards the broader Cypriot sporting culture, including sport federations and fans, suggesting that athletes in Cyprus do not have sufficient help or motives to fight for and progress, while there is a shared belief that 'abroad' sport is taken more seriously.

“On one side it's (swimming) good but on the other I don't know... we don't have the assets, we are not good enough in Cyprus maybe? I don't know. I don't know anything at all about the field and there is no one to help you and explain to you what happens.”
(Peter, R1, L181)

“In Cyprus, swimming is... they won't pay a penny. Honestly. I'm really disappointed about that. [...] we could have had indoor swimming pools, proper blocks... I don't know if I've mentioned this but in the last competitions, she had a very tough race with the other girl [the main rival], and Natalie was ahead. She was going to break the record but because the water was too hot, it was 32 degrees and Natalie couldn't handle it and fainted. Having competitions in such temperatures are nonsense” (Greg, R4, L168)

As mentioned earlier (4.2.2.1), Greg's relationship with swimming is more personal than the other parents as he carries his own experiences from Australia, which as a country has one of the best Olympic swimming teams. Greg's ability to draw comparisons was creating disappointment with the federation as he believed that with better facilities swimmers could develop more. Nevertheless, the incident that took place at the competitions caused Greg anger

and distress, and enhanced his dissatisfaction with the federation, as then, it became a matter of safety for his daughter's welfare, which for all parents, was a priority (4.2.3).

Parents' trust towards coaches, sporting organisations and other members of the culture (e.g. swimmers and their parents, team managers, gym trainers), as also seen in other studies, is sometimes challenged (Knight & Holt, 2013). Teresa narrated how the Swimming federation's rules are unclear:

"we also had that issue with [Natalie] getting disqualified all the time. Whereas everyone on the stands was praying, for the other girl [the main rival] not to break Natalie's record. Everyone! [...] they went "what about the other time when she jumped before the whistle, broke a record and never disqualified her [...] I don't know how they [federation officials] are counting the points... we were expecting Natalie to come 3rd and she came 2nd. Now how come, we don't know. And she [Natalie] went to me, "mum we gotta figure out what happened to know how..." (Teresa, R3, L339 - 357)

Teresa revealed emotions of unfairness and anger regarding the regular disqualification of her daughter, and uncertainty about the evaluation process. Although the members of Natalie's family, according to Teresa, were positively surprised by the final ranking, not knowing how this outcome was resulted made them realise that they had the wrong perception of how points can be collected and that they were counting on factors that in the end did not matter as much. This realisation, caused mixed feelings, happiness and pride for the ranking, feeling lost and lacking control (4.2.1.1.3), and potentially existing concerns regarding the fairness of the federation became recycled. These emotions influence Natalie's family members' sporting experiences and subsequently personal happiness and sense of FWB (figure 1).

Mark's father, Peter narrated an incident with Mark's former coach that took place a year before, which demonstrated how his personal and FWB was found vulnerable due to the lack of support in the Cypriot swimming culture:

"It was about some misunderstandings and he [coach] posted something on Facebook about Mark, he said that it wasn't [about Mark], but it was! Then he [coach] threatened me and my family. There was a point when I was taking my children away to keep them safe because this guy had some previous stories of being involved into fights etc. and... um... then I went to our club's committee and they had a meeting about the incident,

and then the president of the club asked me “do you want your son to be progressing or to be going backwards?”. We had an argument... then I fought a lot with them to allow him to leave the club without getting punished for a year [...] the president of the federation explained to me what to do, following the regulations, I achieved to earn his freedom (to change club without being punished)” (Peter, R1, L217)

In the Cypriot swimming culture, Peter experienced fear for what is the most important thing for him, the well-being of his family. He “fought a lot” and did everything he could to keep them safe. He sought for help but instead, the club’s committee turned their back on him and intimidated him that taking his son to another club would affect Mark’s progress. As it can be seen the club did not take measurements to protect the swimmer, which should be their duty, however later on Peter received the help he needed from the federation. The IOC, in 2017 published a toolkit (<https://www.olympic.org/news/ioc-launches-toolkit-for-olympic-movement-to-safeguard-athletes-from-harassment-and-abuse-in-sport>) to assist sport federations develop policies for safeguarding athletes; however, from this incident it appears that in Cyprus this has not been implemented yet and therefore participants remain vulnerable to abusive behaviours. The findings suggest that, this lack of safeguarding and support reinforces parents’ involvement; Peter intervened with Mark’s club and national swimming federation to protect his child from his abusive coach, and Teresa engaged with the federation’s policies, to understand how, their family could support Natalie’s efforts to succeed. Based on previous studies, parents’ involvement is sometimes causing pressure to the athletes and often some parental interventions are perceived excessive and problematic (Gould et al., 2006; Kanters et al., 2008; J. McMahon & Penney, 2015); yet, what appears to be overlooked in the literature is the emotions that lead to ‘over-involvement’. As illustrated, for Peter it was concern and fear, and likewise for Teresa it was confusion and desire to see her daughter succeed. Moreover, it is significant to note that according to the participants’ narratives, the parents in this study were mostly becoming involved after also being asked by their children.

Gloria, although had similar opinion regarding the limitations of the Cypriot swimming culture, she had a somewhat different approach to her experiences:

“The greatest outcome of Mark’ trips. He gets to see new things, other swimmer, other swimming pools, the facilities that exist abroad, the environment where other swimmers are training, he gets to compete and set higher goals.” (Gloria, R1, L157)

Gloria repetitively focused on the experiences and the longer-term qualities that Mark could develop (more examples included in 5.2.1.2.1 and 5.2.2.1.1), rather than the achievements per se; having these values, Gloria appeared more appreciative and happy regarding the benefits of the participation rather than the costs or focusing on the improvements that could take place. Significantly, her approach seemed to contribute to her personal enjoyment of being part of the culture, while she is the parent who occurred to be the most enthusiastic regarding the friendships that she developed from swimming (5.2.1.2.1).

Comparing Cyprus to other countries, Ross and Rachel identified that abroad there can be ‘healthy rivalries’, which was affecting negatively their happiness, causing them disappointment and frustration:

“here in Cyprus we're all about destroying one another let's say... to give you an example, the pool there [abroad] was... I think it could fit 12000 people and both the morning and evening sessions (of the competitions) were sold out! I'm telling you there was no space to move, and you saw them cheering and so on... I mean they were enjoying it, whereas at the competitions in Cyprus it's all about being mean to one another... surely, they [foreign swimmers] also have some competition between them but they're not wishing for one another to not swim well!” (Ross, R3, L85)

“There [abroad] the swimmers mind their own business, they don't gossip one another” (Rachel, R2, L281)

The socialisation in the Cypriot swimming culture appeared to sometimes be too intense for Rachel but mostly Ross, who experienced repetitively being laughed at or ‘attacked’, illustrating how it is not only their personal relationships with swimming peers that influence their social well-being, but also the broader culture, including the spectators. As explained in the sport literature, including two swimming-specific studies (Lang, 2010; J. McMahon & Penney, 2013), athletes especially when they reach a high level and enter the ‘spotlight’ where people know of them and have expectations from them (e.g. lead a healthy life and have a muscular body) internalise what Foucault referred to as ‘the gaze’ (Foucault, 1991), and are cautious of their behaviours to always meet the acceptable norm; this in the long run causes negative implications on their self-esteem (J. McMahon & Penney, 2013). For Ross, these

experiences appeared to have also caused a confusion as to what he would like to follow in the future:

Ross: Basically, I always believed that, always, always I'll be getting 'sorted' with swimming, but now that I'm growing up and looking things I think that it can't be like that. I see my coach for instance and think that you always need to have a backup plan let's say.

Anastasia What's that, that you're seeing that made you reconsider?

Ross: For instance, he's struggling all day [training athletes] and I see that they [parents and swimmers] are driving him mad... and then if you want to build a house, have a family etc. it's not enough just being a coach in Cyprus. And that's what I wanted but I started changing my plans. I was determined to be a swimming coach but now I don't know how I feel. (Ross, R2, L278 - 282)

Ross, coming to a realisation that he will not always be able to make living from swimming (as a swimmer and then as a coach) felt disappointment as he would maybe have to follow a different path than his passion. From observing his coach, Ross developed a perception that working with people involved in the Cypriot swimming culture is a struggle. Significantly, Ross' exact words were found in his parents' narratives as well (discussed in 5.2.2.2), which may be an illustration of a common way of understanding the world or / and Ross might have internalised his parents' opinions (Maccoby, 1992). He feels that being a coach in Cyprus cannot offer enough money for him to achieve his future ambitions of building his own house and having a family. On the other hand, his description implies that Cyprus as a culture cannot offer those opportunities and appears that he feels trapped; Ross' concern and uncertainty about his future choices impact his well-being as well as the other members' sense of family well-being, who in this instance share Ross' views on the inadequacy of the culture (discussed further in 5.2.2.2).

This study suggests that parents experience concern, fear and irritation when they feel that their child might not be treated fairly or might be emotionally and/or physically hurt reinforce their involvement. For the parents who took part in this study, their children's well-being is a priority, therefore it is expected that their reaction in any situation they perceive to be threatening will be to get involved. In addition, as seen in other studies (Knight & Holt, 2013), the participants' narratives revealed doubtfulness about the rules of the federation,

which perhaps means that they are not communicated effectively to the public and create disturbances. Looking closer into the swimming culture, every year the Cypriot swimming federation publishes an annual statute, which provides in detail the competition selection procedures that will be followed for every event and the rules and regulations that should be followed by teams and athletes; nevertheless, from Teresa's narrative (R3, L357) it appeared that it is not clear to everyone. With this finding, it is suggested that the two leading sporting organisations (Cyprus Sport Organisation and Cyprus Olympic Committee) should ensure that the federations would provide more support to the families involved to avoid family destructions, which can subsequently also impact the athletes' experiences.

Overall, elite swimming influences the participants' happiness, as it places them within a culture where they have a 'high' social status and in which they come to socialise with other people, including competitors, expected to have specific behaviours (e.g. be humble and not "brag" about their achievements) in order not to be negatively criticised (5.2.1.2.1). Everyone appeared to be enjoying the positive recognition they were receiving for the swimmer's results and the findings suggest that, that recognition was contributing positively to their social well-being (4.2.1.2.1) as they benefited with the emotions underlining social acceptance and contribution (Keyes, 1998). In the cases where they did not receive sufficient recognition, they felt disappointment and injustice. Similarly to social recognition, friendships contribute to individuals' social well-being as well as to their experiences in the swimming culture, whereas rivalries and perceiving that the sport demands harm their social life have the opposite outcome. For example, Ross' felt becoming socially "isolated" because of his limited free time with his school friends and his joy in swimming is more depended on succeeding; in contrast to Rachel who finds joy during demanding training sessions as well. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate how broader context of Cyprus swimming, including spectators, the Cyprus' Sport Organisation and national swimming federation, generate a negative affect influencing solely negatively the individuals' happiness and their FWB. The rules and regulations, the funding going into the support of the swimmers and the spectators' 'gossiping' create fear for the swimmer's well-being, and that reflects of their approval for their involvement (discussed further in 5.2.2.3) and in the systems' well-being (figure 1).

5.2.1.3 *Elite sport and parents' financial burden*

The financial demands that participation in sport places on the parents of youth athletes have for years been discussed in a large body of literature (Burgess et al., 2016; Côté, 1999; Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Knight et al., 2016; Knight & Holt, 2013; Knoetze-Raper et al., 2016). Likewise, the parents of this study have extensively spoke about the financial demands that swimming poses on them, while one of the most highlighted in this context is the need to equip swimmers with a high-tech suit for their competitions. These swim suits are known for their expensive price and for their importance in competitions as they can sometimes provide competitive advantage; high tech suits enable swimmers have a better glide in the water and often contribute to their confidence (Morales, Tamayo Fajardo, & González-García, 2019); therefore, if a swimmer does not own one or even, if the one they own is not the latest version, they can find themselves in a disadvantageous position against their opponents. The high-tech suit in this section is used as a symbol, representing both the literal need of one but also all the resources that a swimmer needs for a race. The following paragraphs discuss the relationship between equipping a swimmer with a race suit with the parents' financial well-being and self-satisfaction, and FWB.

“Well look, lately everyone, and the kids, get to see it a lot, that I am stressed with our finances. But its elite sport, who's gonna pay for it? Ross might want a new swim suit, could I say no? It's what he needs for his race! Could I say no? Now he is getting some funding so it's not as bad but, would I say no?” (Adam, R1, L75)

Adam perceives that elite sport requires a large budget and feels that, in his case, he has no support in covering these costs, but also no option in contributing to Ross' participation. Knowing that by not having a new suit could put Ross in a disadvantageous position creates pressure for finding the money to afford one and at the same time as it adds to his expenditures. Taking into account the findings on the cultural norms of Cyprus regarding parenting expectations (4.2.1.1.1), not being able to buy one, would be a reason for a Cypriot swimming parent to feel like a bad of inadequate parent and be unsatisfied with themselves, which will impact negatively their personal well-being (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2008). In addition, although the funding that Ross' receives appears to be offering some relief, the way the reward system of the swimming federation of Cyprus functions, makes it difficult to rely on and

contribute positively to Adam's financial and psychological well-being. As described (5.1), the amount of funding a swimmer will receive by the end of the year cannot be predicted, and at the same time, the need to wait to receive it means that someone (usually parents) needs to cover the costs in first; therefore, a budget needs to be in place in advance. Saying that lately everyone in the family sees that he is stressed, illustrates how his stress intensified and could not hide it from the "kids", as he would. Becoming more vocal or expressive, might have been a cry for help; nonetheless, it appeared that the dynamics of their family cannot accommodate such a call.

"I hear them (parents) talking about it (financial issues)... they might get a bit a bit louder sometimes, I assume, I'm not sure, I don't like intervening in such matters."
(Ross, R2, L327)

Anastasia: In regard to the family life, where does swimming stand?

Ross: It's a burden... a burden in a way but also a pleasure? The truth is that as much as I get tortured, the others do too... okay maybe not to the same extend but they do get tortured but when they see me achieving what I wanted, I believe that they then forget the bad stuff.

Anastasia: And when you say tortured? In what way?

Ross: They have to run after me, whatever 'the kid' needs haha! They have to offer it!

Anastasia: And it is something that you see? As a torture?

Ross: No. No, no ... an obligation! (Ross, R1, L286 - 296)

Being a family that does not have an open communication between parents and children, as well as a family which adopts masculinity behaviours, when someone is experiencing negative affect and others get to witness one being more vulnerable, especially the father, they do not know how to respond, despite wanting to be supportive. As illustrated in Ross' first narrative, financial struggles have at times been a reason for the spouse to argue; however, Ross remained distant and impartial from his parents' discussion, despite that he cares about them and that he knows that his swimming has part in their financial difficulties. Ross felt that swimming is both a burden and a source of happiness for his family, which appears to be making him feel somewhat guilt seeing them struggling but on the other hand he believes that he makes up every time he performs well; such a belief, according to the literature can create a sense of

responsibility for their parents' emotions and cause competition anxiety, loss of intrinsic motivation and withdrawal (Coakley, 1992; Kanters et al., 2008). Moreover, Ross felt that his parents would do anything for him and that he is their little 'kid', which illustrates how their unconditional provision of resources for swimming developed a sense of contentment and dependence. He seems thankful but that he also feels that that's how parents should be; he does not perceive his parents' actions as a sacrifice, which relates to his perception of how a parent should be. Ross' perception, that a parent should be a provider of whatever would benefit or please their child, represents the Cypriots' attitude towards parenting (discussed in 4.4.2.1), nonetheless, it disables parents expressing weakness or struggling and creates discomfort and distancing from other members in order to protect their 'image' of the 'strong provider'; subsequently, FWB becomes negatively affected.

In Rachel's family, the high-tech suit and the financial demands related to swimming had the same importance; however, as illustrated in the members' descriptions and in the findings in section 4.4.1.1.2, being a family with different structure and functioning, and a family with a more open communication, the experience of the 'suit' had different impact on their FWB.

"we aren't rich but we have a good job, both my wife and I, and I think that we can cover all our needs and most importantly our children's! For example, I don't need to think about the cost when Rachel asks for a new swimsuit. If she needs to buy it she will. She won't get it though just because it's a new model and has to (have the newest one), she'll get it because she needs it. They (children) aren't demanding themselves though... they understand that... or if they don't I give them an understanding" (Matthew, R1, L71)

Matthew's narrative, in contrast with Adam's, shows that he feels that the financial demands are shared between him and his wife; he does not sense that he must be 'the provider' but a provider, therefore, buying the suit is a shared task. He is grateful for their financial ability but separates his children's desires from needs and prioritises his spending; as he explained his children are not demanding, while when he feels that they might cross a line he gives them an understanding, whereas Adam takes all the responsibility of providing, does not share his feelings with his children and as seen in Ross' narrative, they develop expectations that have a negative impact on the family dynamics and well-being.

Overall the findings suggest that the provision of ‘high-tech’ suits appears to be creating an interplay between the parents’ self-satisfaction and financial well-being and swimmers’ expectations; in the case of Ross’ family this interplay was influencing negatively their FWB, whereas in Rachel’s it appeared that there was a mutual sense of understanding, allowing contentment to exist. This study suggests that, the way that the financial demands of elite sport will impact FWB, does depend on the parents’ income as others suggested (Kay, 2000; Kay & Spaaij, 2012), but perhaps relates to a greater extent, on the members’ communication and their perception of financial well-being. As financial well-being is somewhat subjective (Diener et al., 1993; Diener & Seligman, 2004; Prawitz et al., 2006) and solely depends on the parents’ perception, comparing the impact of sport in comparison to household salaries would have not been necessarily beneficial for understanding FWB and would have also then led to evaluating their expenditures, which goes beyond the scope of this study. Finally, as shown, the more effective the communication is, the less the contentment amongst the members will be impacted in the case of financial struggling (Minuchin, 1974; Satir et al., 1975).

5.2.1.4 Religious rituals

Religion has a fundamental role on the well-being of the four families (4.2.1.4), as it provides them with a guide regarding what is right and wrong, rituals and it is also a source of strength. As seen in athletes belonging in other cultures (Czech, Wrisberg, Fischer, Thompson, & Hayes, 2004), at times of struggle, such as during an injury or when coping with competitive anxiety, the participants of this study always turned to God, praying for help; therefore, when swimming was imposing stress on the families, religion provided a source of contentment. On the other hand, as Adam described, swimming was often breaking their religious habits.

“There are disagreements but not extreme ones. I want to be going to church every Sunday, Ross can’t make it, it’s not that he doesn’t want to, he can’t. I don’t like that he doesn’t come but I can tell that he’s always looking forward to Sundays to get some rest. Tomorrow it’s his godfather’s dad’s death anniversary and he will go, he didn’t even raise an issue...” (Adam, R1, L70)

In Ross’ family, swimming was disrupting their religious ritual of going to church every Sunday but more significantly, Sunday became attached to a different values; according to the

literature (Bowen, 1976) and the findings of the study (4.2.3.2), for FWB is important that family members share the same values and approve each other's choices. Considering that unlike other teenagers, elite swimmers in Cyprus start their day around 5am and only have one day per week to rest, if they do not need to be at a race, Sunday is particularly important for them; it is their only time to physically rest, catch up with homework and friends and also, since they do not need to wake up early allows them to spend some time with their friends on Saturday evening. Hence for Cypriot swimmers and others who follow similar school-training schedules, Sundays provide a chance to somewhat fulfil personal needs and desires which could contribute to balancing their lifestyles and enhance their well-being (Stambulova, Engström, Franck, Linnér, & Lindahl, 2015). Furthermore, it could be argued that Sunday is also the day which allows these swimmers explore other aspects of their identity, which is important to developing autonomy and independence, which are significant for their current and future state of well-being (Coakley, 1992; Malina, 2010). On the other hand, Adam's definition of Sunday, and of others' who are also involved in the sport participation of an elite and witness too their daily efforts, has not fully come in line with the sport demands and hence Ross' denial to go to church is causing him mixed emotions. For Adam, Sunday has remained a church day and so he was sensing annoyance but at the same time could feel compassion on his son's tiredness; in addition, his narrative illustrates, that the father and son manage to come to a negotiation (e.g. Ross will be going to the church in the important occasion of a death memorial) and so their disagreements do not touch the "extremes". Overall, their mutual compassion and respect towards each other needs, feeds positively their relationship and FWB and enables the family supporting Ross' participation.

5.2.2 The significance of elite swimming on the members' sense FWB

As presented in figure 1, sensing FWB is an important contributor to personal happiness and subsequently to the development of a mutual sense of contentment and FWB (discussed in 4.2.3). As it is known, elite sport demands high physio-psychological abilities from athletes, such as being physically healthy, having cardiovascular and muscularly strength, speed, flexibility, mental strength etc. (Harmison, 2011; Sheard & Golby, 2006); however, maintaining such a condition at all times is perhaps impossible considering the athletes' workload. Throughout the year, the swimmers' well-being was evidently central in the

participants' life and a defining factor to the family's well-being, especially when it was perceived low. The following themes discuss the impact of swimming on sensing others' happiness and physical health and approving other's choices, while the impact on the interfamily relationships is discussed throughout them and in more detail in section 5.4.

5.2.2.1 Elite swimming on sensing others' happiness and physical health

“The positive side is when he swims well... in fact when you see him being happy and he wants to carry on. Umm... it doesn't mean that he'll always win but it's important for whatever he does to be satisfied” (Peter, R1, L189)

The section demonstrates how participating in elite sport influences individuals' differently, yet that influence is not only significant to their personal well-being, as it is also transmitted to others impacting theirs too (4.2.3); this transference sometimes imposes additional stress, others additional pleasure, and others it 'neutralises' emotions. For instance, parents' lack of time for rest caused by the sport demands and physical tiredness sometimes becomes 'neutralised' / irrelevant when seeing their child happy.

