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WHY HAVE CHILDREN?
A STUDY OF METHOD AND MEANING IN VALUE-OF-CHILDREN RESEARCH.

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the Degree

of

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in Sociology

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VOLUME TWO

PART TWO

Children are ... very much part of a New Zealand marriage - so much part, that we omitted to ask the women why they did have children! Like the women themselves, we assumed that marriage and children go together.

(Barrington & Gray 1981 : 99).

The Jones men expected to have children when they married. That was part of what marriage was about ... Men were aware that children brought not only a change in lifestyle but also an increase in responsiblility, and they constantly tried to balance the rewards which children brought against the costs they incurred. Apart from a few grumbles, they were happy to do so. None seriously considered not having children as a way of avoiding the whole issue.

(Gray 1983 : 77).

Chapter 7

CONTEXT OF THE NEW ZEALAND STUDY

7.1 Introduction

The present study on 'value' of children in New Zealand might be perceived in two distinct, though overlapping, contexts. On the one hand there is the social context of the subjects of the research, a context which has its own unique historical background. On the other hand there is the methodological context of the researcher. In order to situate the substantive issues described in the following chapters within their social setting, these contexts are summarized here in terms of historical context and as research methods and analyses.

7.2 The New Zealand Family: An Historical Reconstruction.

Historical reconstructions of the New Zealand pakeha (European) family are based largely on a synthesis of official statistics on the one hand and of the commentaries of diarists, letter writers and newspaper columnists of the day on the other. This section reflects these two sources, acknowledging the rather different orientations and purposes of those whose research is cited.

Systematic colonization of New Zealand began in 1840. Until that time most European migrants had been men (Neville 1979: 4). From 1840 onward, however, the New Zealand Company representatives apparently adopted a deliberate policy of encouraging British families to migrate. Wakefield, for

instance, had witnessed the difficulties experienced in England, for men in finding work, for women in finding husbands and bringing up children; emigration, he thought, would ease Britain's pressure. A fund of labour in New Zealand would bring prosperity and "happy and prolific families would ensure growth, stability and civilisation" (Olssen & Levesque 1978).

Although migration provided most of the population's growth in the early years (see Appendix IIIa), natural increase soon became a significant component. Indeed, by 1860 the crude birth rate exceeded 40 per thousand, one of the highest rates in the industrialised world at the time (Gibson 1971: 175). The birth rate fluctuated about this level until the dramatic decline commenced in 1881 (Appendix IIIa).

Despite the high birth rate, children were not prominent in the history of the New Zealand family, as told in journalistic or research literature. "The family" referred to father, if the topic was economic or political, or to the mother if the topic was welfare or health. Children were assumed to be present, but in discussion were seldom referred to unless as subjects of legislation or policy. As subjects, they tended to remain indistinct from the structure of which they were considered a part - family, school, welfare system, etc.

Early records gave no indication of the world or experience of a child. Childbearing, according to New Zealand economist Brian Easton, was an "investment":

> In the nineteenth century families were able to maintain the investment-in-children program because of three factors. In New Zealand women were scarce, so it was the affluent men who married and raised children. Childrearing costs were low in rural areas and where mothers and young children were able to work. (Legislation against non-family child labour was comprehensive by the 1890's). Third, where childrearing was a common activity for all families through most of the family life cycle, all families would be sharing in the community investment in children. (1979: 104-5).

We know that children, like women, worked alongside men, eking out a survival by clearing land, working farms, helping in workshops or with housekeeping. Some instances of child factory labour are recorded (NZ Herald May 12, 1881), but generally migrant children did not work long hours in factories or mills as their English contemporaries did. In the home, however, 19th century New Zealand parents had complete rights over their children, to neglect or desert them, or even to sell them.

Many of the colonists were working class people; they epitomized the ethic of hard work. Children, apparently, were no exception. McDonald (1978: 45) noted,

> Most of New Zealand's settlers came without material resources, and in all senses of the term, children became tools of their parents in the business of survival.

The work ethic was reinforced by government and state agencies. Neglected and deserted children whose occurrence in Otago and Auckland in the 1860's was considered problematic, were responded to by the establishment of Industrial Schools, repressive institutions, the aim of which was to train children to be sound, hard-working citizens. For practical reasons (lack of facilities) the 1877 Education Act which made education for children aged 7-13 free, secular and compulsory, was not rigidly enforced at first. McDonald has suggested that the needs of a family to have a working child were also sometimes seen to be greater than the educational needs of the child.