5.2.2.1.1 The swimmer' well-being in the centre of FWB

The well-being of swimmers was found to be causing a domino effect on the other members' personal well-being, including physical health, happiness and sense of FWB, which as illustrated (figure 1) is directly impacting FWB.

For Gloria, swimming is associated with her son's success and development, and based on this mentality she described swimming as a source of happiness.

“it is happiness seeing my son winning! [...] the more qualifications he gets for international competitions, the better for him. I see that he's gathering some nice experiences, which he will always remember. For instance, he'll remember that he went for competitions at X country and what experiences he had. The medals and trophies, all look the same but these experiences will remain in his memories. And the people he

got to meet, he met some friends abroad with whom they also became friends on Facebook. [...] if Mark carries on being good at swimming, we are hoping that he'll manage to get some scholarship for the US. Other than this I can't see earning anything else. Swimming in Cyprus doesn't offer much, if you were abroad there would be a lot to win, and material stuff..." (Gloria, R1, L250)

Gloria's quote demonstrates how she equates Mark's success with personal happiness; yet for her, winning does not relate to the usual material prizes but to the gained experiences. As illustrated in figure 1 and explained in 4.2.3, sensing other's well-being contributes to individuals' and the family's well-being and for Gloria, victories bring about the feel that her son has well-being. Gloria enjoys travelling and finds education vital for a good future and as victories allow Mark to travel, meet new people and could potentially earn him a university scholarship, it allows her to feel happy. It could be suggested that if the outcomes of winning did not seem valuable to her, or any parent, a victory would have a different emotional impact on them and instead of being celebrated it would create conflicts in the family. Therefore, what counts as 'winning' is subjective to the values of the family members. Moreover, Gloria's care for Mark, encourages her to be actively involved in his swimming.

"it seemed to us that his stress [around performance in swimming] is overtaking him. He gets a bit anxious on the race days, although before he wasn't showing it, it seems that he gets stressed on the day. And it's something that I spoke about with Rebecca (his sport psychologist), I told her that we need to work on that, it can't be like that." (Gloria, R2, L130)

Monitoring Mark's day-to-day behaviour and mood illustrates how Mark's mental strength in relation to swimming, has a place in Gloria's daily thoughts. She revealed a sense of negative affect, including frustration and sadness, as she perceived that Mark was being overtaken by his stress and was failing to perform as well as she believed he could. In addition, contacting his psychologist illustrates importance, sport knowledge and a strong desire to continue trying to resolve the perceived issue, of Mark's competition anxiety; nevertheless, it also shows how a parent's will to help their child motivates them to cross the line of desirable contribution and becoming overinvolved.

Peter's narrative illustrates how his personal happiness was impacted by perceiving that Mark's physical health was low:

“what stresses us [Gloria and him] out lately is that, Mark had some low iron levels, and they [doctors and coaches] hadn't told us that he should be taking iron. He saw the doctor, and... there's no one to tell you... they don't know... they don't know! We went to the doctor for some blood tests to check his iron, check the calories, etc. we took the tests and it came up with high enzymes [...] and then we carried on with doing ultra sounds for his liver, for this, for that... [...] you ask this doctor he doesn't know, the other one, doesn't know. And so, you get confused and you start getting scared”
(Peter, R2, B170)

Peter's quote illustrates how his psychological well-being (Huppert, 2009) was affected when Mark's routine blood tests showed iron deficiency. Mark's narrative matched / triangulated (Turner & Turner, 2009) Peter's, as he also described how these tests were not taken due to the presence of a symptom. As he explained in his interview, he was surprised with the results; *“I thought to myself, “how can I be ‘exhausted’? I feel just fine” and I didn't feel tired at all”*. Taking precautions to ensure that Mark remains healthy, showed Peter and Gloria's priorities and concerns, illustrating again (4.2.3.1) how the other members' health occupies their mind and affects their psychological well-being. Mark's issue caused Peter a lot of stress, while he put a lot of effort, time and money into looking closely at what was wrong with Mark's health. It appeared that the whole procedure was creating panic, frustration and anger towards the doctors and the coaches as no-one was helpful; being a member of a swimming team, Peter potentially expected that Mark would be helped, yet the family had to deal with it alone. This incident demonstrates how in difficult times families can find themselves in; feeling alone and abandoned, having to deal with issues that are not educated about. For Peter, it can also be said that, as he was facing financial struggles, such unexpected expenditures that swimming can impose on families, were potentially at the time intensifying the sense of stress.

Interestingly, although on an individual level members were sensing a negative affect when Mark was dealing with a health issue, in their efforts to help him overcome his health issue, they were gradually developing behaviours and emotions that contributed to a mutual sense of contentment and acknowledgement. The narratives of all the members of their family illustrated that during their individual efforts to help Mark members developed mutual positive

emotions (compassion, support, love) and encouraged positive interaction (active support), which as discussed are vital for FWB (figure 1). Besides the parents, Mark's sister, being also aware of his struggles she also became involved in assisting him in her own way.

“My sister sometimes helps me with my homework. My mum and dad take me here and there.” (Mark, R1, L576)

Although being a final year student and having as well a busy schedule, Mark's sister was sometimes voluntarily helping with his homework, which as well illustrates the importance of the swimmers' well-being and his goals in their family but also their impact on her. Coming to help Mark means that she senses the need for help and sympathises with his struggles; therefore, Mark's negative affect becomes shared. Likewise, offering practical help, implies that Beth needed to sacrifice her own time. Mark's narrative illustrated that he recognises his family's efforts, which contributes to developing the mutual sense of acknowledgement and FWB (figure 1).

5.2.2.1.2 Siblings' well-being

Previous studies have mostly discussed the impact of sport on siblings' relationships allowing gaps of knowledge to exist on the impact of sport on their personal well-being (Hopwood et al., 2015). Studies have, mainly showed how sometimes siblings develop resentment towards their successful sibling, as they do not receive much attention from their parents and feel neglected (Blazo et al., 2014; Davis & Meyer, 2008; Knoetze-Raper et al., 2016). The siblings of the swimmers who took part in this study also acknowledged that their sibling receives more attention and that their parents invest more resources and time on them, but expressed solely emotions of pride for their brother / sister and compassion for the struggles that they are going through. Nonetheless, being also emotionally involved in their brother / sister's participation and caring for their well-being, siblings were also experiencing fluctuations on their well-being, depending on their swimmer's well-being.

“Ben: When you hear her saying that she is too tired and that she might not swim well, which she only said once because she was extremely tired, you can’t be alright with that – knowing that your sister is extremely tired and sensing that she feels sad!

“Anastasia: What is it like then? Having your sister in that place?

Ben: [huffing] It’s difficult... because you must be looking after her, because you are the man and... how can I say this? You must be more protective towards her than her towards you. That’s what I feel, I don’t know what Rachel would say. But I try helping her in everything. Like for instance at her party, I was going up and down and up and down and by 10 o’clock I wanted to go to sleep, I couldn’t, I was extremely tired. I started at 4, I took the tables out, sorted out the drinks, I did this – that... I did everything I could. Because it was her last day I wanted it to be at least nice.” (Ben, R4, L523)

Ben’s narrative illustrates how he was surprised to hear Rachel saying that she is tired and that she might not swim well, and how his sister’s exhaustion and sadness was transmitted to him influencing his own happiness. In addition, saying that as a brother “*you can’t be alright with that*” indicates how he expects every sibling to have felt the same, but also the expectations he has from his own family; to feel compassion. Similarly, Natalie’s brother shared similar emotions:

“Harry: Natalie is my weakness and I am happy that she does some things, I’m happy that she’s reached adolescence, finishing school, you know... as a person, when I have someone who’s going through a difficult time, there’s a thing. I think it’s called reflexive psychology. I get in the mode and change my mood. I mean I try uplifting her mood. But I feel her a lot, whenever I’m there anyway.

Anastasia: Does that affect you?

Harry: It doesn’t affect me because I don’t get it fully. I know though that since we live together in the same house, I gotta fill my role too! Which is reminding her that she only has a few months left and that will be it! This tough year will come to an end. And... in general I do... I am the silly thirty-year-old brother, who makes her laugh to forget, to take her mind away from this routine.” (Harry, R3, B39)

Harry clearly expressed his love, care and pride for Natalie. The perceived psychological impact that swimming has on Natalie is somewhat transmitted to Harry, but his regular absence from the household does not allow him connecting fully with her struggles; yet he takes time and puts effort to support her. He suggests that he always tries to make people happy but at the same time it is evident that he also senses a responsibility towards helping his younger sister; nonetheless, sensing responsibility and being unable to solve a problem can lead to negative affect, such as anxiety (Davey et al., 1992). Harry feels that has a role to fill and his way is by becoming entertaining and supportive. Studies have shown that sometimes older siblings feel jealousy towards their younger successful athletes (Blazo et al., 2014; Davis & Meyer, 2008; Trussell, 2014), however, in this study, none of the participating siblings illustrated such signs; the only evidence suggesting that a sibling felt 'left out' because of swimming was described by Greg, and regarded Stacy who lived abroad (discussed in 5.4.1.1). The four siblings often took the role of a 'protector'; examples include: Beth standing up to her parents telling her parents to stop pressuring her brother about his swimming and helping him with his homework; Tom becoming infuriated when his brother participates in races, when not ready to perform well, as he feels that, that would give the opportunity to competitors to criticise him as well as becoming his brother's personal gym trainer. Significantly, Ross' sibling, Tom, who was also in a similar situation to Stacy, as during some of the months he was abroad finishing his studies, expressed passion in his brother's swimming and shortly after the fourth round of interview the two siblings would start training together. Tom, besides being a sibling and a friend to Ross, he would become his gym trainer. This example is significant to the study of families in sport, as previous studies suggested that it is more likely for siblings to develop negative emotions when they are boys and the younger one is the high achiever (Trussell, 2014). This finding supports studies, which have also found that the siblings' responds and perceptions vary (Bean, Fortier, Post, & Chima, 2014; Davis & Meyer, 2008; Kay, 2000), and demonstrates the uniqueness of each family, highlighting the need for studying further siblings' relationships along with the social factors that could play a role in the shaping of their relationships.

5.2.2.1.3 Parents' competition anxiety & family dynamics

As other studies have shown, this study illustrates that most parents find competitions particularly stressful, especially when their child has high competition, as Rachel's father explained:

“at competitions there is some tension [...] but now, especially in Cyprus, because especially now... it may be a bad thing to say but, because of the low antagonism with others, we take it for granted that Rachel will win!” (Matthew, R1, L245)

For parents, the higher the competition, the higher the possibility of a failure and therefore the higher level of negative affect is developed; the impact on their sense of happiness depends on the arousal level and on the duration. Moreover, besides the negative impact on their personal well-being, parents often without wanting to, transmit their emotions to the athletes, adding to their own stress and made to feel responsible for their parents' emotions (Bois et al., 2009; Knight & Holt, 2013; J. McMahon et al., 2012; Omli & LaVoi, 2012; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011; Weiss & Hayashi, 1995; Wiersma & Fifer, 2008). Interviewing all members allowed to see how the parents' stress was not only causing a negative impact on athletes but was creating more complications on their FWB.

Greg and Harry described how Teresa struggles with anxiety during Natalie's races:

“she [Teresa] almost passed out when she thought that Natalie was disqualified! [...] my mum has always been looking into things, how the rankings work” (Harry, R3, L47)

“She's [Teresa] shaking, she gets all red, she needs to put water on her face... she gets too stressed! [...] and the bad thing is that she makes everyone around her anxious! [...] she stresses me out, I get worried that something might happen to her... faint or something...” (Greg, R3, L267)

Both narratives show how Teresa's race nerves become concerning for other family members (Harry and Greg), as her anxiety develops psychosomatic symptoms. Greg's quote, despite of concern also reveals emotions of embarrassment, irritation and discomfort as for how her reaction raises other spectators' attention too and affects negatively the family's and the

spectators' experiences. Additionally, within "everyone around her", Greg included Natalie too, who needs to remain focused; yet according to his perception, she can be a source of 'negative energy', implying that Teresa's race anxiety can influence Natalie's performance, which is what parents are expected not to do (Kay, 2000; Newhouse-Bailey et al., 2015). Although in their case, these incidents did not seem to impact long term their marital relationship; feeling embarrassed for a family member indicates a perception that they do not fulfil their family and/or role, and could lead to distancing influencing the sense of mutual acknowledgement (4.4.2) and FWB.

"she would come to me and be like "Gosh what if this happens? Or what if that happens?" and she makes me anxious too." (Teresa, R3, L77)

Thompson discussed extensively how being a 'sporting mother' can be demanding (Thompson, 1999), and Teresa's narrative shows how having to help her daughter cope with her stress can be affecting negatively her well-being. From her quote, it appears that Natalie finds trust and comfort in Teresa, to freely unload her stress by sharing her thoughts and concerns about all the possible scenarios and seeks for support that would perhaps enhance her self-confidence to perform. Nevertheless, it appeared that having this role it was creating a sense of overwhelm for Teresa, as she had to hide her own competition anxiety and remain a 'rock' for Natalie.

In Ross' family it was the father who found it difficult to cope with the competitions.

"Becky: He's a very anxious person, he takes his pills (anti-stress tablets) though, in the morning and he's fine! When there's the competitions, he takes two!

Anastasia: Why are the competitions so stressful for him?

Becky: I don't know why they stress him that much... and he also says that I'm the one stressing out. I don't stress for the result, I stress about the kid in the water! You hear all these things everyday about athletes who, while training, touch wood, they pass away. I don't care even if he comes last as long as he is well!" (Becky, R2, B294)

The above dialogue illustrates how the wait towards racing impacts Ross' parents emotionally. They both become stressed about it, but their emotions appear to be encouraging communication, sharing how they feel. Nonetheless, for Adam, competitions impose an additional source of stress, for which he appears to be unable to self-regulate and cope, which

he resolves by taking medication. On the other hand, Becky perceives that the reason she worries is more ‘valid’ or ‘serious’, which means that during these difficult moments the sense of stress has a different shape, and therefore they do not share a mutual emotion. As with Teresa and Greg, this implies that in the wait for a race the sense of contentment (4.4.1) fluctuates; the lack of understanding and perhaps of active support between the members can be causing negative affect to individuals, such as loneliness. This sequence of interactions can later have a greater impact on the members’ relationships and FWB.

A different coping mechanism for race anxiety, is offering guidelines or advices to athletes. Mark’s mother being worried that her son would lose by a ‘rival’ and get upset, advised him to “*be careful not to be beaten*”. This good-intended advice though appeared to have caused race anxiety but also family conflicts.

“I think that Mark thinks that it isn’t our place to guide him. For instance, when he swam in Larnaca, I couldn’t go because it was the day that Beth had her IELTS exams and I stayed here to give her a lift, and he swam around his personal best times. On the second day, he was swimming the 200m and before we left, I told him “do what you gotta do because the others might pass you” [...] And I told him about two specific kids. Later on, on new year’s day, we took the kids [Mark and Beth] for lunch and started talking about things and Mark expressed how he was feeling and said that, what I told him then, about those two other kids, wasn’t helpful. And then my husband and I spoke about it and decided that we won’t be intervening anymore! We won’t be saying anything, we’ll just take care of his nutrition and the lifts to the pool and we’ll let his coaches and psychologist do their own part. And decided to pull back... just telling him “go and do what you can”, but without adding any pressure or anything. When I said that in December though it wasn’t to put any pressure on him it was just... you know, to shake him up a bit!” (Gloria, R2, L145)

From this example, it can be seen how the mother’s worry about her son’s performance and well-being and her effort to help, had the opposite results and impacted negatively their FWB. As other studies have illustrated, it is difficult for parents and athletes to agree on a level of involvement that would satisfy both (Kanters et al., 2008) and in the case of Mark, who generally held a more silent stance in the family, it becomes even more difficult for this optimum to be discovered. Mark did not reply, but he became distant with both the parents

and found resort in his sister. At the new year meal, Beth took the opportunity to express her frustration and intervene for her brother.

“I told them that... that they are exaggerating a little bit... and that they shouldn't be moaning because he does everything he needs to” (Beth, R2, B247)

“he told me that the only thing that I do that bothers him is that I note down his times. And I asked him, “why is that bothering you?”, and he said that it's because I'm drawing comparison and that he doesn't want me to... I said “okay, if it bothers you [I'll stop]”. And I told my husband “I won't be doing it in front of him, I'll be doing it behind his back.”. I am comparing but in what sense? Not because... it's because I feel and believe that he can do better. That's why I'm comparing. Not because I feel that mine [son] isn't good and I'm comparing with the better ones. I just feel that he can do it and he doesn't believe in himself. That's it. That the only reason I do it!” (Gloria, R4, L453)

Gloria's narrative demonstrates almost a 'typical' father's behaviour, as presented in other studies (Coakley, 2006; Gottzén & Kremer-Sadlik, 2012; Kay, 2007); however, it is the behaviour of a Cypriot sporting mother, who is concerned about her son's development and believes that her actions could benefit him. As can be seen throughout this chapter, Gloria was not the only mother who was as actively involved, which perhaps demonstrates the strength of the socio-cultural demands of being a Cypriot mother over being a sporting parent. Moreover, the negative affect that Mark and Gloria sensed prior to the race had a longer-term impact on their FWB than the disappointment of the result; therefore, the impact of a competition is not solely dependent on the result but on the entire experience of it, including the pre-, during and post-competition happenings.

As illustrated, families most often do not know how to react in order to show support and compassion but not pity, but depending on how they do and how it is perceived, can impact the members' dynamics (Dorsch et al., 2015; J. McMahon & Penney, 2015; Tamminen, Poucher, & Povilaitis, 2017). In the literature, it is mostly highlighted how parents' negative reactions can lead to negative affect and children's distancing; however, Jess' recollection on an incident that took place 5 years before illustrated how her unhappiness for a bad race led

her to react in a negative manner but has instead on the long run contributed positively their FWB.

“It bothered me! I mean I got sad! Because I could see her little face... in her eyes, and... I might have reacted the wrong way, I remember that moment! [...] I feel that that time I made a mistake, when I said, “what happened to you and you lost?”. I feel that I made a mistake then and I can’t forget that. [...] now I tell her, “it’s okay, it doesn’t matter darling” although I’m not sure if this is doing her any good. Because maybe I’m not giving her a push to get more passionate. I don’t know, it might be doing good, it might be doing wrong...” (Jess, R1, L246)

Jess’ quote illustrates how a bad race could trigger a series of emotions and reactions that could damage FWB. For Jess, her reaction caused her to still feel regrets and guilt for the way she spoke to Rachel, and to be unsure about how she can be supportive after a bad race; these emotions can have a negative impact on Jess’ self-satisfaction as they reflect on her mothering. Although it was evident that the members of Rachel’s family have a fairly effective communication, dealing with a failed competition appeared to be a challenge. When a competition goes wrong it is usual for parents, athletes, coaches and other participants to reflect on the result, trying to put a blame and see what can be done better the next time; amongst others, a bad race tends mirror the athletes’ abilities and work put into training, and the family’s support. The findings suggest that Cypriot parents’ self-satisfaction can be early disturbed by a bad race, as in elite sport parents receive the acknowledgement they need through their swimmers’ results, the society’s ‘congratulations’ and their family’s recognition for their contribution to the swimming result; nevertheless, after a bad race, the focus goes on the swimmers and therefore parents remain in self-doubting. As exemplified, this process can be upsetting and challenging for maintaining the core elements of FWB. This study suggests that ideally, after a bad race the family members need to maintain open communication and express their emotions (e.g. anger, sadness, disappointment, embarrassment, etc.) without hurting or offending one another. At the same time, whereas a good race tends to be bringing all the members closer, the siblings are often left out from difficult post-race conversations.

These findings show that due to a) the parents’ duty and desire to protect their child’s well-being and see them happy, and b) their own lack of control (discussed in 4.2.1.1.3) over the race, competitions can become very emotionally demanding. They develop fear in case

they hurt their children with their comments and become disappointed in themselves when unwillingly do so. As being involved in elite sport means that there is always a competition-related goal, parental stress is almost relentless and their worries and thinking process remind of a vicious circle. Their intense emotions cause a domino effect and influence performance but also the family's sporting experiences and well-being (Dorsch et al., 2015); the more the anxiety is perceived valid the more supportive the other members can be, whereas when they perceive it unreasonable they often become withdrawn. As seen in other studies (Burgess et al., 2016), Cypriot parents also adopt coping behaviours, with the most preferred one being to managing their emotional reactions, and more specifically avoiding to have a conversation with their swimmers prior to a race, not to trigger any negative emotions or conflicts. Nevertheless, this study suggests that the impact that families have on sporting experience are subjective as every family has different communication codes and same parental behaviours could have a different impact; as seen Natalie was successfully 'blocking' her father, but Mark was psychologically affected. Moreover, to safeguard the FWB, every member's emotions should be cared for and efforts to understand each other should be made. Additionally, as in Cyprus the family ties are strong (discussed in 4.2.3), to assist performance enhancement it is important for family relations to be positive, otherwise, the swimmers' personal well-being could be impacted disabling them perform at their best. This finding gives support to FWB theories, which suggest that the parents' well-being is a key contributor to the FWB (Henry, 1994; Jekielek, 1998; Newland, 2014, 2015).

5.2.2.2 The role of 'others'' well-being on swimmers

The findings show that, although their family's well-being was important to them, throughout the year, the swimmers were neither very emotionally nor actively involved in what the rest of the members were experiencing; this might be due to the lack of time and energy to become involved in what the other family members are going through. It was evident that the swimmers' emotions were only impacted when other members' wellness was considerably impaired or when they perceived that they were responsible for what others' felt:

“The truth is, they [parents] were really sad because they were also seeing me [being upset] ... everyone was talking about me, discussing what was going on with me... mum

kinda felt embarrassed too, I think! Of course, it isn't right because there can be bad races too” (Ross, R3, L327)

Feeling responsible for the emotions of family members, is a common feature in sporting families (Knight et al., 2016; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011) and as illustrated, Ross' words reveal somewhat sadness and self-disappointment for being the reason that his mum felt embarrassed at the competitions. Although he rationalises his thoughts saying that bad races can happen, he felt that if he swam faster or hid his emotions his parents would not have felt as such. Based on the findings, this accountability adds another responsibility on athletes, which becomes a factor influencing their self-satisfaction and happiness (figure 1).

Mark throughout the year repeatedly said that he does not get involved in the others' lives, and this was not only his self-perception, but also the others'. When his sister was narrating how her family reacted, when she failed to get into the university she dreamt of, Beth said:

“I told my mum about what bothers me, my dad got worried [...] my brother was here sitting he didn't say anything ha ha ha...” (Beth, R3, L217)

In the meanwhile, Mark, who has been receiving significant support from his sister, including help with his homework and with dealing with his conflicts with their parents, explained:

“I feel a bit bad because everyone is stressed and they're running around all the time, we only see each other at night (R3, L523)”.

Mark appeared sad, about the fact that the other family members are struggling with their duties, and longing for spending time with them. From his words, it can be seen how the others' well-being is important for his and potentially also influence his swimming experiences; nonetheless it is not communicated to the other members, which perhaps makes them feel that he does not care. Mark appeared and was described by his family and himself as an introvert, which may explain his limited involvement. In addition, their limited communication could be an outcome of his limited free time due to the sport demands or a sense of inability to help, and thus remains silent.

In Rachel's family, the siblings' dynamics and bond were different, while also the siblings have the same passion for swimming. Ben, in contrast to Beth, appeared grateful for his sister's support.

"She means a lot to me. She's helping me, especially lately because she realises too that she's leaving soon [going abroad to study]" (Ben, R3, L114)

Regarding the support the swimmers offer to their parents, it appeared limited; during the training season, Ross who was also sensing his parents' anxiety about his father's work, remained impartial.

"They sometimes discuss a bit more intensively, but I don't know what they're talking about... oh! Basically, dad had a matter at work and he was thinking whether to leave or stay" (Ross, R2, L339)

Remaining distant from his parents' matters illustrates a somewhat lack of interest, however at the same time Ross was dealing with his illness and his dad, in his interview mentioned that he tried not sharing much with Ross as "he had his own problems going on". Although evidently sometimes the absence of the swimmers from their parents' personal / professional matters is blamed on the parents, at many other occasions when swimmers were asked to help by fulfilling their family role duties, they were witnessed to be turning their backs (5.4.2.2). Moreover, a significant observation was that, just before the second round of interviews Rachel's grandmother was diagnosed with cancer and that was a significant matter for her parents; however, nor Rachel or her sibling, who is also a swimmer, referred to the diagnosis or mentioned how their mother was struggling, nor the analysis illustrated that their well-being was negatively impacted by any relevant factor. They only referred to what happened at the 4th round when her grandmother's condition got significantly worsen and their mother was also torn. This finding illustrates how for swimmers, sport sometimes has a greater importance than the others members' experiences, but it might also be another illustration of how parents become protective to their children and do not involve them in what is happening, not to become distressed, which this study suggests that it does not relate to swimming but to Cypriots parenting ideals (4.2.1.1.1).

5.2.2.3 *Elite swimming on approving other's choices*

Approving others' choices was presented as a core element for members' personal and FWB (4.2.3.2) and although the initiation in swimming may have not been the swimmers' choice per se (Natalie and Rachel were encouraged by their fathers, Ross was taken by his parents to start exercising due to excessive body mass and Mark followed his sister), elite swimming was evidently an approved choice that swimmers made.

“The role of swimming doesn't change because it's the alpha and omega in Ross' life. It requires a big budget for his expenses but since he wants it, he'll have it! But the happiness that a race can give you [as a parent] is... it's worth all the money!” (Becky, R4, L814)

Becky's narrative offers an insight on the financial demands that swimming imposes on the parents and highlights the significance of Ross' happiness. Taking into account how their financial well-being is a matter that causes a significant impact on her husband and their family's well-being (4.2.1.3), saying that swimming is worth *“all the money”*, illustrates how rewarding it is for Becky when a race goes as desired. At the same time, their sacrifices to assist their son illustrate their approval of his choice, while saying that *“The role of swimming doesn't change because it's the alpha and omega in Ross' life”* demonstrates that they also allow Ross to be in 'control' of the presence of swimming; her words imply that for as long as he chooses to swim, they will support him. Significantly, this mentality perhaps illustrates as well that Becky trusts her son's choices and perception on what is 'good' for him, and trust is a vital ingredient in enhancing the sense of contentment (4.4.1). In addition, it could be suggested that, the prioritisation of Ross' desires create a hierarchy, positioning him at the top, at least for as long as he chooses to swim; therefore, where for FWB all members' individual well-being is equally important, in Ross' family it is not while his is more important.

“How can I say this... it wasn't my dream for my kids to become athletes [...] now it has a big role... you come to think that, if Rachel wasn't in swimming she would have had a completely different development. So, since swimming entered our lives we are moving to a different direction and I believe that swimming plays a big part, because they put so many hours into it. Imagine not having the races every other week... it does affect us... but we aren't doing it halfhearted” (Jess, R1, L236)

Jess in the first round of interviews focused more on the overall role that swimming has in their lives and identified how swimming has shaped them. Their weekends would be different, probably they would be spending more time together; however, she cannot predict how it would actually be without swimming. Saying that they “*aren’t doing it halfhearted*” denotes that although they put significant effort into swimming and make sacrifices, it is not perceived as a burden and they genuinely want Rachel to be successful. Probably again, because swimming fulfils her need to sense Rachel’s happiness.

5.2.2.3.1 *Neglecting school*

Wanting the best for an adolescent in Cyprus, like in many countries, includes wanting them to receive good education and progress in life (Symeou, 2007). The swimmers often needed to be absent from school for competitions and did not study as much as expected by parents, teachers and often also by swimmers themselves, yet families made substantial effort to balance school and swimming for their child; as Natalie shared:

“I prepared for this year, because it’s an important year. I prepared quite a bit although there’s still some things I need to arrange, some afternoon classes that I’ll try arranging to have them in the evenings not to miss training. Definitely it will be very tiring, this year. I try focusing more at school, because last year I wasn’t focusing, I wasn’t following much in class. I’ll try more this year so that I’ll have less to do at home because I won’t have much time, I’ll be studying in the evenings basically so my sleep will be reduced. It will be a tough year...” (Natalie, R1, L590)

Natalie’s narrative illustrates how important it was for her to be able to attend her training, as she was planning her schedule, making several arrangements in order not to miss sessions or fail in school. For swimmers, but mostly for parents, sacrificing study time for swimming created significant emotional stress and insecurity, affecting their sense of happiness (4.2.1). The families’ investment in swimming meant that their self-satisfaction was and would be somewhat dependent on succeeding in swimming. This investment led parents to question

what participation in elite swimming could offer, which sometimes caused arguments with their children.

“I didn’t want her to be doing it [swimming] just for the sake of it and not achieving anything [...] now sometimes she has exams and I’m telling her, “if you want, don’t go today, stay home and study a bit”, “no, nooo [yelling] I won’t miss...!!!” she’s the one not wanting to! Now we’ve reached to the other extent, me telling her, “the exams are [more] important.” (Greg, R4, L121)

Greg’s narrative was found particularly interesting, as from a ‘pushy’ parent as he would be described in the literature (Burgess et al., 2016; J. McMahon & Penney, 2015), he became the one advising his daughter to put more effort in studying instead; this attitude shift could be a result of doubting that Natalie could benefit from swimming due to her latest performance and / or a realisation of the risks of neglecting her education. Nevertheless, this shift became a reason for the father – daughter dyad to be falling into conflicts, which subsequently negatively influenced their FWB.

In contrast to Greg, Jess who appeared as a parent who always monitors her children’s school progress, and would *“occasionally shout about studying more”* (Jess, R1, L151), within the data collection year, her approach shifted; significantly, by the third round, Jess shared that she became more lenient regarding Rachel’s studying.

I might be exaggerating, I might be... But you know, I finished my studies having three degrees and when I went out looking for a job, instead of employees looking at my degrees, they looked at my school marks. Therefore, I believe that the school grades follow you for a lifetime. (Jess, R1, L183)

“It’s only now that I realised that Rachel won’t get a chance to rest this year, and I genuinely feel sorry for her [...] I became more lenient because I was feeling sorry for her. It’s very hard! Very hard! She was away for a month and then was like, “mum I haven’t done great at the exams.” Whatever I’d say... won’t... what could I say? All I’m saying is that that’s the price of the gold medals. The price of... it’s too much though... and Rachel was always an A student and now all of a sudden not doing well at the exams, isn’t the best thing. Oh well!” (Jess, R3, L19 - 23)*

As can be seen, Jess' reasoning in wanting her children to be focused in their studies, stems from her personal experiences; although it was a surprise seeing that employers, in Cyprus, were more interested in her school grades than her higher education and believes that it was unreasonable, at the same time she felt responsible to ensure that both her children are good students. Nevertheless, witnessing Rachel's efforts and mixed results in school and swimming, that took place during the competition season, was impacting Jess' happiness, as in was often painful seeing Rachel struggling but also pleasant seeing her happy when achieving her swimming goals. Moreover, based on the in-depth analysis, the way Jess experienced the entire year had a significant influence on her self-satisfaction. The events included in the entire year allowed Jess to develop a better understanding of her daughter's skills and qualities (e.g. committed and hardworking), which contributed in developing even more admiration and respect towards Rachel, but also a complex combination of self-guilt and self-satisfaction for her parenting; proud parent for having Rachel as a daughter, but guilt for not having showed enough trust in the past and was somewhat 'pushy' in terms of studying more. Nevertheless, Jess' experiences evidently led in accepting Rachel's choice of not being fully devoted to studying and became more "lenient"; taking a step back, was potentially a somewhat cathartic action for Jess as for her it was a way to then on show her support and true care in a way that would be more coherent to her daughter.

The swimmers who took part in this study, except Ross, were coincidentally distinction students, however, it was only Ross' family which fully invested in swimming and prioritised it, instead of school. The family discourse indicated that taking the risk of prioritising qualifying for the 2020 Olympic Games over education was a conscious decision; Adam was intervening in the school activities to enable his son rest more for swimming.

"I took over the school arrangements, I was adding some 'spices' [lies] onto what I was saying. He could have been home resting and I'd call and say that we'll be going to another town to see the doctor [...] I arranged with the school to allow him to not take the exams" (Adam, R2, L100)

Adam's narratives illustrate how he could be turning into a person he does not like, to assist his son; as he emphasized in previous narratives, *"I hate lies"*. Taking such an action could be causing self-doubt as on one hand he fulfils his duty, which contributes to self-satisfaction

(4.2.1.1) but at the same time his behaviour clashes with his core values. In addition, although his intention was to enable Ross to perform at his best and safeguard his well-being, and Adam's actions could be seen as 'good parenting' in sport (Coakley, 2006; Dukes & Coakley, 2002; Kay, 2000), Adam could be criticized negatively by broader society for being an irresponsible parent for not encouraging education (Symeou, 2007), and that could affect his social well-being and happiness (Keyes, 1998), and consequently be reflected on his FWB.

As illustrated, being a parent of an elite athlete in Cyprus, and in many other cultures where education is perceived valuable, can be challenging for their well-being, as for them there are more criteria to comply with in order to be recognised as good parents and to enable them to sense social acceptance and self-satisfaction. This study argues that, although sport can enable athletes to enter universities with scholarships and can offer important assets for their future career development, it can be risky due to the unpredictability of sport. With an unlucky injury, an athlete's career can be terminated. Therefore, as also suggested also in the literature (Gould, 2010; Malina, 2010), investing in sport should be carefully considered as sport can destruct positive development and have a significant influence on the athletes' self-satisfaction later in life (Coakley, 2011). This study supports the literature, which encourages balance between private life, education and sport (Stambulova et al., 2015) as this balance would enable families to exert control over their lives, which as described in 4.2.1.1.3, is essential for sensing happiness.

5.2.2.3.2 *Future aspirations*

Participation in elite swimming does not only influence present experiences, it also shapes future aspirations, which in contrast to being the current swimming goals, the swimmers' swimming related aspirations do not always find approval by their families.

Whereas Ross' parents have been fully supportive (5.4.2.1) of his involvement in elite swimming, Ross' desire to remain involved in the sport as a coach in the future, appeared to be a choice that they did not approve.

"He wants to be a coach, now what could he do as a swimming coach in Cyprus... I don't know. To do what? That worries me a little bit. His future based on what he wants to do. That worries me. He says he wants to go to America to study and I'm scared that

if he goes, he won't come back because of swimming. We are discussing now and I'm trying to convince him to go to England. At first it was only America then he included England then we went back to only America and now we are kind of in the middle. He told me he'll go to America so that I won't be able to visit [jokingly] and I told him that I will overcome my fears and take pills [to remain calm / sleep on the flight] and go!" (Becky, R1, L185)

I'm worried about the future! He wants to become a coach, and then what? (Adam, R1, L98)

As seen in 5.2.1.2.4, most participants expressed dissatisfaction with the 'sport scene' in Cyprus, and based on that sense, for Ross' parents, a coaching career is not one that they would like their son to have. Significantly, besides their belief of working in Cyprus as a coach to be a bad decision, Becky and Adam also have their own personal withholds as to why they do not wish for their son to studying coaching in the US; firstly, for Adam, being a coach in Cyprus means being an employ and as he mentioned in round 1, "*because I was disappointed quite a bit in my life I want them to build something themselves and not be employees! An employee is just an employee.*" (R1, L9); at the same time, Becky is fearful of flying and of Ross loving America and not wanting to return.

Ross' lack of interest in school, limited exploration beyond sport and his shared with his parents, reservations towards the Cypriot sporting culture, has left him with uncertainty about what career path he would like to follow.

Ross: *Basically, I always believed that, always, always I'll be getting 'sorted' with swimming, but now that I'm growing up and looking things I think that it can't be like that. I see my coach for instance and think that you always need to have a backup plan let's say.*

Anastasia *What's that, that you're seeing that made you reconsider?*

Ross: *For instance, he's struggling all day [training athletes] and I see that they [parents and swimmers] are driving him mad... and then if you want to build a house, have a family etc. it's not enough just being a coach in Cyprus. And that's what I wanted but I started changing my plans. I was determined to be a swimming coach but now I don't know how I feel.* (Ross, R2, L278 - 282)

Ross, coming to a realisation that he will not always be able to make a living from swimming (as a swimmer and then as a coach) felt disappointment that he may have to follow a different path than his passion. From observing his coach, Ross developed a perception that working with people involved in the Cypriot swimming culture is a struggle. Significantly, Ross' exact words were found in his parents' narratives as well, which may be an illustration of a common understanding of the world or / and Ross might have embodied his parents' opinions and it is likely that his future decisions will be based on these values and understandings. He feels that being a coach in Cyprus cannot offer enough money for him to achieve his future ambitions of building his own house and having a family. Overall, Ross' concern and uncertainty about his future impacts his well-being as well as the other members' sense of family well-being, as they can see his fears and subsequently become also concerned.

5.3 Summary: The role of elite swimming on members' personal well-being

The findings in this section illustrate the complexity in understanding the role of elite swimming on Cypriots personal well-being. As described in Chapter 4, the main contributors to Cypriots' personal well-being are physical health, happiness and sensing FWB, and as presented in section 5.2, are all somewhat impacted by their participation in swimming. The findings illustrated, how elite swimming can be a threat to family members' physical health (especially swimmers) by following 'train hard-play hard' practices, how family members' self-satisfaction becomes to a large extent dependent on performance and how their social well-being is shaped in the context of elite swimming. Successful performances are a significant source of happiness as they are perceived as a result of successfully fulfilling personal family and social role duties (e.g. parents' provision of resources and athletes' hard training), and it reinforces sensing power, ability and goal achievement. Furthermore, the participants shared a variety of perceptions on their social experiences in sport, while there was a shared dissatisfaction with the Cypriot sporting culture. Moreover, carrying the status of 'elite swimmer' or the parent / sibling of one, the majority of the participants appeared to be somewhat expecting the society to reward them with positive social recognition, including respect and acknowledgement. Although siblings were open to share with their social circle their pride for their sibling, parents and swimmers maintained the socially desirable stance that

exists in Cyprus, of being 'humble' and not 'braggers' (5.2.1.2.4); yet, often when people disregarded acknowledging theirs or their swimmer's achievements, participants were developing emotions of injustice and anger, indicating a negative impact on their happiness.

The findings suggest that as the swimmers' well-being becomes central in the families' life it also becomes a defining factor to the members' personal well-being. Especially when swimmers' well-being was perceived low or threatened (e.g. failing at school or being ill), it appears that members' focus gets turned on resolving the hazard. Subsequently, as they all usually sense each other's emotions and are affected respectively (figure 1), when the swimmer's well-being suffers, it creates a domino effect on every member's well-being, including their sense of happiness and perception of FWB. Finally, and leading to the following chapter, elite swimming evidently had an impact on the members' relationships and mutual sense on FWB.

5.4 The role of swimming on the mutual sense of well-being

As illustrated in figure 1 and discussed (4.4), the findings suggest that a mutual sense of FWB is developed when the members feel content with and acknowledged by one another. The following sections, demonstrate how elite swimming influences the development of mutually sensing FWB.

5.4.1 Contentment

Family contentment in this study refers to the members' mutual sense of satisfaction, happiness, and confidence regarding their family relationships and interactions (4.4.1). From the analysis, it appeared that in Cypriot families, the members' personal swimming experiences impact the collective sense of contentment positively when the experiences are shared, but negatively when they differ and are not effectively communicated.

5.4.1.1 *Sensing togetherness Vs Spending time together*

As discussed in 4.4.1.1.1 spending time together is significant for Cypriot's FWB; elite swimming was observed to be limiting the together time but instead of also impacting negatively the sense of togetherness, it was often enhancing it.

"I was away for three weeks, then I came back for two and then went away for another two. I would like it if they [family members] could come too, I don't like that I'm always that far. Especially this year that is my final one [in Cyprus]. But okay in the X competitions (international) they will come!" [...] I would rather if they came at the Y competitions (international), as I could have achieved something better there but mum was like "what would we do in that country!" Haha!" (Rachel, R4, L567)

Rachel's narrative illustrates how the competition period became intense as she spent a significant amount of time away from her family and was missing them. The fact that after a few months she would move abroad for her studies appeared to be creating additional emotional stress, which somewhat appeared like guilt. Preferring her family accompanying

her abroad, especially at competitions that she expected to do well, than maybe staying home to be with them, illustrates the importance of swimming and that being away from her family is a sacrifice, but also the importance of making her family proud and happy. Bearing in mind that Rachel and Jess often clashed (examples included in 4.4.1.1.2 & 5.4.1.2), her quote suggests that, having to be away that often enhanced her need to be with her and the rest of the family.

In the same round of interview, Ben provided a detailed description of how their family experienced watching Rachel's race online; his narrative shows how that event allowed the family to develop mutual emotions of contentment.

“We were here, with the laptop on, we were sitting here. I was sitting there, mum there, and dad there. And they were kinda, stressed, a lot! They were really nervous, especially mum! And when she finished first dad stood up screaming, hugged mum, and was wondering if she broke the record. She was really close but it was really good! But yeah, dad got more excited than all of us. [...] it's nice but I wish Rachel was here to watch how great she is doing!” (Ben, R3, L150)

Ben's words reveal emotions of pride and love for his sister; he wants her to know or realise how great she is doing and feel the same pride as the rest of them do. Moreover, Ben's description illustrates how this family comes together through swimming, both in a physical way (gathering together) and emotionally. Contributing to the mutual sense of contentment (4.4.1), the three members shared the experience; they watched the event all together and at the same time they all shared an alike emotional experience, including the arousal before the race, which instantly disappeared with the result and was replaced with happiness and pride, as well as joy for seeing each other happy. Moreover, that event became a reason for the parents and sibling to communicate their emotions, and show each other their compassion and support, which are important for family members' sense of self-worth in the family, as well as for FWB to exist (Armstrong et al., 2005).

Like sporting families from other cultures (Côté, 1999; Dukes & Coakley, 2002; Kay, 2000), the participant families also often arranged their holidays around the swimming schedule too, which illustrates that despite of culture, the presence of sport in the lives of elite sporting families, is often relentless. Ross' family chose a hotel with a pool so that he could train, despite that it was in the off-season; and Rachel's mother preferred accompanying her to

a competition that would be in a country that she liked rather than at one that she was expected to do well. Similarly, Mark's family combined competitions that take place abroad with vacations; however, the four members experienced this trip differently.

“it wasn't a holiday for me. I was all the time at the pool. Hotel – pool, hotel – pool. [...] they had fun, they were with some other parents too. They stuffed themselves with food, they did a lot of shopping... they must have had fun” (Mark, R4, L401)

“It was tiring at times because the races were lasting for too long and I missed two sessions, but all the other times I pushed myself to last because I wanted to watch him race!” (Beth, R4, L219)

“we went all together, we had fun, we had a good company as well! My daughter liked it too, she did some shopping, got some stuff, shoes, clothes, a bag...” (Gloria, R4, L234)

In this example, it becomes evident how the family members experience the same event in different ways (Bartle-Haring, Kenny, & Gavazzi, 1999; Deković & Buist, 2005). Mark expressed dissatisfaction and annoyance with this explaining that, whilst his family was having fun, he had to be resting to race. Beth described this experience as tiring, and focused on Mark's races. Gloria on the other hand, found the trip “fun”; her words reveal happiness and satisfaction that Beth enjoyed it too. For Gloria these senses, might be related to her worry about Beth feeling marginalized; believing that Beth had fun offers her relief and increases her self-satisfaction as a mother for fulfilling her ‘duties’. Overall, for Gloria this experience contributed positively to her psychological well-being, for Mark it was irritating and for Beth physically tiring. Although people cannot have the exact same experiences, this finding suggests for families to organize holidays in a way that could be enjoyed as much as possible by all members. As illustrated, it can be frustrating for athletes witnessing their family having a pleasurable holiday, while they must remain focused on their performance. Despite that Mark did not react to this incident, such happenings could cause conflicts and strain FWB (Galvin, 2015; Levin, Dallago, & Currie, 2012; Newland, 2014).

In Natalie's family, the need for and lack of ‘togetherness’ was emphasised in all the members' narratives, throughout the four rounds; however, the impact of elite swimming in

their family was observed to be occasionally, in either difficult times or happy moments, bringing members closer. Significantly, at times when there were less extraordinary happenings, swimming appeared to be causing tension to the dyadic relationship of Natalie and Greg (5.4.1.2 & 5.4.2.2) but also, to be allowing Natalie's sister (Stacy) expressing her feeling of being neglected.

“Stacy would be like, “you’ve forgotten about us”, “we’re here too!”” (Teresa, R3, L319)

“She came for a week and then left, that was after summer. And her mum [Teresa] went, “come for a bit longer next time! When you come for a week and then leave, we don’t get to see you!”. And then she [Stacy] shoot up! She shoot up and told her [Teresa], “you know, what’s the point of vising? You’re always at the shop and dad is always after Natalie”, he said “it was as if you hit me on the head”. (Greg, R2, L65)

Stacy, not belonging to the nuclear family (as defined in this research), was not included in the study; however, Teresa's and Greg's narrative demonstrate emotions of guilt for not being adequately there for her. It is important to note that as other siblings, including most importantly Harry, who is also Natalie's sibling but lives in the house, did not express any similar emotions towards their parents. Nevertheless, based on the analysis it was observed that, except during summer, the other periods when Stacy was visiting her family, were periods of either intense training or competitions (Christmas and Easter) and therefore, parents and swimmers are usually busier; in addition, considering their family's disagreements, Stacy's stance could also be a response to her parents' stance towards her life choices (4.2.3.2). Finally, it is important to mention that based on Natalie's narratives, they have a strong bond with her sister; therefore, Stacy's reaction may have been triggered by their parents' stance than the presence of swimming per se; such, an example was evident in Beth's narratives presented in the following section (5.4.1.2).

As observed in the other three families, difficult moments and victories provided space for family members to join or regroup, either to support the swimmer or to celebrate. Despite the difficulties that swimming created on the sense of mutual togetherness in Natalie's family, they were not an exception.

“When I saw, Natalie catching her rival I thought “finally the time has come!” [to be first again] ... the chances to lose were one in a million... and it was that one. [...] when Natalie was getting in front of her rival, my mum busted in tears... she felt that excitement, thinking “finally!”. All that effort, stress, diets, going from school to training... [...] then she started losing speed and I thought “come on Natalie”, and I thought she lost all powers. And then we found out that she fainted. [...] Dad went first and I went second [to find her]. (Harry, R4, L200)

Harry’s narrative allows grasping the emotional experiences of the family members during a difficult race. Besides the understanding on the fluctuation of the members’ emotions it is important to note that, this race was a reason for Greg to feel disappointed with the federation (5.2.1.2.4).

Summing up, although togetherness is a vital element for members to develop mutual contentment and FWB, it is not only about being present in the same space at the same time (Nash et al., 2018); members need to share also the emotional experience. This study suggests that when elite swimming becomes a common interest for all the members it can provide numerous opportunities for families to develop their togetherness (Kirk et al., 1997); for instance, competitions (especially abroad) can offer a reason for families to take time off to support the swimmer, during which each individual member would simultaneously fulfil their family duties (4.4.2.1), and have holidays all together, enhancing their bonding. However, if the members’ experiences are not mutual, and some do not sense others’ understanding and support, sport participation can be a liability to their FWB; leading to the next section, effective communication is essential for maintaining sporting families’ FWB (Nash et al., 2018).

5.4.1.2 *Communicating swimming matters*

Habitual conversations amongst members of sporting families include reflecting on training or competition results; more specifically, it is a common practice for parents to ask about their children’s training, but as seen in other studies too, it is not always received well (J. McMahon & Penney, 2015). The findings of this study illustrate how swimming conversations impact the family members’ dynamics in Cyprus and how important it is for the

personal well-being of family members, and their FWB, to maintain effective communication during their participation.

Mark shared how he manages the ‘unwanted’ conversations with his parents:

“I tell them as much as they need to know! [...] I don’t want them to know about my sessions. It’s okay up to the point of asking whether it was okay or not. They don’t need to know more than that. They end up acting like coaches when they get more than that. [...] I told them to cut it off. [...] they did and then started again. Now they don’t. [...] I feel fine now... not having them on my head all the time!” (Mark, R3, L335)

Mark found useful to share as much information needed to keep his parents happy and when needed he asks them to “cut it”; it appears that his parents’ coaching behaviours are reoccurring but at the same time that Mark found a way for stopping them, when needed. In asking them to “cut it”, Mark draws his own boundaries, which are necessary to be respected in order for members to feel contentment (4.4.1); however, unless his parents are convinced that Mark’s well-being is not under threat, despite whether they behave within Mark’s boundaries and limit their involvement, mutual contentment cannot exist as they will feel uneasiness.

Gloria’s and Peter’s involvement was not only an issue for Mark, but also for Beth, and as illustrated below it had a domino effect on the family dynamics:

Beth: *I could wake up on a weekend and be listening to them talking about swimming and I was like “okay, they’re talking about swimming again”.*

Anastasia: *And how were you reacting?*

Beth: *I didn’t do anything... I basically usually have my headphones on listening to music, so I don’t really listen to what they are saying. Now things are more relaxed I think.* (Beth, R1, L184 - 188)

Beth’s irritation was towards the pressure her parents were imposing on Mark rather than Mark’s swimming per se; Beth, twice within the year initiated (example included in 5.2.2.1.2) a family conversation to criticise how their parents become pushy on Mark. On this note, as it can be observed in the other families as well, the other siblings who participated in this study expressed solely positive emotions towards their swimmer and took similar positions when

parents became ‘pushy’; this might be relating to the cultural values of Cypriots and the duty to be a caring sibling (4.4.2.1).

One of the uniqueness in Rachel’s family, was that her sibling was also a swimmer; therefore, the topic of swimming was coming from both children. Other than the international competitions, where only Rachel was participating, Ben and Rachel were training together and competing at the same national events. As Rachel suggested, *“Because my brother is also a swimmer, it’s something ‘normal’ in the house”*. Although in other studies, some siblings who participated in the same sport expressed jealousy towards the more successful sibling (J. Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008; Knoetze-Raper et al., 2016), in Rachel’s family swimming was often a topic that the family or the two siblings would get together to talk about.

“my brother likes talking about swimming, whereas I’m more like “whatever happened, happened”! He’d tell mum “I need to swim this fast!!” and “do this and that!!”. He likes it! And then I tell them too!” (Rachel, R3, L933)

According to Rachel, but also her parents, Ben is more talkative in relation to swimming than Rachel who is the elite; by sharing his thoughts, ambitions and his passion appears to be encouraging the family to be communicating swimming ambitions. In this instance, it is evident that elite swimming contributes to their FWB as it increases the family time and the members’ positive interaction; this identification was evident in another study where siblings were involved in the same sport (Kirk et al., 1997).

Similarly to Rachel’s family, in Ross’ there was a positive sense of enthusiasm about sport-talk, which was evidently related to the family’s prolonged involvement:

“Everything revolves around swimming. Basically, everything revolves around what our children are doing. At racing season, we talked almost exclusively about swimming, we were only interested about swimming. Then swimming was over and Tom came along so we were only talking about Tom’s competitions. It depends. Whether you like it or not it does affect your everyday life” (Becky, R1, L177)

In contrast to Ross’ and Rachel’s family, in Natalie’s, talking about swimming sometimes creates conflicts, disturbing the sense of mutual contentment and sense of being acknowledged,

affecting negatively their FWB. Looking at Natalie's perspective, she finds her father's advices before a race irritating:

"I don't know, sometimes my dad gives me advices before a race and I'm like... okay. I hear it, but it's not what I need, because I know that the only advices I need are from my coach. I don't tell him anything though. I say okay and then I do what I want. this is the only thing I don't like. Nothing else! [...] if I didn't have them (parents) I wouldn't have been this strong! I don't have any complains, even what I told you earlier, its nothing!" (Natalie, R1, L482)

Natalie, holds an irrelevant stance (Satir et al., 1975) towards her father, behaving in a way that is meant to make the other person believe that everything is alright; however, by not expressing her annoyance does not allow her dad to understand how she feels and her attitude maintains the distance between them, which may be what she wants to achieve, like Mark (discussed below). This suppression of emotions not only disables contentment to be developed, but also harms her personal sense of happiness, which can be reflected in her FWB but also in her swimming performance (Knight et al., 2016; J. McMahon & Penney, 2015; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011). Nonetheless, having been involved in swimming since a young age, Greg might feel that he can offer advice on her races and / or gets too emotionally involved, and in his effort to help.

"Sometimes I ask about her swimming and she feels like... I feel, from the way she responds, that she doesn't want to talk about it. I don't know if it's my fault, if I come across as pushy. I'm not pushing her but I don't know... well... I know that she talks a lot with her mother. It seems like they talk more... I don't know, I don't initiate conversations, lately, as I used to." (Greg, R3, L139)

Greg's narrative revealed a sense of disappointment and pain regarding his relationship with Natalie, which as observed in the length of the study, it appeared to be getting worse, as Natalie's responses became more aggressive, leading Greg to distance himself. Significant to the worsening of their relationship was the collective increased anxiety and concern for performing well, deriving from the repeated failed races that Natalie had throughout the year. The findings suggest that the performance anxiety imposed further stress on the family, and

the limited communication that already existed between the dyad was inadequate to support further pressure. Supporting this suggestion, Natalie's anxiety during the competition season, was reflected in an incident when she pushed away her brother:

"I went to find her after the race to see what happened and I grabbed her as I always do [hugging] and she just looked at me, as in "I know what you wanna ask" and when I asked she said "I don't have any strength! I'm not in the mood" [yelling], she said something like that! [...] it was a tough period with her exams and all the competitions... I could see it, she was psychologically exhausted and she just didn't care" (Harry, R3, L554)

Harry's narrative allows arguing that there can be times that Natalie needs space from her family, especially her father, but her stance does not allow them to realise her needs. Her aggressive responses develop negative affect to others and sometimes, as illustrated mostly in Greg's narratives, it can influence their relationships long-term. This study suggests that the participation in elite swimming without effective family communication can in some instances can have significant effect on their FWB, including disengagement and alienation of the members (Brown, 1999).

5.4.1.3 Routinisation and normalisation of elite swimming

In all the interview rounds, the participants were asked "*what is the role of swimming in your life at the moment?*", seeking to identify whether the role of swimming is transient. Interestingly all of them gave similar responses, including "*it's part of our / my life*", while the different seasons (pre-competition, beginning of the competition, peak of the season and off-season) had minimal influence. The findings suggest that families somewhat lose their own family routines and develop a new 'swimming routine', while their prolonged involvement and investment allows elite swimming to become 'normalised' and a "part" of their life. As the participants' shared, swimming has a continual presence in their lives, including in their diet:

You don't have a personal life, you are constantly with him. And the Sundays, one or two Sundays in each month you spend it at the swimming pool, either abroad or here."

We used to go to the village every weekend, that's gone too! [...] it's constant. And Gloria cooking his food, doing the same food everyday...” (Peter, R1, L233)

Peter, by using “you”, instead of I, to describe what he does, shows that he perceives that what he does is included in the role of any sporting parent, normalising in this way his experience. His narrative shows how fulfilling his role in a routinely manner affects his personal well-being, as he experiences tiredness and needs rest; nevertheless, his personal life, the family rituals, including excursions to their village, and the variety of meals in their diet became exchanged with monotonous swimming schedules.

It's a routine now, we live, we breath, and do everything for Natalie. Of course we [spouse] try looking after the others [children] because sometimes you know, without realizing it [...] many times I made the mistake of putting all my focus on Natalie and neglected all the others. Including my husband haha! (Teresa, R3, L137)

Teresa’s quote although summarises the perception of all the members of her family on the concept of routine, in terms of schedule and investing, the analysis illustrated that the importance of swimming in the extent described, “*we live, we breath for...*”, was an overgeneralization and regards solely Teresa’s emotions. Furthermore, despite saying “we” about neglecting the other children, Greg from the first interview stated that he would, and as seen did, take actions to change his stance towards others. Teresa joked about neglecting her husband as well, but the negative impact on Greg, like on Stacy, was evident throughout the four rounds, as Greg felt marginalized and neglected (5.4.1.2 & 5.4.2.2). Being aware that members of the family are feeling hurt, but maintaining neglecting them, perhaps illustrates lack of care, which may be underlining an unhappy marriage, or a sense of inability to cope with the challenges, giving up and holding an irrelevant stance (Satir et al., 1975). Overall, in Natalie’s family, it was observed how the swimming routine was gradually having negative effects on the FWB as the members did not find an equilibrium in their relationships, and the enthusiasm of and pressures coming from swimming intensified the dysfunctional aspects of their system (Peterson & Green, 2009; Satir et al., 1975; Walsh, 1996).

As illustrated in others’ narratives as well, the routinisation of swimming is, to a great extent related to their emotional and cognitive processes, as it was common to suggest that swimming does not leave their minds.

“It doesn't leave your mind at all... even during the holidays, when they come! Or... when you start preparing [the training season]. It doesn't leave, it's this! It's 365 days a year! It never stops. You're done with one race and then there's another. You end the training season then you start competing. Then you're done with them and... then the rest is too little! Um... but it's doing circles in your head all the time! On one hand during the competition period when the kids racing all the time, there's more tiredness. And for us [Jess and Matthew] because... it's stressful! All that psychological pressure... you get stressed and then consequently you get tired. On the other hand, when there's like fifteen days without anything [races] you miss it! You miss it because it became part of our lives, our daily routines, of everything! Everything! sometimes I'm thinking [giggling] that when they [Rachel and Ben] stop swimming the upper floor [of the house] will become empty. We always have their towels, their suits... it's all hanging there [to dry]!” (Jess, R3, L417 - 421)

Jess' quote illustrates both the development of a new normality but also a sense of 'institutionalisation' (Johnson & Rhodes, 2007); explaining how demanding it is to their physical and psychological well-being but at the same time, the absence or even thought of absence causes negative affect, such as feeling a loss or emptiness. Even the physical space of their house is routinely 'decorated' with hanging towels and suits, therefore their habitat, with the absence of swimming will be altered and the members will need to live in an almost different environment, where the norms and rules will need to be adjusted. For Jess, it is difficult to imagine this scenario. As another study showed (Lally & Kerr, 2008), sometimes the transition out of sport is difficult not just for the athletes, but their families too; they all personally lose their hobby and a piece from their routine while also the family loses one of the most significant ties that was bringing them together for years. They almost do not know 'how to live' without sport as the last time they were together without sport was when the athlete was younger and so they need to recreate new rituals to fill all the free time that they then have (Lally & Kerr, 2008). It is often the case for family members become disjointed, as FST would describe, as athletes post retirement move on with their lives, whereas parents do not do so at the same speed, and depending on the members enmeshment they could experience emotions of abandonment (Brown, 1999; Minuchin, 1974; Satir, 1983). For these families, their transition out of sport would have a significant impact on their FWB; as illustrated

throughout chapter 5, all the contributors to their FWB as impacted by swimming; therefore, when swimming becomes subtracted, the members will have to rediscover their equilibrium; especially in regard to the mutual aspects of FWB (contentment and acknowledgement).

The constant presence of swimming and the swimming-shaped routine was reflected in the participants' social life:

“in the beginning when the holidays began it was awesome because... well I needed holidays but now, that a few days went by, I am a bit bored. I mean without swimming! I missed going for training.” (Natalie, R4, L32)

Only being off from training for a few days, Natalie finds her days 'boring'; this shows how the training environment offers her a sense of doing something worthwhile and pleasant, which based on the study's conceptualisation (figure 1), it relates to her self-satisfaction and sense of happiness; likewise Ryff's concept would also suggest that it is essential for maintaining her PWB (Ryff, 1989; Van Dierendonck et al., 2008). Although during the training and competition season, Natalie was feeling physically tired, it seems that only a few days were enough for her to miss that routine; this also relates to 'institutionalisation' and 'routinisation' (Johnson & Rhodes, 2007). The 'boredom' from being away from swimming for some time was also found in the other swimmers' narratives; As Mark expressed during off-season, *“I'm not doing anything important at the moment”*. However, during off-season, the social well-being of all swimmers becomes dependent to the availability of opportunities to 'have fun' without being in the swimming environment (e.g. if their friends would be available to meet with them). These findings suggest that the swimmers' social well-being is strongly connected to their sport. The presence of friendships in the sport context is significant for the individuals as well as for their family's well-being, as the more they individually feel socially content in the sporting environment, the more positive emotions will be brought in the family system, and can potentially benefit FWB (figure 1).

The findings of this study suggest that, the routinisation of swimming in the families' lives is not only reflected in the members' thoughts and daily routines, it also extends to their social circles and experiences; their social circle is evidently affected in a negative way when swimming limits their free time but also in a positive way, when swimming develops new social routines bringing families and others together.

“Um... we [the family] can’t imagine our lives, mine, our family’s, even our relative’s, without swimming in our lives! No way! [...] my brother couldn’t make it [to the competitions] twice, one time because he had work and the other because it was his daughter’s birthday. The other day at the competitions, my mother in law and my dad joined. My mum couldn’t because of her health issues...” (Adam, R1, L92)

Expressing that his family and relatives cannot imagine their lives without swimming either illustrates that he perceives swimming as an important element to their lives, that contributes to their happiness and would be unbearable to lose. He feels that the people he included would only miss a race under exceptional circumstances and that this grouping together for the event of a race contributes to everyone’s happiness and bonding. The emotions revealed in Adam’s narrative indicate personal happiness and so did the narrative of Ross, who also spoke about his relatives’ presence. Similar emotions were evident in Natalie’s family:

“My nan and my auntie, basically my aunties [attend her competitions]. Oh! And some family friends!” (Natalie, R1, L262)

Summing up, the presence of elite swimming in the four Cypriot sporting families’ lives appeared to have a predominant role in the shaping of their functioning, including their daily schedules, rituals, social life and family dynamics; however, the families’ long involvement in swimming enabled them becoming adapted to the sport’s demands, and whereas the demands of swimming were changing in line with the seasons, the role of elite swimming was almost unchangeable. Although routines enable individuals and families to have control over their lives and have an important role on their happiness (4.2.1.1.3) and FWB, as seen in Natalie’s family, the routines developed by swimming can cause negatively impact; this section, as well as the following one, illustrate the essence of effective communication (Galvin, 2015; R. Peterson & Green, 2009).

5.4.2 Acknowledging each other’s contribution

Whilst for FWB, it is essential for a mutual sense of acknowledgement to exist (4.2.3), the findings illustrated that the presence of swimming can often make it difficult to be

developed. As illustrated throughout the findings and in the literature, participating in elite sport imposes various challenges on families (Kay & Spaaij, 2012; Newhouse-Bailey et al., 2015), including adding extra duties to the individual family members; such as additional expenses for the parents. Whilst swimmers were observed to be constantly upraised by their family for their achievements and their great strength for combining school and elite swimming, the other members received minimal recognition from one another, for how they contribute and respond to the additional sporting demands. The findings show how, not all members feel appreciated for their contribution, and as a consequence how the mutual sense of being acknowledged is reduced, impacting at times the sense of mutual family well-being (figure 1). The following themes describe the impact of ‘glorifying’ the swimmers and of the swimmers’ neglect to acknowledge others’ efforts, on the mutual family well-being.

5.4.2.1 ‘Glorifying’ the swimmer

In all the families, the swimmers were receiving particular appraisal from all the other members, indicating a mutual belief that the swimmers’ achievements, including their ‘status’ in the society, being ‘elites’, is important. Although in other studies family members’ involvement was causing pressure to athletes (Bois et al., 2009; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011; Palffy & Martin, 2008), the parents’ endless support and acknowledgement evidently had mostly a positive impact on the swimmer’s personal happiness and was often reflected on FWB (figure 1). Providing an example from Ross’ family, the members’ shared faith in his swimming potential and the acknowledgement they were offering to Ross, through verbal and practical support, was observed to be benefiting both Ross by increasing his self-satisfaction and development.

“I think, after my parents, she [grandmother] is my biggest fan! [...] I believe that I just basically need my parents’ support. The others’ [friends, relatives and other non-family members] is important too but I believe it’s unnecessary. It’s different to have the support of those who are ‘there’ everyday...” (Ross, R1, L468)

Ross’ words reveal a variety of positive emotions, including motivation, self-satisfaction and esteem, and sense of contentment, illustrating happiness (4.2.1). Nonetheless, this happiness

is strongly related to the constant acknowledgement he receives from his family. The following narratives illustrate how at challenging times, his family offered their support and expressed their faith in Ross's ability as a swimmer.

"I went one day to school and asked my son to get out of the class so I'd be alone with his teacher, and I asked her how dare she, calling Ross a loser?! That was the PE teacher... she called my son a loser! My son who's breaking records!" (Adam, R1, L66)

"I was like "see! We all have faith in you and you don't! For once, just believe in yourself", "Urgh! Leave me alone" he'd say, so I leave it there because I know that, after a while, he'll be after hugs and be all like "mummy, mummy, you're the best mum!" (Becky, R2, L416)

Adam's quote revealed an overall sense of pride for his son's swimming achievements, which contributes to his self-satisfaction for his parenting, while the incident with Ross' teacher caused him particular distress as it made him feel disrespected. Although this incident had an impact on Adam's personal well-being, including tension in his social well-being, his behaviour is one that allows Ross feel content in his family and acknowledged for his swimming. Similarly, Becky's perseverance in trying to persuade Ross that he can swim fast appeared to be somewhat tiring for her; nevertheless, as her words revealed that her efforts pay off; Ross returns the acknowledgement he receives, creating a positive relationship between them and at the same time he manages to continue trying with his swimming. Significantly, Ross' siblings were also supportive and had a positive impact:

*"He had some competitions and he was telling me that he didn't wanna go and I said "why not going? You'll f*** them all if you go!", and he was changing his mind!"* (Tom, R2, L403)

"I get angry when they [athletes] go to their races and think, "Oh I'll go and whatever happens, happens", you can't say that! If I went, I'd do anything I could to come... and it's what I get mad with, I'd go with the mentality of coming first [...] when I return to

Cyprus I'll have a chat with him and tell him that he needs to start thinking differently if he wants to make it to the Olympics” (Tom, R3, L423 - 431)

From Tom's perspective, seeing his brother giving up on a race, not taking competitions seriously or not swimming with the purpose of winning, infuriates him, as he does not want his brother to fail and be sad or to be laughed at. As illustrated previously (4.2.1.2.1), in Ross' family the sense of social recognition and the masculinity behaviours (e.g. specific use of language) have a significant place and impact on their functioning. Significantly, the analysis illustrated that all the members in Ross' family offer, everyone in their own way, unconditional and endless support, even Will who was only five years old.

“I caused more sadness to Will. He was holding me in his hug and telling me “don't be scared mate, whatever happened, we'll get over it...” basically I don't know... I felt that, I should give them a little happiness, because no matter what we say, it was an endless year...” (Ross, R4, L325)

As it can be observed, the collective acknowledgement that Ross receives for his swimming ability and the effective communication they have, had a positive impact on his experiences both as a swimmer but also as a member of his family. Ross quote shows that sensing their admiration, approval and support makes him feel content with his family, whilst from the others' quotes it can be seen how he was made to feel cared and important. Becky was tirelessly and patiently trying to boost his confidence by talking to him and, according to her narrative, her efforts were always rewarded as after a while Ross responded with affection expressing gratitude and love, which in return appears to enhance Becky's perception of her mothering ability. Adam and Tom were called to help him, which illustrates his trust towards them; Adam openly showed his anger towards his teacher who insulted Ross, and Tom was successful in 'shaking him' using masculinity practices. These behaviours characterise the norm in their family and contribute to the members' mutual sense of FWB; Ross, although often portrayed as an almost insensitive character, said things like *“I don't listen to them [family]”*, he was always sensitive towards his family's beliefs. The dynamics in Ross' family enabled Ross to, after a devastating year to remain positive for the upcoming one; as he said: *“I'm ready for the next year!”* (R4, L782); nonetheless, as illustrated in the following section, like other

swimmers', Ross' attitude does not always allow returning the positive acknowledgement that he receives and as a result harms the mutual sense of acknowledgement.

5.4.2.2 Swimmers neglect acknowledging other's contribution

The findings suggest that the swimmers' expectations towards their parents somewhat become amplified, probably due to their lack of ability to control their emotions deriving from the sport pressures. Despite whether parents manage to accommodate them, it was observed that swimmers often fail to acknowledge their support and importance as parents, and consequently parents feel disrespected and inadequate. As illustrated in the following paragraphs, this negligence has a negative influence on FWB as the mutual sense of acknowledgement and contentment becomes disrupted.

In Natalie's family, it appeared that Natalie's appreciation towards her father is not communicated effectively and as a result Greg becomes marginalised, and the mutual contentment does not develop.

"I have the ideal family that an athlete and student could have!" (Natalie, R1, L50)

"now dad was doing the 'chauffeur' for me to have my physio, my training and that. I know that he does everything in his power to help me!" (Natalie, R2, L456)

"it [the previous months] was kinda more intense, the stuff that I had to do... Natalie... it's Natalie too, who's the type of person who demands stuff, you know, she can't stop... 'take me here, take me there, hurry up!!' Haha! I'm not complaining. That's just her... character! I'm glad I can do it ... I'm not... there has been a day when I when I had to drive to town and back [25mins each ride] five times! What I mean is that... I might have had work to do..." (Greg, R2, L17)

"Sometimes I ask about her swimming and she feels like... I feel, from the way she responds, that she doesn't want to talk about it. I don't know if it's my fault, if I come across as pushy. I'm not pushing her but I don't know... well... I know that she talks a

lot with her mother. It seems like they talk more... I don't know, I don't initiate conversations, lately, as I used to.” (Greg, R3, L143)

The above quotes illustrate again how Natalie’s and Greg’s dysfunctional communication has created two contrasting ‘realities’ and the negative consequences of it on the sense of acknowledgement (4.4.2) and FWB. Natalie expressed appreciation towards her father, while the use of the word ‘chauffeur’ indicates an understanding of how Greg went beyond his fathering duties, providing a ‘service’ or a doing chore, to fulfil her desires. On the other hand, her father felt disrespected, unappreciated, left out, unsure about his fathering, as well as disappointed and hopeless, due to her behaviour. The way Natalie “*demands*”, makes him feel irrelevant, whereas if Natalie asked for his help, it would have allowed him to feel that she acknowledges that he also has things to do and that his help is valuable and appreciated. Although swimming seemed to be the main common interest between this dyad, their interaction led Greg distancing himself and breaking the togetherness they all want (4.4.1.1.1), as described by FST, Greg ‘cut-off’ from the other family members (Brown, 1999).

Similar issues were also evident between Adam and Ross:

“I have a few complaints from him [Ross]. It’s been a month, that we barely talk. It’s unacceptable passing by me saying a simple hi and leave while I am doing housework, and not even ask if I need any help. It bothers me, and I ‘attack him’ I won’t let it go. You know what is like to be an athlete, so we (wife and him) agreed to let him have some rest during August because he was training 11 and a half month in a row. I’m not in a position to say whether is hard or not but... I am waiting... when I sense that he is more relaxed as well I’ll be more relaxed to.” (Adam, R1, L53)

Adam’s narrative shows that does not feel acknowledged or respected by Ross; his words reveal a sense of being taken into advantage and that causes him anger and disappointment, which are reflected in the FWB. When the family roles change without being communicated effectively amongst the members, the boundaries and expectations become blurry, allowing confusion to exist and gaps for misunderstandings to develop (Broderick, 1993; Minuchin, 1974). For example, if one of the duties of children are to be helping with the house chores, but for the swimmers it is acceptable sometimes (e.g. competition days) not to do so without defining the circumstance and the ‘new’ expectation to help later, it can encourage swimmers

to think that they do not need to help anymore. Although the cut between a parent and a child roles is somewhat rigid in Cyprus, this study suggests that elite swimming can create misunderstandings and be a reason for family arguments, unless families maintain effective communication.

In contrast to Adam's sense of being unappreciated and respected by Ross, Jess (illustrated in 4.4.2.1.) and Tom feel differently; Tom feels acknowledged as a good brother and trainer, him and that enables him to feel confident in helping him.

"I think that as soon as he starts [training] and sees and realizes that I'm there [for him] too, he'll be fine" (Tom, R3, L439)

Overall, this finding suggests that despite the swimmers' inadequate communication of appreciation, their demandingness and limited help with house chores, provided another reason for parents to feel unacknowledged. Another supporting example comes from Rachel's family:

"we used to argue a lot more! They [parents] used to tell me off regularly but now I don't do silly things any more so they don't! I used to be the most untidy person that exists haha! I am very untidy [giggling] I'd leave stuff everywhere, I'd tell mum "mum let's go there" or "come take me there". Whereas now I'll tell her stuff when she comes home. In the past we used to argue because, I had no one to take me to the gym yeah? Every day, I had to... sometimes I was taking a taxi and I was feeling awful! Who am I to be getting a taxi to get to the gym? The daughter of... I don't even know whom [someone overly rich]! As if I have a personal driver or something? [...] now [that she got her driving licence] it's fine. I used to yell at her, because she had her lecturing but I was like "I don't care, figure it out!" and she would yell back saying that I should be acting like that!" (Rachel, R3, L697)

Rachel's narrative illustrates how, reflecting on the arguments she was having with her parents she realised and admitted having a blame; Rachel explained that she was not fulfilling her family's role duties and that was infuriating her parents. Her words reveal gratitude towards her parents and regret for being demanding. On the other hand, having to take a taxi to get to her session was making her feel uncomfortable as for her that would have been something that a 'posh' person would do and could not identify with; on the contrary, she was feeling

embarrassed. As she was understanding of her mother's need to work, her reaction appeared to be more related on her fear of being criticised by others, as by maintaining a humble and low-profile she would be conforming to the society's expectations and would not risk of impairing her social image in the sporting culture. Rachel's narrative provides an illustration of the complexity in understanding how training demands of elite adolescents can impact FWB; from this example, it can be seen that Rachel's training demands and dependence of transportation clashed with her parents' professional duties (Thompson, 1999), which as described (4.2.1.1.1 & 4.2.1.3) are essential to maintaining financial well-being and self-satisfaction for fulfilling their family and social role as employees. At the same time, in their effort to accommodate Rachel's needs by paying for a taxi was impacting negatively Rachel's social well-being and social role (swimmer) duties, and was consequently backfiring on the mutual sense of FWB. Moreover, looking at the positive change in the family's well-being once Rachel became able to drive, illustrates how the role of elite sport on FWB can relate to the age of the athlete, the cultural social expectations and sport-specific training demands.

Discussing the role of the swimming demands on his parents' lives, Ross suggested that his parents are obliged to accommodate his needs.

Ross: *They [parents] have to run after me, whatever 'the kid' needs haha! They have to offer it!*

Anastasia: *And it is something that you see? As a torture?*

Ross: *No. No, no ... an obligation! (R1, L296)*

Ross' narrative reveals mixed emotions; on one hand appreciation towards his parents for their tireless efforts, "running after" him, but on the other hand the opposite, as he does not perceive their help as something beyond their duties. As discussed in the Cypriot culture, parents carry a sense of obligation in regard to fulfilling their children's desires (4.2.1.1.1 & 4.4.2.1); nevertheless, the attitude of expecting parents to accommodate all needs, especially without offering any acknowledgement, could only affect FWB negatively, as not everyone will feel as valuable members (4.4.2). Similarly to Ross, Mark also shared:

"she might say "I can't do faster my love" and I tell her to wake up earlier [to be ready on time] Hahah! [...] when she is late I moan at her continuously "come on Mrs Gloria!" hahah! Until we leave!" (Mark, R2, L645)

Evidently in all four cases, the swimmers became agitated when their parents could not accommodate their needs in the way they wanted. Their agitation might be attributed on the pressure they feel to be punctual with their swimming duties and their fear of becoming punished by their coach or even failing at their upcoming races; nevertheless, their negative emotions, their inability to communicate effectively, control how they feel and do anything to change the sport requirements (e.g. change the training time), brings out of swimmers a manner that hurts their parents' emotions and harms their FWB. At the same time, parents appear to be becoming 'overindulgent' when it comes to swimming matters (Wolford, Darling, Rehm, & Cui, 2020), neglecting their needs and negotiating their personal well-being at times (5.2.1.1.1). The parents' overindulgence according to the literature could have a negative influence on the adolescents' emotional and behavioural development. In short-term, adolescents may suffer with limited ability to control their emotions of helplessness and frustration, yet always being offered a solution by their parents could later on in life lead to being unable to cope with daily tasks due to their lack of fundamental abilities; as consequence it could cause the swimmers have low self-efficacy, high dependence on others but lack of a stable good relationships, depression and even substance abuse (Wolford et al., 2020).

Overall, the four Cypriot elite swimmers' support towards other members of the family appeared to be limited, especially towards their parents, which illustrates that the sense of being supported and cared about, is not always equal amongst members. The findings suggest that this inequality, can be causing feelings of being neglected and impacting negatively their FWB. It must be highlighted that swimmers, being young at age may have felt that their help would be useless and were not offering it. Nonetheless, the swimmers' negligence to acknowledge openly their parents' contribution and their demandingness has a large impact on a) parents sense of acknowledgement as they sometimes doubt their ability as parents, which affects their self-satisfaction and esteem, b) their sense of contentment and acknowledgement. Initially parents' response is to try harder to offer more to their children and then, after remaining unacknowledged for a while, as seen in Greg's narratives, they sometimes distant themselves, as they feel neglected. The notion of gratitude of athletes towards their parents has not been explored before; nonetheless this section (5.4.2) provides significant insight on how it is an element that could make the families' sporting experiences more positive, and most importantly would enhance individuals' sense of happiness, the members' mutual sense of FWB and overall FWB (figure 1)

5.5 Summary: The role of swimming on the mutual sense of well-being

Participating in elite swimming, Cypriot families develop a shared goal for succeeding in swimming, which for FWB can be beneficial as family members strive for the same values (Brown, 1999). Theoretically, on this circumstance, competitions and other daily swimming duties were providing a space for members to share mutual experiences and opportunities to demonstrate affection to one another, including offering support, interest, care, and essentially developing mutual positive emotions, and subsequently FWB would be enhanced. Nonetheless, open and effective communication (Akhtlaq et al., 2013; Galvin, 2015) amongst the members was proved essential for benefiting from participating in elite swimming. The pattern of developing cohesion through difficult times was evident in all four families and according to studies, an increase in family cohesion during a difficult time can contribute to adolescents' sense of optimism and self-esteem (Guassi Moreira & Telzer, 2015), which in turn will supposedly, contribute to a positive interplay between individuals' and a mutual sense of well-being (figure 1); however, in the families with less effective communication the bonding was only taking place for the moments of crisis. Once issues were resolved, the members were returning to being distant. Moreover, the sense of acknowledgement often suffers due to the lack of effective communication between parents and swimmers; often swimmers almost fail to express gratitude to their parents and as a result parents feel unappreciated and disrespected. Unlike other studies though (Blazo et al., 2014; J. Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008), the findings showed that elite sport provides stimuli for siblings to develop strong relationships; based on the analysis this is due to the siblings' strong compassion towards the swimmers, but also, in the swimmers' demonstration of acknowledgement, which makes them realise their value as siblings. It is suggested that these findings relate strongly to the Cypriot cultural norms, which require from parents to tirelessly provide their children with everything they need (Shiakou & Belsky, 2013) and at the same time the children to be protective of one another. As the literature explains (Heylighen, Lenartowicz, Kingsbury, Beigi, & Harmsen, 2017; Johnson & Rhodes, 2007), socio-cultural norms are embodied; likewise, the findings also show that the participants' sporting experiences and most significantly the impact that swimming could have on families, is strongly related to the broader social expectations. For instance, as having to be a loving and protective sibling is a socio-cultural expectation, Cypriots perceive the challenges derived from swimming as opportunities to practice their family role, instead of threats.

6 Chapter 6: Conclusion

Introduction

This final chapter presents a summary of the findings, highlighting the most significant conclusions. It discusses the strengths and limitations of the study and proposes suggestions for future research. Concluding, this chapter provides recommendations regarding the potential implementation of the findings in policies and practice.

6.1 Findings' summary

This study sought to explore the role of elite swimming on the well-being of Cypriot families, which have an adolescent elite swimmer. The exploration was conducted following the framework of IPA. Through four rounds of individual in-depth interviews, which took place at the beginning of the pre-competition season (September 2017), beginning of the competition season (January 2018), peak of the competition season (May 2018) and off-season (August 2018), the members of four families (16 participants) shared their daily personal, family and sport experiences that took place in between the interviews, allowing to collect an entire year's experiences. The aim of the four rounds was to develop an in-depth understanding about individual and family well-being. The focus was on the analysis of the multidimensional characteristics of wellbeing in terms of the dynamic interplay between personal and family and experiences and the role of elite swimming in Cyprus.

The findings of the study suggest that the well-being of Cypriot families, which have an adolescent elite swimmer, can be explored through and characterised by a dynamic interplay between each member's personal well-being and the members' mutual sense of FWB. Mutual sense of FWB is reported when the members feel content with one another and feel acknowledged as valuable members of their family system and for the society. Personal well-being requires physical health, happiness, which is influenced by self-satisfaction, social well-being, financial well-being and religion, and sensing family well-being, including sensing others' physical health and happiness, approving their choices and sensing that the family relationships are good.

The exploration of the participants' experiences enabled developing an in-depth understanding of the role of elite swimming on FWB, including of the influence that swimming

can have on their personal well-being and the mutual sense of FWB. The impact of elite swimming on family members' personal well-being was mostly evident on their self-satisfaction and social well-being, which significantly, were both related to the swimmers' well-being. As illustrated the swimmers' personal well-being is constantly challenged, mainly due to the on-going training demands that cause friction on their physical well-being; at the same time this friction becomes consciously central in the families' daily life and affects how the different family members feel in general but also about themselves. On this point, the participants' sense of self-satisfaction was to a great extent influenced by the level they accomplished their duties (e.g. going to work, cleaning, cooking, doing their homework, being 'good' family members), goals and ability to control their lives. Moreover, the sacrifices participants needed to make for the attainment of their goals or fulfilment of sporting duties was often clashing with their other duties; for instance, parents often had to arrange their job schedules to accommodate the swimmers' needs or felt that, with their involvement in swimming they neglected their other children; also swimmers sometimes felt that they were not adequately supportive to the others'. Consequently, participants were sensing negative affect, including fear and concern about being unable to fulfil all their duties effectively and was affecting negatively their well-being.

To different extents but for every participant, their social well-being becomes influenced by elite sport. As other studies also suggested, elite swimming was, for some participants, improving their social life, as some developed friendships, which were positively contributing to their social well-being; however, for others, their social experiences in the swimming culture were mostly negative. Adding to the existing literature, the findings illustrated that the participants perceive that sport success should be rewarded with social recognition and therefore, being an elite swimmer or having an elite swimmer as a child or sibling, participants expect from the society to provide it. This expectation made them vulnerable to people's opinions. This study suggests that, receiving positive recognition contributes to their sense of social belongingness and approval and benefits their personal happiness, whereas negative recognition or being 'unnoticed' in areas where one puts effort (e.g. work and swimming) causes the opposite effect; a negative impact on happiness, including emotions of self-doubt, anger and dissatisfaction. Moreover, the findings have shown how there is a consensus on the perception that Cyprus is not ideal for elite sport due to the lack of facilities and sport attitude from stakeholders, which often causes negative impact on the participants' sport experiences and well-being. By examining the participants' perception of

swimming on FWB it was found that the strong presence of swimming in their lives can often encourage members to blame it for ongoing family issues, whilst it was often perceived as the reason or explanation for other family members' well-being (mostly for their negative experiences). At other times, swimming can function as a trigger for members to bond, putting aside their interfamily conflicts. Swimming has a more complex role in the participants' FWB, which was unfolded when exploring the participants' mutual experiences.

The mutual sense of family well-being is fundamentally affected by the time members get to spend all together and the effectiveness of their communication. The various challenges that are placed on the families, including having to sacrifice their 'together time' for swimming purposes, often contribute to developing emotions that promote contentment, instead distancing and alienation. For instance, family members develop longing for family time, while the mutual sense of pride and happiness deriving from swimming achievements increases the sense of solidarity and belongingness. On the other hand, the need for regular discussions on swimming-related topics, sometimes strengthens members' bonds but at others, it creates alienation. This study suggests that, families with effective communication can potentially benefit from participating in elite sport as it provides numerous opportunities to share meaningful experiences (e.g. competitions) that can enhance their mutual sense of contentment and FWB; yet families with dysfunctional communication can suffer conflicts. Finally, and in relevance to communication, sometimes the mutual sense of acknowledgement appeared to be lacked; swimmers often neglected showing their appreciation towards their parents' tireless efforts, which caused parents distancing themselves and feeling frustrated, influencing as a result negatively the mutual sense of contentment. On the other hand, swimmers are at most times being uplifted by the positive recognition that their family offers but in return their behaviour often makes parents feel disrespected, mismatching their true feelings. Their ineffective communication creates an uneven sense of being acknowledged as members of their family and therefore a disagreement on whether contentment is mutual (figure 1).

Overall, the findings illustrate how Cypriot families' well-being is complex and multidimensional, and can be influenced in various ways when a child is an adolescent elite swimmer (figure 1). Participation in elite swimming can benefit FWB in some respects, whilst in others to be causing friction; the impact is at most subjective as it depends on the unique functioning processes of each family and their life circumstances, which are always changing and can never remain the same, but at the same time, the negative impact of sport on athletes' physical well-being is a real threat that would always influence families' experiences and well-

being. Concluding, the well-being of Cypriot sporting families must be considered by the various sport stakeholders and be responsibly safeguarded at all times.

6.2 Strengths and limitations

Like every study, this research as well, has its own strengths and limitations, which influence the trustworthiness and the potential implications of the findings (Yardley, 2000). The length of the research and its inductive approach count as a strength and contribute to the trustworthiness of the study, as the prolonged engagement with the participants enabled observing thoroughly and over time the different factors that were shaping their personal and family well-being and allowed more informed interpretations to be made regarding these contributors' significance. Following up on their experiences enabled developing an understanding of the sequence of the events that took place in each participant's life, as well as their previous thoughts and desires; this process allowed gaining an in-depth understanding on how and why the participants perceived the events in the way they did. This study suggests that by interviewing participants once would be difficult to obtain sufficient information regarding their more personal needs, which is essentially what is needed to understand well-being. Although a specific number of interviews cannot be recommended for future studies, the four interview rounds conducted were valuable in drawing a picture on what shapes individual's well-being, FWB, as well as understanding in depth the role of sport. Following the participants for a year allowed exploring a variety of their experiences and their meaningfulness while also having a sense of the order in which their experiences took place.

This study provides a significant contribution to the sporting literature as it adds knowledge on the impact of sport on different family members (siblings, parents and swimmers) but most significantly offers an in-depth understanding of the role that sport can have on FWB, especially regarding the Cypriot sporting culture. Most sporting studies that explored family well-being topics, in the context of elite sport, focused mainly on the negative influence of parents' involvement, rather than the nuanced and complex, sometimes positive implications of participation on the members' dynamics and FWB. Also, only a very limited number of studies included all the family members' voice.

Like most studies that adopted a phenomenological approach, this study was limited to a small sample size and was strictly context specific; therefore, the transferability of the findings is restricted (Yardley, 2000). The findings reflect mostly the Cypriot swimming culture and due to the small size of the broader Cypriot sporting community, they could reflect

to a large extent other Cypriots' experiences too. Moreover, as the swimmers of this study also belonged in the international swimming culture, their experiences could be similar to sporting families from other countries, especially of ones coming from countries with similar socio-cultural characteristics to Cyprus (e.g. collectivist, religious, family orientated). Nevertheless, generalisations beyond the homogenous group of Cypriot elite swimmers should be avoided without further exploration.

This study overall contributes to the literature adding knowledge to two neglected areas; Cypriot's FWB and the well-being of sporting families. There have not been any studies that came to researcher's attention that examine FWB or individual well-being using measures other than GDP in the context of Cyprus; therefore, this study is the first one to offer a conceptualisation and a new framework, as a tool for exploring FWB. The findings of this study illustrate how in the Cypriot culture the traditions and moral values, often deriving from ancient times, are being passed on to new generations and are still shaping what people perceive as well-being and how they evaluate it; therefore, this study suggests that exploring sociocultural factors are significant in the study of well-being. Finally, the knowledge on the socio-cultural characteristics of the Cypriot sporting culture and on the participants' experiences is also very limited; yet this study places stepping stones to a variety of topics situated in the context of Cyprus, to be explored by future studies.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

Having recommended a new conceptualisation of FWB, based on the views and experiences of Cypriot swimming families, it would be interesting for future studies to explore its applicability on the broader Cypriot culture, as it could be used as a tool for assessing families and improving policies. Taking into account the small size of the country, its collective nature and the presence of strong socio-cultural norms, it is suggested that the model presented in figure 1, could reflect the broader community and even other small states, which share similar values.

This study contributes to developing an in-depth understanding of the Cypriot swimming culture; nonetheless, gaps in knowledge continue to exist. Exploring further the sporting experiences of athletes, families and other sport participants from different sports, would enable developing a deeper understanding on the nature and functionality of the culture and comprehend more the participants' sporting experiences. For example, what is the

meaning of being a sportsperson in Cyprus and why is the participation of people low comparing to other countries. Unless knowledge is developed on the experiences of participants, progress cannot be attained to its full capacity. In addition, as in other areas, in elite sport athletes often become victims of abuse (Baum, 2006; Gervis & Godfrey, 2013; J. McMahon & Penney, 2013; Rhind, McDermott, Lambert, & Koleva, 2015) and while the interest of researchers remains limited in the context of Cyprus sport, there can be various unknown / unheard threats to athletes' and other sport participants' well-being that will live on (Papaefstathiou, 2015). In addition, it would be beneficial for future studies to explore further sporting families' well-being in different countries, as FWB is a neglected topic in sport.

It could be argued that this study could have benefited further with the incorporation of observations on the members' interaction. Observations of their daily life could have allowed further exploration of the members' dynamics and enabled developing a better understanding on the members' communication patterns, which as illustrated in the findings and literature (Galvin, 2015; R. Peterson & Green, 2009; Satir et al., 1975), is a key element in FWB. Moreover, observations in the competition settings could have enabled seeing the social dynamics between participants and other sport people (coaches, athletes, parents, officials, etc.), which would allow examining further the role of swimming on individuals' well-being and FWB. Observations have been taken into consideration when designing the study; however, the possibility of causing a disruption to the participants' spontaneous behaviours by the researcher's presence or even causing withdrawal from the study by appearing as suspicious with the request of access, led to deciding not to conduct observations, at least not in this study. Although on reflection it appears that access could have been gained, especially after the second interview when noticeably all participants felt comfortable with me, the presence of a researcher during interactions it is still believed that observations could be damaging for the study's trustworthiness (Moens, Braet, & Soetens, 2007). Where interviews allow participants' share as much information as they like, having to carry on with their daily tasks while being observed could motivate inauthentic behaviours, as members would feel as 'experiment subjects' for criticism in case they did not comply to the socially desirable behaviours. Taking into account the rigidity in the social expectations that exist in regard to the functioning of families, it could be argued that studying families through observations could be even more challenging than when studying other populations,. For instance, in the presence of a researcher whilst a parent, like Jess (4.4.2.1), wanted to tell off their child for not tidying up their bedroom, instead of arguing their interaction could be different. Jess for example could

reserve her anger and expressed her emotions in a calmer manner to illustrate that perhaps she is a patient parent etc., whilst also Rachel, instead of arguing could without saying anything go and do as her mother asked and reserve her frustration to present an image of ‘a good daughter’. Nevertheless, if there could be a way for a researcher to become ‘invisible’, with the participants’ consent, or build a relationship that would allow participants feel comfortable enough with him/her to behave genuinely, and conduct observations it could enable obtaining significant data that would allow further investigation of both FWB as a concept but also of the role of elite sport in FWB.

6.4 Implications for policy

Although funding is a global issue in elite sport and, as illustrated, is a factor that adds stress to the FWB, the struggles of the federations are appreciated, especially of the ones in which are run by volunteers, such as the Cypriot Swimming Federation. This study suggests to federations, especially to the Cypriot, to explore the athletes’ and families’ core needs and evaluate whether their funding could be used in a more effective way so as to facilitate their participation and improve their experiences; taking off the families’ shoulders some of the costs, such as the expense of the high-tech suits, could make a significant difference in the sporting experiences and FWB. Athletes will feel supported, the cohesion of the National Team could be enhanced as uniformed suits could create a sense of identity and belongingness, it could increase athletes’ motivation (Faure, Appleby, & Ray, 2014) and finally, the parents will feel that their child’s efforts are appreciated, while also the financial burden will be reduced.

Many participants expressed concern and uncertainty about the policies of the federation around swimmers’ rights, qualification and awarding criteria, this study suggests that it would be beneficial at the beginning of every year, for the Cypriot swimming federation as well as the Cyprus Olympic Committee to have an open to public presentation of their annual agenda. This would provide an opportunity to families to ask questions relating to the federations’ practices, rules and regulations and will enable increasing awareness on what is happening and on their rights, and limit their sense of uncertainty, which as illustrated influences negatively their well-being. More importantly, such invitations would contribute to the family’s their sense of belongingness and social contentment as members of the Cypriot sporting culture and would ameliorate both their sporting experiences and would contribute to

their FWB. Moreover, it would be beneficial for the Cyprus Olympic Committee in the cases where families feel unease about their participation, to provide counselling or encourage them to visit a professional. Sometimes it is easier to express concerns in a 'secure environment' rather than to someone within the club / federation. A specialist can provide unbiased help and secure their confidentiality.

Based on the review of the literature conducted for this study, there are no policies that safeguard sporting families' well-being at any country; this study highlights the need for protecting families and suggests that such safeguarding policies could have a significant impact on global sport. The families will be enabled to enjoy their participation more and it would be more likely for sporting families to remain involved for longer, athletes could have more progress and could potentially be an inspiration for others to become involved.

6.5 Implications for practice

Sport psychologists working with athletes, especially at young ages, would benefit from developing an in-depth understanding of their athletes' family background and functionality, as well as working with their families too. According to the findings of this study, facilitating families develop effective communication, could be a key element in a) preventing injuries and burn-out, as swimmers will feel encouraged to voice their physical and psychological struggles and families will be able to assess the situation and take actions; and b) in maintaining their FWB while participating as well as after retiring from elite sport, as though communication members will be able to develop an understanding of each other's emotions, feel empathy and by knowing others' needs they would be able to provide support and build contentment. Finally, safeguarding athletes' FWB could enhance their sporting experiences and performance, as the emotion of contentment would enhance swimmers' psychological well-being (Bois et al., 2009; Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011).

The coach-parent relationship is one that can often be challenging as parents are often perceived to be intrusive and distracting the coaches' job, and finding an effective balance of involvement can be difficult. This study has shown how many times parents are called to support their child but have no guidance, and as a result they develop negative emotions, which become reflected on their FWB. Therefore, it is suggested for coaches to maintain effective communication with the parents, including setting clear boundaries, to enable them in return to be helpful, but to also feel valuable and important in their child's development process. For

example, the coaches should talk to parents about nutrition, as they are the ones who provide the athletes food; when parents do not know, they feel that the coach and team do not care and that all the pressure is placed on them to do the right thing. Significantly, all parents appeared to be willing to follow coaches' advices, but the availability of the coaches was not adequately present; nonetheless, for assisting families maintain their well-being and the athletes to progress, effective collaboration between coaches and parents, or guardians, can be key.

To conclude, if sport stakeholders, from the smallest communities to the biggest international federations (e.g. International Olympic Committee), invest in developing new safeguarding policies, athletes' and their families' experiences and well-being can be significantly improved.

7 References

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8 Appendices

Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

College of Health and Life Sciences
Department of Life Sciences



FAMILY-PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Study title: The role of elite sport in families' lives and well-being.

Invitation to participate:

You are being invited to take part in a research study conducted by Anastasia Christoforou, a PhD Student at Brunel University London. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?

The purpose of this study is to understand how elite sport influences the life and well-being of your family. The findings will contribute in educating institutes and informing policies, which regard the welfare of sport participants.

Why has your family been invited to participate?

You are being invited to participate because at least one of the children in your family is an elite swimmer aged 15-18 years old and because of your nationality (Cypriot).

Do we have to take part?

As participation is entirely voluntary, it is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?

This is a yearlong study, during which you and all the members of your immediate family will be interviewed individually and privately, to discuss their everyday experiences. The interviews will be conducted during the following periods: beginning of the swimming season (September, 2017), pre-competition period (December, 2017 / January, 2018), competition period (around May, 2018) and post-competition season (August 2018). Although the interview months have been pre-selected for research purposes, the time and place will be arranged between the researcher and each family member to suit your schedules. Each interview will be conducted face-to-face and will be lasting between 30-60 minutes. Throughout the year you will also be contacted by phone or video call for casual updates on your everyday life experiences. The time and form of call will arranged over a

text message or email, not to create any inconvenience and to suit everyone's schedule. It is important to let you know that to contact any child of your family who is under 18 years old, a parental consent will be required. Initially, the time and form of call will have to be arranged between the parents and each underage child. Once the family comes to an agreement, one of the parents will have to contact the researcher by a text message or email, confirming that they allow the researcher to contact their child, specifying the time and form of call. Likewise, you are also welcome to contact the researcher if they would like to share any information. Every verbal communication will be audio recorded to facilitate research processes.

What do we have to do?

The only thing you will have to do is participate in the interviews and share with me your everyday life experiences. The discussion topics include swimming experiences and family life.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no foreseen risks associated with taking part in this study; however you will be asked questions about your personal experiences which could result in psychological distress. If psychological distress occurs, it is recommended you consult Thalia Panayi (Registered sport psychologist and counsellor) at +35796272020.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

There may be no direct benefits to you from taking part in this study. However, your insights will contribute to greater understanding of the role of elite swimming in the lives and the well-being of Cypriot families.

What if something goes wrong?

If you are harmed by taking part in this research project, there are no special compensation arrangements. If you are harmed due to someone's negligence, then you may have grounds for a legal action but you may have to pay for it.

Will our taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Throughout and after the study, anonymity will be upheld and all shared information will be kept confidential and safe from being accessed by other people. In the presentation of findings pseudonyms will be used and any information which could reveal your identity will not be included. Your identity will only be revealed in case that shared information indicates evidence of harm or misconduct. Then, the incident will be fully reported to the study's supervisors and if considered necessary to the Welfare Office of Cyprus.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The findings will be presented in the PhD thesis and may also be used in journal articles and conference presentations. If wished, a copy can be sent to you.

What are the indemnity arrangements?

Participation in this study will not affect any insurance.

Who has reviewed the study?

This study has been reviewed by Brunel University London's College of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Contact for further information:

Researcher: Anastasia.Christoforou@brunel.ac.uk / +35799811165 / +447743962899

Supervisor: Daniel.Rhind@brunel.ac.uk

Address: Heinz Wolff Building, Brunel University London, Uxbridge, UB8 3PH, UK

Brunel University is committed to compliance with the Universities UK [Research Integrity Concordat](#). You are entitled to expect the highest level of integrity from our researchers during the course of their research.

For complaints and questions about the conduct of the Research

Professor Christina Victor, Chair College of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee Christina.victor@brunel.ac.uk

Thank you for your time and consideration to participate.

Appendix B: Interview Schedule



College of Health and Life Sciences

Department of Life Sciences

Study title: The role of elite sport in families' lives and well-being.

Interview Schedule

Interview 1 (Beginning of the training period: September, 2017):

Firstly I would like to thank you for participating in this study, as I have earlier explained your participation will contribute to understanding how elite swimming impacts the well-being of families. To give you an overview of the interview, firstly I will be asking questions, which will help me to get to know you, and then we will look at the relationship you have with swimming. If there are any questions now or as we go along do ask.

Introductory questions:

- Can you talk to me about yourself? Prompt: everyday life, hobbies, social life, personal life, description of yourself.
- Do you have any aspirations? Prompt: Have you set any goals for this year or the near future?
- Could you describe to me how do you generally feel? Prompt: What can affect your mood positively and negatively? Is there anything in your life that concerns you or causes any difficulty in your everyday life?

Swimming specific questions:

- For the swimmers: For how long have you been participating in sport?
- For parents and siblings not participating in swimming: Are you participating in sport yourself or have you ever practiced sport previously? If so can you describe to me your experience? Prompt: how do you feel about sport in general?
- For parents and siblings not participating in swimming: How did you / your sibling / your child become involved in swimming?

- How does it feel being an elite swimmer / the parent / the sibling of ...?
Prompt: Does your social circle know about your / your sibling's / your child's swimming? What? How does it make you feel?
- Which was the most successful moment that you/ your sibling / your son / daughter have experienced? Prompt: Could you describe to me the event and tell me how you experienced it?
- Which was the most unpleasant moment that you/ your sibling / your child have experienced in swimming? Prompt: Could you describe me the event and tell me how you experienced it?
- What is the role of swimming in your everyday life? (Identify positive and negative impact. E.g. in social life, health, financially, everyday schedule and duties).
- How do you perceive the presence of swimming in your family life? Prompt: do you discuss with each other or all together swimming matters?
- May I ask if there are there any specific swimming goals for this year?

Family related questions:

- Can you describe to me what do you think of your family? Prompt: how do you feel about each individual member? What is your relationship like with your family? Have you got a closer relationship with a specific member? If so why?
- Only for parents: Can you tell me a bit about the family you were born into and your childhood? Prompt: how different are you as a parent from your parents?
- I am interested to learn about times that you spend time all together. Do you engage in any activities as a family?
- Do you think that you have shared beliefs/views with your family? Prompt: Do you communicate your emotions with each other?
- How would you describe the communication of your family? Prompts: Do you share how you feel with your family? Do you update the other members about your career and social life news?
- May I ask how is your relationship with the extended family? Do the other members of your family have the same relationship?

Conclusion:

- What's coming in the following months up until January, when I will meet you again?

Interview 2 (Beginning of the competition season: December, 2017 / January, 2018):

- May I ask how have you been feeling lately? Prompt: How are you getting on with work / studies?
- How are you planning to spend Christmas? / How have you spent Christmas this year? Prompt: Did you participate in any activities with your family? Is this Christmas any different from previous years? Has swimming affected any plans?
- How have the other members of you family been during this period? Has anything particular happened in their lives? (identify how aware of and involved in each other's lives).

Family related questions:

- How are your relationships with your family? Have there been any changes since the last time we spoke? Prompt: what caused these changes and how do you feel about it?
- How has the family life been since the last time we spoke?
- Have you been spending any time doing things all together? Prompt: If so what and how was it? If not, why and is there anything you would like to do, how does it feel?

Swimming specific questions:

- The competition season is approaching, how do you feel about the about it?
- Will the competition season cause any changes in your everyday life?
- How have the other members of you family been dealing with the preparation period?

- Can you tell me how did you and your family experience last year's season?
Prompt: would you like this season to be different in any way?

Conclusion:

- What's coming in the following months up until May, when I will meet you again?

Interview 3 (Competition period: May, 2018):

- How have you been feeling lately? Prompt: How are you getting on with work / studies?
- How have the other members of you family been during this period?

Swimming specific questions:

- How are you experiencing this competition season? (Identify any impact of the competition demands on their lives and well-being)
- For swimmers: How do you think the rest of the family is experiencing this competition season? Prompt: Are you satisfied with your results up to now? (identify how much they understand one another)
- For other family members: How do you think (your son / daughter / brother / sister) has been dealing with this competition period? Prompt: How would you feel if you were in the swimmer's position?

Family specific questions:

- Have you had engaged in any activities as a family? Prompt: Are there any family plans?
- Have there been any changes your relationships with the other family members? Prompt: what about the relationships between the others?

Conclusion:

- What's coming in the following months up until August, when I will meet you again?

Interview 4 (End of the competition season: August, 2018):

- May I ask how have you been feeling in lately?
- How are you and your family spending this summer? Prompt: Is there anything you would like to do alone or with your family?
- If you had to review this year (August 2017 – August 2018) what would you say? Prompt: Which parts of this year would you highlight and why?
- If you could, is there anything that you would have done differently during this year? Prompt: are there any particular unfulfilled desires?
- How do you think the other members have experienced this year? (identify how much they understand one another)
- At this point of time how do you perceive the presence of swimming in your life? Prompt: How about in your family life?
- Have you set any personal goals for the next year?
- What do you wish for yourself and your family for the future?
- Finally, may I ask how have you experienced your involvement in this research?

Note:

The interview questions presented for interviews 2, 3 and 4 are only indicative of the topics that will be discussed. The final questions will be decided during the interval periods as the responses from previous communications will be directing what will be asked next.

At the end of each interview participants will be thanked for their time.

Appendix C: Examples of Personalised Interview Guides (Ross' family, round 4)

Ross

Personal WB & Swimming impact

- May I ask how have you been lately? Prompt: Emotional, social, personal well-being. Which were the highlights of the past 3 months? Any news / changes? Competition experiences (Mediterranean games & National championships), Tom's return to Cyprus and his involvement into your swimming training?

FWB

- How are the other members in your family doing? Prompt: how have the relationships between each other been lately?
- How do you think the other members have experienced this year? (FWB understanding – exploration of communication, affection, family life satisfaction)
- At this point of time how do you perceive the presence of swimming in your life? How about in your family life?

Personal WB

- If you had to review this year (September 2017 – August 2018) what would you say? Prompts: Which parts of this year would you highlight and why? Mononucleosis, Commonwealth games. If you could, is there anything that you would have done differently during this year? Are there any particular unfulfilled desires? Any lessons learnt? -
- Have you set any personal goals for the next year? Prompt: What do you wish for yourself and your family for the future?
- Finally, may I ask how have you experienced your involvement in this research?

Tom

Personal WB

- May I ask how have you been lately? Prompt: Emotional, social, personal well-being. University results? Living in Cyprus now, how is it? Job? How are you doing with your body building?

Swimming experiences

- Can you talk to me about your experiences related to Ross' swimming during these last three months? Prompt: At this point of time how do you perceive the presence of swimming in your life? How about in your family life? Have you started training Ross?

FWB

- How are the other members in your family doing? Prompt: how have the relationships between each other been lately? How do you think the other members have experienced this year? (FWB understanding – exploration of communication, affection, family life satisfaction)

Personal WB

- If you had to review this year (September 2017 – August 2018) what would you say? Prompt: Which parts of this year would you highlight and why? If you could, is there anything that you would have done differently during this year? Are there any particular unfulfilled desires? Any lessons learnt?
 - Have you set any personal goals for the next year? Prompt: What do you wish for yourself and your family for the future?
 - Finally, may I ask how have you experienced your involvement in this research?
-

Adam

Personal & Family WB

- May I ask how have you been lately? Prompt: Emotional, social, physical, financial well-being. Which were the highlights of the past months?
- How are the other members in your family doing? Prompt: how have the relationships between each other been lately? Tom's return to Cyprus (FWB understanding – exploration of communication, affection, family life satisfaction)

Swimming experiences & FWB

- What experiences did you have in swimming since we last met (May)? Prompt: Competition experiences (Mediterranean games & National championships)

- At this point of time how do you perceive the presence of swimming in your life? How do you think the other members have experienced this year? How about in your family life? (Role of swimming in FWB).

Personal WB

- If you had to review this year (September 2017 – August 2018) what would you say? Prompt: Which parts of this year would you highlight and why? Mononucleosis, Commonwealth games. If you could, is there anything that you would have done differently during this year? Are there any particular unfulfilled desires? Any lessons learnt?

- Have you set any personal goals for the next year? Prompt: What do you wish for yourself and your family for the future?

- Finally, may I ask how have you experienced your involvement in this research?

Becky

Personal WB

- May I ask how have you been lately? Prompt: Summer holidays, Emotional, social, personal well-being. Which were the highlights if the part months? Any news / changes?

- If you had to review this year (September 2017 – August 2018) what would you say? Prompt: Which parts of this year would you highlight and why? If you could, is there anything that you would have done differently during this year? Are there any particular unfulfilled desires? Any lessons learnt?

FWB

- How are the other members in your family doing? Prompt: how have the relationships between each other been lately? How do you think the other members have experienced this year? (FWB understanding – exploration of communication, affection, family life satisfaction)

Swimming experiences & FWB

- Can you talk to me about your experiences related to Ross' swimming during these last three months? Prompt: At this point of time how do you perceive the presence of swimming in your life? How about in your family life?

· How do you think the other members have experienced this year? How about in your family life? (Role of swimming in FWB).

Personal WB

· Have you set any personal goals for the next year? Prompt: What do you wish for yourself and your family for the future?

Finally, may I ask how have you experienced your involvement in this research?

Appendix D: Illustration of Data Analysis

Ross - round 2			
Emerging Themes	Greek (Cypriot dialect)	English	Analysis
	A: Βασικά σήμερα απλά να πούμε ηνταπου έκαμες τους τελευταίους 3 μήνες πως είσαι, πως αισθάνεσαι?	A: So today basically we will go through what you've been up to the past 3 months. How you are, how you are feeling?	
Physical health & WB Fluctuations	R: Ήταν πολλοί οι τελευταίοι 3 μήνες εν η αλήθεια, ήταν αρκετοί, ήταν σαν να και ήταν χρόνος. Καταρχήν ήταν που αρρώστησα αλλά τώρα εξεπέρασα το	R: The truth is. the past three months were too much, it was as if it was an entire year! Firstly, I got poorly, but now got over it	The last three months felt like a whole year. Too many things took place in too little time. Intense emotions. Exhaustion. The biggest incident was his illness - now he is over it. Relieved. Importance of physical health on WB
	A: Α, Πες μου λίγο, πότε αρρώστησες? Ηνταλος το έμαθες	A: Oh, tell me about that. When did you get poorly? What happened?	
	R: Εε... ειχα τέλος πάντων τα συμπτώματα, ξέρω 'γω...	R: Well... I had symptoms and so on...	
	A: Βασικά είδα σε Σεπτέμβρη... τέλεια αρχές του Σεπτέμβρη	A: Basically, we met in September... at the very beginning of September	
Discovering mononucleosis	R: Ναι και Σεπτέμβρη μεσ' τη μεση περίπου έμαθα το, βασικά έκαμνα πυρετό... θυμάσαι που ήσουν τη προηγούμενη φορά που σου ελάλουν οτι επονούσα τα μάτια μου?	R: Yeah, around Mid September I found out, basically I had high temperature... remember the last time when I was telling you that my eyes were hurting?	
	A: Ναι	A: Yeah	

	<p>R: Εμ, είχα πουκινα... πονοκέφαλους, πονούσα τα μάτια μου και έκαμνα πυρετό κάθε 2-3 μέρες. Ε και λαλει μου η μάμμα κάτι εν πάει καλά, ε και εμίλησε με τη θεία μου που εν παιδίατρος. Ηταν Δευτέρα και Σάββατο ήταν να πήγαινα να έκαμνα αναλύσεις, εντάξει ήταν και αρχή της σεζόν, και είπε της ότι υποψιάστηκε το, να πάω να κάνω την επόμενη αναλύσεις και την Τρίτη επήγα και έκαμα και ήβραμεν το...</p>	<p>A: Well, I had those... headaches, my eyes were hurting, and I was getting high temperature every 2-3 days. And my mum thought that something was not going well and she spoke with my auntie who's a doctor. It was Monday, and on Saturday I had planned to go for blood tests as it was the beginning of the season, and my auntie suspected what was happening and said that I should go and have my tests the next day. And then we found out...</p>	<p>His mother was concerned - when she realised that Ross' health wasn't right she reacted instantly and sought for help. It appears that it was obvious that something serious was going on. The pain was too intense to hide? Having blood tests at the beginning of the season - importance of being in a good / healthy / strong condition. It appears that Ross went through a stressful period not only physically but mentally, trying to figure out why he was in pain.</p>
	<p>A: Λοιμώδη μονοπυρήνωση?</p>	<p>A: Infectious mononucleosis?</p>	
	<p>R: Ναι, και σκέφτου δηλαδή να μείνησκα ως το Σάββατο προπονήσεις, ήταν να ζεροσω! Εντάξει ευτυχώς επρόλαβα το ε και έπρεπε να κάτσω, έκατσα 2 μήνες</p>	<p>R: Yeah, and if you think about it if I waited till Saturday and trained until then, I would have crashed. Well luckily it was soon enough and I dealt with it. And I had to rest, I stayed out (of training) for two months.</p>	<p>He felt lucky that he discovered that he was suffering with mononucleosis early enough - it could be worse. Looks at the 'bright side'. Reveals emotions of relief.</p>
	<p>A: Εν εκαμες τιποτε?</p>	<p>A: Where you not doing anything during that time?</p>	
<p>Living with mononucleosis & Revealed for returning to the pool</p>	<p>R: Έκαμνα. Τον ενα μήνα βασικά έκαμνα 3 φορές, βασικά έκατσα μιαν εβδομάδα φουλ και μετα απλά επιεννα 3 φορες που μιαν ώρα απλά για να κυλά το αίμα, τίποτε αλλο. Εντελώς χαλαρά και εξεκίνησα ανέβαζα σιγά σιγά που μου ελάλε και ο γιατρός οτι ειμαι οκ και μπήκα Νοέμβρη, αρχές του Νοέμβρη, 5-10</p>	<p>R: I did, the first month basically, I stayed out completely for a week and then I was just training three times a week for an hour just for blood circulation, nothing else. Just easy swim. And then I started picking it up slowly slowly, when the doctor said that I was ok. And I started in November, beginning of November, around 5-10th,</p>	<p>He felt that the amount of training he was doing was not enough - reveals a sense of sadness and self-disappointment. Remembers the time when he started training 'normally' - importance of swimming.</p>

	κάπου εκεί επήγα κανονικά	somewhere there, I started swimming as normal.	
	A: που το έμαθες πως αντέδρασε?	A: How did you react when you found out?	
Fear about his swimming career	R: Παππαλλα λαλώ, εφαιμεν την, επειδή ελαλουσαν μου οτι εν πολλά άσχημη και ειχεν πολλούς που ήξερα οτι σταμάτησαν, ας πούμε η Αλης εξερα οτι εσταμάτησεν. Εντάξει μπορεί να μεν το έκαμνεν τόσο σοβαρά εκείνη αλλά ειχεν σταματήσει και είπε μου και ο γιατρός μου οτι είχε το και ο Φεντερερ και ήθελε ξέρω 'γω ενα χρόνο να φέρει τα μιλια του. Παναγία μου λαλώ επροσπαστηκαμεν. Αλλά ντάξει έφουε μου γλήορα	R: I thought that's it, I'm ruined, because I had heard from others that this illness is pretty bad and there were a lot of people I knew who gave up, like Alice, I knew that she gave up because of it. Okay maybe she wasn't doing it (swimming) that seriously but she stopped and my doctor said that Federer had it as well and he needed a year or so to recover. And I thought Jesus I'm done, but ok it went quick.	Knowledge of what mononucleosis is made his think that his career would be over (as others'). Comparing himself with others was adding to his stress as he could not find a case that ended up in a good enough way for him. Feelings of worry, fear and sadness. He perceives that he got over it quickly and feels lucky about it.
	A: Και αν σε ρωτήσω τωρά την πρώτη εφτομάδα που εκάθεσουν τελια πως ήσουν?	A: And if I asked you now, how were you feeling during that first week when you were only resting?	
-Fear -Importance of physical health	R: Να σου πω, στην αρκή λαλώ αν νεν μια εβδομάδα εν καλά, πρώτα η υγεία λαλώ αλλά εν άντεχα, άπρεπε να πάω να βουτήξω! Εε πως ένιωθα? Βασικά έσπασαν τα νεύρα μου και ένιωθα άχρηστος την ίδια ώρα γιατι εν ήξερα τι ηταν να γίνει, αλλά ντα έφουε	R: Yeah, I'll tell you. In the beginning I thought if it'll just be one week it's fine, because health comes first but I was struggling, I had to go and swim! Um... how was I feeling? Basically I was getting angry and I was feeling useless at the same time because I didn't know what was going to happen, but it passed.	Feeling hopeful / patient in the beginning but then gradually he developed negative emotitons: being useless, anger, frustration, worry about what would happen. He wanted to go for a swim, he couldn't - missing swimming, fear of losing his form and not being able to achieve his goals

	A: Είχες βοήθεια σε τούτο το πράμα? Πως ήταν οι γύρο σου?	A: Did you have any help during this? How did the people around you react?	
Support network (mother's role & psychologist)	R: Νταξει εθορουσαν με οτι έκρουζα που μέσα μου, αν και εν ήθελα να τους το δείχνω αλλα εντάξει εκαταλαβέναν με ε και λαλούσαν μου οτι ενα μου περάσει αλλα εγώ επροσπαθούσα να πείσω τον εαυτο μου οτι ήταν να μου περάσει αλλα ένιωθα οτι εν θα μου περάσει. Ε ντάξη είχα και μια γυναίκα, η ψυχολόγος μου τέλος πάντων και εν εκείνη που με εβοήθησε παραπάνω και έβαλα μεσ' το νου ότι είμαι οκ	R: Well they were looking at me burning inside, although I didn't want to show it they was seeing it and they were telling me that it's going to pass but I was trying to convince myself they was going to pass but I felt that I wouldn't. I also had a psychologist, who anyway she helped the most and I convince myself that I am ok.	He tried not showing it (as expressed before he doesn't share his emotions) - it was impossible; this shows again that others care as they were paying attention to him and that he was in real struggle. Felt that it was all over and was hurting; anger, frustration and grief. He feels that the help he had from a psychologist was the most significant and that that was what enabled him to feel psychologically better. Grateful towards his Psychologist
	A: Πέραν της ψυχολόγου ποιοι ήταν οι άλλοι άνθρωποι τουτοι που λαλείς?	A: Besides your psychologist, who were the other people that you're talking about?	
	R: Ε παραπάνω η μαμμα. Η κυρια Becky χαχα	R: Mostly my mum, Mrs. Becky haha!	"my mum, Mrs Becky" - Sarcasm but at the same time it seems that he feels that his mum is strong and somehow superior. He tries not to appear 'soft' but his words reveal warmth towards Becky and appreciation.
Mother - son dynamics	A: Εμιλός της? Είπες οτι εν ανοίγεις	A: Were you sharing your thoughts with her? You've said that you don't open up	Mixed messages as to how much he is sharing with his mother; nonetheless, her presence during struggling with
	R: Εν της εμίλου ιδιαίτερα...	R: No, I wasn't speaking to her much about it...	

	A: Αλλά νομίζω είχες μου πει και στο προηγούμενο ιντερβιού ότι μιλάς παραπάνω της μαμμας σου?	But I think that the last time I saw you you said that you mostly speak to your mum?	mono was evidently significant. I feel that Ross tries to portray a 'strong man' either to his mother or me or both. Explore further their relationship / communication
-Supportive and caring mother - Supporting the swimmer -Family dynamics (enduring mother - son not listening)	R: Ναι αλλά εν και μιλώ, αλλά εντάξει άμα εν να μιλήσω εν να μιλήσω παραπάνω της μάμας. Ε εκείνη εντάξει καταλάβαινε με και ελαλεν μου εν να σου περάσει ας πούμε και οτι οι καλοί εν εκεί στις δυσκολίες που φαίνονται και ξέρω 'γω που τούτα ούλλα αλλά εγώ χαβά μου, χαμπάρι, εν έβαλα λογία	R: Yeah, but I'm not speaking, ok if I'm going to speak I mostly speak to Mum. She could feel me and she was telling me that it will pass and that "you can tell who was a good athlete from how they deal with difficulties", and stuff like that, but I was not listening, I wasn't paying attention to anything.	Caring and supportive mother - closer than the others, persistent support. He wasn't listening to anything - too hard to believe that he would recover, scared to believe it in case he wouldn't be let down. Specialists words give more comfort - he wants to know facts.
	A: Νομίζω είπες μου οτι και με τον αδερφό σου εμίλας, οτι ελαλες τα προσωπικά σου η θυμούμαι λάθος?	A: I think you also told me that you also share your thoughts with your brother Tom, that you are also talking to him about your personal stuff as well, do I remember correctly?	
Siblings bonding	R: Βασικά με το Τομ ναι, αλλά με το Τομ για τούτο θέμα λαλώ του... Υστερα, θυμούμαι μια μέρα και λαλώ του "ρε εγ*** την" λαλώ του, "γιατί?" λαλεί μου, λαλώ του "αρρώστησα", "ηνταμπου έχεις?", "λοιμώδη μονοπυρήνωση" λαλώ του. " Εκείνο που είχες και εσυ"	R: With Tom yes, but with Tom about this subject I told him... later I remember one day I said to him "I'm f***", and he asked "why mate?" and I told him, " I got sick", "what's up?", " infectious mononucleosis", "what's that?" he asked me and they said that " it's what you had as well".	Ross presented his problem in a 'funny way' - didn't want to concern him, presented as a minor thing, hiding his devastation and fear. Telling Tom what was happening illustrates how he counts on him and his support is important - call for help?

Appendix E: Theme development through the four rounds of interviews (Ross' example)

Ross Round 1

Topic	Super ordinate themes	Sub-themes	Themes	Quotes:
Personal WB	Swimming	Life goals	No other goals than swimming	I can't imagine my life without swimming. During summer I only tolerated 2 weeks without swimming and then I started swimming again. It was nice having fun too (going out) but in mind I that I had to swim. (L164)
		Needing to remain isolated	Suppressing social needs	I do go out, not as much during in season, off season I do (line L20) They (friends) are important but not as much as swimming. (L157). Isolated... because supposedly to achieve some things you gotta remove some things and because I can't have both I am forced to distant myself from the friendships etc. because I want to succeed in swimming. (L264)
			Eager to win Need to remain focused	
			Breaking out	During summer I wasn't in the mood of doing anything else than being with my friends who make me happy... that's it. (L70)
		Coach as a role model	Vulnerable to his opinion	my coach was telling me "try it, you can do it... try it, try it..." and I believed in what he was telling me and I made it! (L512)
			Be like him	I wanna study coaching, that's what I'm declaring. (L58)

		Family support for granted	R: For instance, I'd say to my dad "come and take me to the doctor", and he'll come despite the fact that he's got other stuff to do, he wouldn't tell me that or that he doesn't want to. But that how I feel that he feels obliged to come take me. (L304)
		Be a swimmer	Don't give up I built some faith in me, I did my warm up and then came out of the pool leaving behind my previous race. And I thought what should I do to do well and okay. (L220)
Stay focused In the past I wasn't feeling anything. I would dive in and whatever would happen. But now, you know... I'll focus before the race, I'll consider what I do, I'll have faith and it happens. I do what I gotta do! (L516)			
Psychological impact I swam a 100m on 1:06 which completely destroyed me and I ended with 8:23. (L508)			
Uncertain future		Undecided about a future career A: What about after? Studies for instance? R: No I haven't thought of that, its just the Olympics for now. [...] To be truthful, I'm a bit scared. I don't know what's coming... but... I don't know I'm scared about them. (L191)	
		School grades because I am not sure how things work with unis, as higher as possible. And because I've done many stupid decisions and I will need a good average grade, I wanna achieve that (L500)	

	Self-esteem	Taking control	Violent behavior	I wouldn't beat up my parents, but you know someone at school might start acting 'smart' and... he'd get beaten up hah! (L86)
			Inability to control anger	I get angry very easily, I calm very quickly, it depends how you'd find me (it depends on the day). (L30)
		Need to feel surepior	Expecting respect and understanding Feeling 'bigger'	R: Well yeah of course I expect respect... I can't take, people who are half my size acting 'smart'... so... respect and to have understanding. These two things mainly. (L98)
			Feeling important	Being the first Cypriot to swim under 4 minutes. Because no matter what it's a historic... it will be remembered. (L213) they are fans of mine; they follow me on Facebook and sharing stuff! (L464)
	School issues	Taking back time	Fear for the future Regrets Bad grades & need to improve them	because I am not sure how things work with unis, as higher as possible. And because I've done many stupid decisions and I will need a good average grade (L500)
		Can't wait to get out		I'm bored of them hah! (L54)
Family Well-Being	Finding ways to communicate	Need for attention		He [younger brother] wants all the attention to himself. (L39)
		No effort in communicating with parents		A: So as far as I understand when something happens you would keep things to yourself. R: Yeah. A: That that imply to your swimming matters as well? R: In those cases I will talk to someone [from the family]. Then I might be more relaxed, not more

			relaxed but wanting more to take an action. (L139)
	Respond with violence		R: I yell or I beat up hah! I beat Will. (L82)
Roles & Responsibilities	His role	Not helping with house chores I am a man	R: Um... I can't be bothered. He [dad] might tell me "come mop the floor", how could I be capable of mopping? There's no way that I would do such a thing. (L336)
	Their job	Parent have to provide	R: For instance, I'd say to my dad "come and take me to the doctor", and he'll come despite the fact that he's got other stuff to do, he wouldn't tell me that or that he doesn't want to. But that how I feel that he feels obliged to come take me. (L304)
Family relationships	Mummy's boy'		With my mum, she is my friend as well, she is, you know always by my side, she is my mum.
	Bonded siblings	Violence for fun Better with age	My little brother... he is annoying. (L36) With Will we have a weird relationship whenever he needs a favour he comes and whenever he doesn't want anything he bits me up. Basically, he beats me up and I bit him up. With Tom, okay he is also older than me... in the past we weren't getting on much but now that we grew up he became my best friend, he is my friend! (L328)

		Tensed father - son relationship	And with my dad we argue a lot, we want to 'break' one another, but we love each other as well. (L328)
		Family = team	<p>Receiving unconditional love Feeling bonded Contentment</p> <p>A: Okay, let's talk a bit about your family. How would you describe it? R: As a team for instance. Helping each other. A: How would you describe your family situation? R: Excellent! A: And what makes it excellent? R: It's what I told you... other than our tight bonds, we are helping each other</p>
			believe I basically just need my parents support. The other's is important too but I believe is unnecessary. It's different to have the support of those who are there everyday... (L476)

Ross - Round 2			
Super ordinate themes	Sub-themes	Themes	Quotes:
Cannot swim with mononucleosis	Shocking discovery	Shocked but prepared Painful memory	What shall I say? It was as if I got hurt, I felt something like... how can I describe it? Something like a clinch, like it's the end, that kind of thing, " that's it, forget about the career, it's gone out the window!" I said.
	Breaking point	Feeling helpless	I thought that's it, I'm ruined, because I had heard from others that this illness is pretty bad and there were a lot of people I knew who gave up (L31)
		Need to hide Need to appear strong	couldn't hold it and I cried... I cried... in the shower... ha ha when no one sees me! (L735)
Coming out slow	Accepting help	Parents' efforts and resilience Parents don't know enough Neglecting help	Well they [family] were looking at me burning inside, although I didn't want to show it they was seeing it and they were telling me that it's going to pass (L39) Dad was saying but these things pass and they're not major things to worry about... but ok, I wasn't listening to him (L67) Mother's help (L51) Father (L67)
		Need for verified evidence Fear to believe in recovery	She (psychologist) gave me plenty of examples about other athletes that she was seeing (L71)
		Where's my coach?	My coach... he wasn't saying anything, he was just concerned when... you know, when I was training not to get it back (L83)
		Feeling abandoned	
	Taking it slow	I can't watch Painful swim Heart racing	my uncle gave me a present one of them watches which count your heart rate and so on and I thought of using it one day in the pool... and I put a limit on it, and you know because I wasn't fit and so on, as I was swimming I had pains here on the side and then the watch started beeping and I got completely paranoid. I thought that I wouldn't

			manage to get out of the pool, one day I took the Watch off and I said " that's it enough!", and I've binned it. (L95)
Life revaluation	Realising the need of physical health	Learning process Appreciating health	health comes first but I was struggling, I had to go and swim! (L35)
	Appreciating family moments		if we went abroad for a training camp or so, because I've never been to one, it might have been different but on the other hand I would miss being with the family and stuff, so for the time being it was fine. (L547)
Social pressure	Need to become someone	Future	I don't know, I don't know what I want. for the time being I'm only swimming and acting as if I'm studying for school, that's all, I don't have a clue, I never thought of anything and you know many people ask me what am I going to do and so on and my response is " I don't know yet".. (L283)
		Failing school	Basically I did a mistake there, I had a test but I missed during those two weeks when I was poorly so I did terribly on that one and then the next one I did terribly again. But the worst one was when I got a 20 and basically I didn't even know that I had a test on that day, the teacher gave me a second chance to do it on the Monday, after we were coming back from the Christmas holidays and I forgot about it (L303)
Self actualization	He can be better	Feeling immature	I will have to grow up hah! [...] I'll have to accept that at some point in my life I'll have to study so that I'll be able to get somewhere too. (L243)
	Feeling "perfect"	Swimming fast	Now I'm perfect, today I did my fastest 400m in training (L159)

		No more pain	Once I started seeing that I was starting to improve in my times were getting better I started gaining some self-confidence (L103)
		Self - confidence	
		Self - esteem	
	Empowered by social recognition	Feeling important	during Christmas were acting to be more posh, we're going into town at 'District bar' and at 'Alchemies cafe'... we were at a higher level this year! (L611)
Friendships		the key in our friendship is that they realise what I'm doing with swimming... they might invite me to go out and not say I've got training, and they would never say "Ahhh this swimming...", they realise that I... they even 'promote' me, we might meet up with someone that I don't know what and they'd be like, "this is Ross the best swimmer" (L619)	
Family life satisfaction	Feeling grateful for the family he has Contentment	Emotional with Andrew Proud brother Feeling content Family bonding	Which was the best moment in this three months? R: The fact that I managed to get over mononucleosis... A: It can be irrelevant to swimming by the way, you might have had the best night out for instant! R: I know definitely about swimming but I'm just thinking to see whether there is something else... shall I give you two responses? One was when I managed to swim again at competitions and the second one, it's quite emotional... when I was seeing the kid being so happy during the holidays! hen Santa Claus walked in I... got a bit emotional haha! I'm not getting emotional but I liked it, I was thinking, at that moment I was thinking gosh what is he going to do when he finds out that there is no Santa Claus? (L659)
		Our time 'Just us' Quality time	we had the party at my house, Tom's girlfriend joined us as well, and we were more 'together' this year. We didn't spend too much time with others... were also going into town for walks and stuff with the little one. (L575)

		<p>Being with the family</p> <p>Choosing family over training camp</p>	<p>if we went abroad for a training camp or so, because I've never been to one, it might have been different but on the other hand I would miss being with the family and stuff, so for the time being it was fine. (L547)</p>
	Family roles	<p>Not taking part in 'grown ups' matters</p> <p>Limited knowledge on parents' matters</p> <p>Communicating what's necessary</p>	<p>Well I'll tell you, they sometimes discuss more loudly that I don't know for what matters they're talking about like if it's... oh, basically one time my dad had an issue with the bank and he was thinking of leaving his job and you know he was pressured he had let's say, it was Thursday and until Monday he had to make a decision... and you know he was thinking " shall I leave or shall I stay? (L339)</p>

Ross - Round 3			
Super ordinate themes	Sub-themes	Themes	Quotes:
Need to be faster	Performance anxiety	Conditional anxiety Coach's expectation Disappointing races Negative consequences	I got a bit stressed because supposedly even got prepared for those competitions, I mean I even shaved... a tapered (B117) he says to me " you need to swim faster than 4 minutes", in order to avoid losing time to get the times to enter the national team next year. If I don't manage to qualify now for the national team now then next year I'll have to rush to swim fast in the beginning of the season in order to get in the team and so on. (L165)
	Stronger body	Inadequate training Body still in recovery	This year I think it's a matter of training because I missed out a lot (L751)
	Staying mentally tough	Resilience Optimism Rationalising experiences (Health 1st)	I think I need one good race to boost up [confidence]! (L755) Health comes first [...] prior to getting poorly I wouldn't say such a thing, I mean... I could have been on a 40-degree Celsius fever and I would just take a tablet and just get in the pool, but after this one I'm looking at things differently...if you think about it, I could have not been able to swim at this point.(L261-265)
Living a dream	Becoming one of them	Shaking idol's hand 'Humanising superhumans'	I didn't have any relationships with the big guys... now they're friends of mine hahaha! (L57) But they aren't... Super humans? That they aren't... that they are the same as me let's say but maybe they have just done more training than me, and also the culture... not maybe, definitely! (L77)

	Fame		got out of the pool they were showing on the screen the last moment of my race and I saw it, but once I got out and the Australians were waiting for me, obviously, they weren't filming me, but you could see me in the video with a fake smile hah! I didn't want to show how excited I was but I felt very nice that moment haha! I was next to Horton and I was looking at him hahaha! The nutter is huge! (L133) & (L45)
Being a Cypriot swimmer	Unethical rivals Swimming happier abroad	-The other coach -The ugly Cypriot spectators - Nasty enemies -I don't fit here - Lack of trust in people's intentions	here in Cyprus we're all about destroying one another let's say... to give you an example, the pool there [abroad] was... I think it could fit 12000 people and day and night it was sold out! I'm telling you there was no space to move, and you saw them cheering and so on... I mean they were enjoying it, where us at the competitions in Cyprus it's all about being mean to one another... surely they also have some competition between them but they're not wishing for one another to not swim well! (L85)
	Made to feel inferior	Battling the 'snobs' Irritated	He was teasing me and acting smart and so on... because I am young he thinks he can do it and at some point, I can't remember what it was, and I think I pushed him (L201)
		Unappreciated - unfair treatment	They interviewed us...I was expecting that because... you know they choose the older ones, it was a journalist from RIK (National TV) and interviewed I think A [Famous Cypriot runner] basically he interviewed the older guys. And there was another journalist Who was recording us on his phone and he just posted it on Facebook... (L105)
Owning decisions	Pleasing the coach & suppressing his desires	-Disappointed by the coach -Coach doesn't understand him	the truth is I don't talk to him much... I mean... I'm not going to open up to him as I did now but... I think it's wrong because sometimes when something is going on I'm just waiting for him to ask me (L731)

	"This is the year of 'I don't know'"	Seeking parents' help	R: I will definitely talk about it with my parents but I think that it's my decision, they can't tell me what to do, they will just advise me to see what's right and what's wrong. (L435)
Family communication	Feeling supported and safe	Parents' called to offer advice Limited communication with coach	R: I don't tell much to my coach although I'll talk about this one, I do talk to my parents yes, not my brother because he also tells me to do whatever I want... (L615) (L435)
		Brother's care	When I didn't do well at the Commonwealth Games he got upset and he said that when he comes back to Cyprus he will take over as a personal trainer and nutritionist. (L627)
	The others' WB	Not interested in parents' WB? Assuming everyone is fine	R: Umm... ok because they know that I'm over it I think they are a bit calmer now... you tell me! (L269) (L273)
		Siblings' bonds Best friends	Tom is absolutely fine he is studying, while he was stressed the last few days because ... (L401) (L405) (L415)
New beginning	End of school	Care-free Need for entertainment Dealing with changes	Well, now that I'm completely free I'm going for coffees, out in the evening sometimes, but not too much usually I come back laying bed with the air-con on and sleep! For instance, at this time we usually go for a coffee, beforehand when we had school we didn't do anything just on Saturday
	Serving in the army?	'Mummy's boy' Parents' responsibilities	I don't know, it's my mum who's keeping a proper eye on it, and I don't know she hasn't said anything yet. (L389)

Ross - Round 4			
Super ordinate themes	Sub-themes	Themes	Quotes:
Disappointing year	Physical and Psych. Exhaustion	Exhaustion Hurt Disappointment Feeling 'done'	The entire year was, just being under stress. Not only I went through the illness I had to, I knew that I'd have to swim a fast time (L177) Maybe I was preparing more for failing, than winning (L225) (L325)
			I was feeling... completely empty... completely, I didn't have any strength... I mean, very, very slow, very very bad race. Then we had the relay. I was exhausted and told my coach that I couldn't, I couldn't go again [...] he was thinking about the points (L303)
	Self-dissatisfaction	Can't admit weakness Felt lost	I can't say that I gave up my [weapons] I was trying to give my 100%, the 1000% but I don't know... I knew that... I knew but I didn't want to know that I wouldn't make it (L207) (L325)
	Coach's absence	Inadequately supported Feeling unwanted / not being cared about	"My coach betrayed me [...] he didn't come with me hah" (L229) (L305)
Public embarrassment	Harsh spectators		I like it, I don't have a prob... how can I explain this? I like it when people pay attention on me but during that period I didn't like it at all. I wasn't well. If I was well and swam fast I would definitely want everyone to talk about me (L433)
Family's unconditional sporting support and dynamics	Competition rituals	Caring mother Looked after	I always talk with mum when I'm away. She texts, "when are you arriving? How are you?" You know mum haha! (L275)

	Guardian brother Siblings' bonds		I spoke with Tom after the race, the first day. I told him how I was feeling, that I was feeling alright in the race. And he told me to eat well, to... the usual stuff and asked me too why the race didn't go well [...] he simply advised me to rest (L277)
	Content with his family Blaming himself for 'ruining their year'	Unconditional support Even the 'little one' was supportive Responsible for their sadness Being an embarrassment	I had caused more upset to Will. He was holding me in his hug and telling me "don't be scared mate, whatever happened we'll get over it... basically I don't know... I felt that, I should give them a little happiness, because no matter what we say, it was an endless year... (L325)
			I was 'the topic' on the stands, everyone was talking what could be going wrong with me... I think my mum felt a bit embarrassed (L327)
Well-deserved holidays	Having fun with the family	Fun in Disneyland	I was so nice! I was gutted we had to come back (L23)
Uncertainty	Serving the army or not?	Endless wait Tiring procedures Playing the 'swimming card'	I was supposed to get suspension [...] They said they'll let me know from the base. [...] they haven't said neither yes or no. (L43)

Appendix F: Themes Master Table

Themes Master Table							
Topics of investigation	<i>Superordinate themes</i>	Sub-themes	Themes	Quotes / Examples:			
				Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Personal Well-being	<i>Physical Health (Having a healthy body)</i>	Systematic self-care	Fear of illness	“without being told by anyone, Gloria and I, every 2-3 years we do our tests, blood tests, heart tests, a general check-up.” (Peter, L190)	Peter (L190, 210), Gloria (L54), Becky (L34-38, 278), Adam (L130)	Ross (261-265), Gloria (44-56, 342), Greg (L56), Becky (L186), Jess (L505)	Becky (L213), Rachel (L13, 656), Ross (L512)
			Feeling strong and capable	Matthew (L59), Greg (L122, 162), Becky (L11), Peter (L412),	Matthew (L49, L77-81), Ben (L143), Peter	Matthew (L131, 499), Jess	Becky (L213), Beth (L46), Ross

	Physical health and Happiness	Vs Exhaustion	Rachel (L113), Natalie (L174)	(L258), Mark (L393), Natalie (174), Gloria (281)	(L45), Rachel (L34), Beth, (L431)	(L755), Ben (L346), Teresa (L209)	
		Body shame & Guilt for letting self 'uncared'	I became like this (fat)!" (Gloria, L94)	Tom (210)	Harry (244), (Teresa, R3, L255 – 263)	Harry (L244), Adam (L396)	
		Healthism	"it's health above everything, happiness and then the rest... If you have these two you can have whatever you want! (Natalie, L582) "the good thing" (Greg, l22), Jess (L302)		Ross (261-265), Matthew (L499)	Ross (L671), Harry (L342), Ben (L346)	
		<i>Happiness (Positive emotions)</i>	Self-satisfaction	Social WB			
			Goal attainment	"My goals, my dreams are to send my children	Harry, (L33), Beth (L45,	Harry (L215),	Ross, (L651-653),

				to the university” Peter (L33), Ross (L98, L169), Tom (L87), Beth (L115), Ben (L169), Tom (L87), Harry (L107), Teresa (L4, 20), Rachel (L113), Jess (L61)	307), Tom (L169), Matthew (L41-45), Mark (L393), Rachel (L69), Ben (L143)	Matthew (L511), Mark (L251), Ben (L50), Rachel (L236)	Rachel (L78, 824 - 832), Ben (L20, 366)
			Deonance and fulfilment of duties	Ross (L22, L500, L516), Matthew (L15, 257), Ben (L251), Tom (L79), Rachel (L113), Peter (L451)	Greg (L21), Ben (L139, 343), Tom (L15), Becky (L34 - 38), Peter (L62)	Tom (L219), Harry (L199), Matthew (L111), Mark (L607), Jess (L471)	Becky (L784), Tom (L14), Harry (L342, 402)
			Perceived Control	‘Do not distracts my routine” Jess (L101,) Peter (L45, 81, 185), Ross (L169)	Ross (L243, 283) Matthew (L85), Beth (197), Gloria (L415)	Peter (L92), Ross (L22, 98)	Peter (L56, 90), Gloria (L202) Adam (L14), Harry (L402)

			Financial WB				
		Social WB	Social recognition	'They said I'm a 'good guy' Greg (L461), Tom (L43, 179), Greg (L461), Teresa (L8 – 12), Natalie (L322), Ross (L213)	Adam (R2, L18), Ross (L611), Harry (L195)	Becky (L310), Adam (L251), Ross (L105)	Becky (L436, 602, 718), Adam (L18), Ross (L327), Teresa (L357)
			Trusting people's intentions & Content with friends	Peter (L125 -129) Gloria (L30, 250 - 254), Mark (L648), Adam (L11, 53), Greg (L206), Rachel (L79, 113), Tom (L139)	Peter (L26), Beth (L66, 126, 233), Harry (L135), Adam (L43), Matthew (L69, 77), Ross (L619), Tom (L97)	Harry (L175), Adam (B199), Rachel (L84-88)	Becky (L149, 718), Adam (L132), Rachel (L29), Teresa (L345-357)
			Fulfilment of moral expectations	Peter (L93, 265), Matthew (L88), Adam (L11, 53)		Matthew (L399)	Gloria (L298)

		Financial WB	Self-satisfaction & Fulfilment of parental duties	Adam (L41), Matthew (L71, 88) Greg (L122 & 138), Peter (L412), Natalie (L462)	Adam (L31, 156, 184), Harry, (L33), Ross (L327), Gloria (L415)	Adam (L1057), Harry (L20, 26), Beth (L129), Gloria (L232)	Adam (L381, 384), Harry (L43), Tom (L10)
		Religion	Sense of security Shaping the meaning of WB & FWB	Beth (L390), Adam (L70), Jess (L236), Natalie (L462), Greg (L465)	Teresa (L553), Matthew (L111, L290), Adam (L146)	Teresa (L29 3), Matthew (L371-387), Jess (L243), Adam (L890, 1039), Harry (L207)	Ross (L481), Adam (L6)

	<i>Sensing FWB (Everything goes well with us)</i>	Sensing others' happiness and physical health	Their happiness - my happiness	"Family well-being... um, family well-being... It's the same thing, its happiness haha!" (Greg, L546), Matthew (L43), Gloria (L250), Jess (L236), Peter (L189, 451)	Peter (L170, 210), Adam (L88, 111, 130), Gloria (L54, 130), Teresa (L239), Ross (L327), Beth (L247)	Harry (L, 19, 47, 155), Adam (L31), Teresa (L77), Beth (L313), Peter (L290), Greg (L103, 267)	Becky (L668 - 674, 696, 758), Ross (L327, 671), Ben (L346), Harry (L182, 226)
		Approving others' choices		Teresa (L408), Harry Jess (L236), Becky (L185), Adam (L98)	Teresa (L239), Harry (L335)	Teresa (L 309), Harry	Becky (L626) Teresa (186), Harry (L553)
		Interfamily relationships		Gloria 'a normal family with, we don't have significant issues, we have our disagreements... it's all	Adam (L118, 134), Beth (L283), Mark (L882)	Harry (L151, 155 187), Ben (110), Adam	Becky (L293), Greg (L121), Harry (226),

Mutual sense of FWL	<i>Feeling content</i>			within the normal level’ (L559), Adam (L118), Greg (L359 -367), Jess (L109, 308), Matthew (L297)		(L1077), Greg (L177 – 185), Teresa (L255 – 263)	Gloria (L453)
		Positive emotions	Love, compassion, support approval, respect and trust of rules and boundaries	Ross (L39), Matthew (L83, 269, 297), Jess (L276, 308), Peter (1169), Mark (L157), Gloria (L229), Beth (L235), Rachel (L803)	Adam (L130), Beth (L, 247, 287), Tom (267)	Becky (L306), Ben (L86 -90, 122), Harry (L139-155)	Becky (L22), Ross (L327, 750 - 752), Rachel (L55), Ben (L23-35), Adam (L336)
		Positive interactions	Active support	Jess (L308), Matthew (L15, 297), Jess (L90), Ben (459), Ross (L292), Beth (L204, 276)	Becky (L39, L416) Ross (L615), Tom (L403), Beth (L381), Peter (L62), Ben (L287)	Harry (L35, L39), Becky (L39), Ben (L150), Beth (L123, 217), Greg (L169),	Becky (L668, 758), Ben (L287), Rachel (L567), Harry (L342)

						Rachel (L933)	
			Open verbal communication & Listening	Greg (L254, 369), Jess (L164, 224, 308), Gloria (L196), Peter (L157), Becky (L177), Matthew (L341), Beth (L239 – 243), Rachel (L786), Natalie (L482)	Beth (L223, 283), Teresa (L312-316, 324), Rachel (L933), Adam (L88), Ross (L327), Mark (L882)	Becky, (L35) Ben, (L110), Matthew (L309), Tom (L423), Beth (L217), Mark (L335, 523), Harry (L159), Greg (L169)	Becky (L694, L780), Ross (L487), Adam (L320), Gloria (L465), Ben (L287)

			Spending quality time together	Peter (L169), Teresa (L408), Beth (L239), Greg (L246, 264), Rachel (L803)	Ben (287), Becky (L14), Matthew (493), Mark (473), Ross (L659), Tom (L101, 239), Ben (L287)	Mark (L474, 523), Beth (L291), Ben (L90, 150, 266), Greg (L169), Teresa (L319), Matthew (L43)	Harry (L342), Mark (L401-407), Beth (L219), Gloria (L234), Rachel (L567), Ross (L23) Becky (L33), Adam (L349), Tom (L18)
	<i>Acknowledging one another</i>	Family role		Ross (L292), Adam (L55), Gloria (L229), Matthew, (L15, 297, 305), Rachel (L786), Peter (L451)	Becky (L436), Adam (L55), Teresa (L316), Peter (L62)	Matthew (L305), Jess (L139), Harry (L39)	Becky (L784), Ross (L477), Harry

							(L226), Ben (L523)
		Social role		“I could never be able to take the pressure that Mark does!” (Beth L12) Adam (L39, 66), Jess (L304), Gloria (L229, 483), Ross (L468)	Beth (307), Becky (L106, 416), Tom (L40,3), Peter (L246), Adam (L18), Gloria, (L213 - 217), Harry (L195)	Peter (L398), Adam (1057)	Ben (L366), Teresa (L283), Harry (L266)

Appendix G: Ethics Approval by Brunel University London



College of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee (DLS)
Brunel University London
Kingston Lane
Uxbridge
UB8 3PH
United Kingdom
www.brunel.ac.uk

28 September 2017

LETTER OF APPROVAL

Applicant: Miss Anastasia Christoforou

Project Title: Sink or Swim: The impact of having a child with Olympic potential on family well-being

Reference: 6568-A-Sep/2017- 8406-1

Dear Miss Anastasia Christoforou

The Research Ethics Committee has considered the above application amendment recently submitted by you.

The Chair, acting under delegated authority has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. Approval is given on the understanding that the conditions of approval set out below are followed:

- The agreed protocol must be followed. Any changes to the protocol will require prior approval from the Committee by way of an application for an amendment.

Please note that:

- Research Participant Information Sheets and (where relevant) flyers, posters, and consent forms should include a clear statement that research ethics approval has been obtained from the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- The Research Participant Information Sheets should include a clear statement that queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Supervisor (where relevant), or the researcher. Complaints, on the other hand, should be directed, in the first instance, to the Chair of the relevant Research Ethics Committee.
- Approval to proceed with the study is granted subject to receipt by the Committee of satisfactory responses to any conditions that may appear above, in addition to any subsequent changes to the protocol.
- The Research Ethics Committee reserves the right to sample and review documentation, including raw data, relevant to the study. You may not undertake any research activity if you are not a registered student of Brunel University or if you cease to become registered, including abeyance or temporary withdrawal. As a deregistered student you would not be insured to undertake research activity. Research activity includes the recruitment of participants, undertaking consent procedures and collection of data. Breach of this requirement constitutes research misconduct and is a disciplinary offence.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Christina Victor'.

Professor Christina Victor

Chair

College of Health and Life Sciences Research Ethics Committee (DLS)
Brunel University London

Appendix H: Recruitment Consent by Cyprus Swimming Federation

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΟΜΟΣΠΟΝΔΙΑ ΚΟΛΥΜΒΗΣΗΣ CYPRUS SWIMMING FEDERATION

Αμφιπόλεως 21, 2025 Στρόβολος
Τ.Κ. 23931, 1687 Λευκωσία, Κύπρος
Τηλ: 22449840
Φαξ: 22449842
E-mail: koek@logos.cy.net
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P.O. Box 23931, 1687 Nicosia, Cyprus
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31st May 2017

To whom it may concern,

Anastasia Christoforou has requested permission to recruit participants for her PhD research, during the Cyprus Swimming Championships (22 - 24 June & 6 - 9 July). Considering the purpose and the procedures of the study we are pleased to support the recruitment and assist in the pursuit of her PhD.

If you have any questions or require any additional information please feel free to contact us.

Email: koek@logos.cy.net

Telephone: +35722449840

Best regards,

George Kyriazis
General Secretary