In the context of an historical reconstruction of the New Zealand pakeha family, one of the most important changes to consider is the decline in fertility rates and changes in fertility patterns. Between 1878 and 1901 marital fertility

declined from a total fertility rate[1] of 6.66 to 3.56, with the steepest part of the decline occurring before 1891 (1891 TFR = 4.58) (Gibson: 199). The decline continued, albeit at a slightly lower rate, until the 1936 rate of 2.40; not until 1961 did fertility rise again above a TFR of 4 (4.14) (Gibson: 182).

Over the same period that total fertility declined so dramatically, completed family size for women who had at least one child decreased from 6.9 for the 1880 marriage cohort to 5.3 for the 1891 marriage cohort (Gilson 1970 - see Appendix IIIb)[2]. While the overall fertility decline might be explained by postponement of marriage particulary between the 1870s and 1890s (Gibson: 190-193), and by increased use of "birth control" among older age groups (Pool and Sceats 1981: 102) it has also been explained in accordance with Caldwell's theories discussed in Chapter 4. O'Neill, for instance, wrote,

> The fall in fertility began before the great recession of the 1880s, although the recessions of 1881-84 would not have impeded the decline. One possible explanation relates to changes in the status of children rather than in the status of women. In 1887[3], with the passage of the Education Act making education 'free', secular and compulsory', the economic advantages of large numbers of children, especially in rural areas (and New Zealand was 60 percent rural in 1881) were diminished (1979a: 126).

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1. Footnotes for Chapter 7 are placed at the end of the chapter, p207.

Arguing for this economic rationally in New Zealand, O'Neill pointed out that the "situation" in New Zealand was hardly likely to have been any different to that described by Caldwell and Ruzicka (1977) in Australia, "given the virtually identical, overwhelmingly British, origins of the migrants" (O'Neill op.cit).

Several policy changes which occurred just after the turn of the century, would also affect children and family life. Some of these were a consequence of increased reports of child abuse, both by parents and by employers. Legislation derived from attempts to end this abuse. Emerging ideologies held that the character of the adult was a direct consequence of the care taken of it during childhood:

> ... society sought to have control over the end product of its investment in people. Child rearing was deemed to be too important to be left to the discretion of the family. (McDonald: 47).

Illustrating McDonald's point, one might cite the Education Acts, which removed some of the influence of the family and replaced it with the school, Welfare Acts which provided for the needy, the Plunket Society which was intended to supervise the care of babies and infants, and the school health system and national health camps which promoted the physical welfare of children[4]. Whereas New Zealand children in the nineteenth century appeared to have been regarded little differently from adults as family co-workers, 'pitching in' from young ages in the battle for individual family survival, the children of the early 1900's were regarded as an important investment for the future of the nation, to be moulded collectively and uniformly by "vigilant experts" into solid citizens (Olssen & Levesque: 12).

While Easton claimed that investment assumptions of the nineteenth century broke down in the twentieth century, he also noted that the family policy which was based on these

assumptions persisted into recent decades. "Over a quarter of New Zealand Gross National Output is devoted to investment in children" he wrote, and concluded his argument by observing that "calculations suggest that investment in children is very much more productive" than, for example, investment in buildings, roads or machinery! (op.cit: 105, 104).

Ideological changes in the 20th century affected the common perception of what 'family life' was about. After the Depression of the 1880's there appeared a "movement" in New Zealand which was to have a lasting effect on family philosophy. Led by members of the medical profession, a group of people sought to promote the ideals of purity and temperance in order to rectify the social problems of the era. More importantly, they fostered the ideal of domesticity: "Mother became the cult figure, her temple the Home" (Olssen & Levesque: 6). "Mother" symbolized morality, purity and chaste love. This cult gave purpose to motherhood, as a recognisable role, at a time when home and workplace were becoming separate, and male and female roles increasingly polarised. This idealised wife-mother began to appear in fiction and was represented in women's journals. Over the next forty years the domesticity cult was reinforced on two fronts. On the one hand, such 'evils' as prostitution, drink, pornography and tramps and swaggies were campaigned against in order to save men from debauchery and protect the sanctity of the family. On the other hand motherhood and household management became 'scientific', while teaching and nursing developed as specifically female skills, both founded on a philosophy of the (biologically) 'natural' roles of wife and mother[5]. Paradoxically, the effect of the movement was to remove several of women's former roles, as the state took over responsibility for the dependent aged and orphans, and focussed on the care of institutionalized children.

Eventually men, women and children became subject to a proliferation of policies to make 'decent family life'

possible. Introduced by the 1935 Labour Government, these included maternity benefits, free antenatal and postnatal services, increased family benefits and provision for housing assistance. As if to sanction family size officially, the minimum wage was based on the needs of a couple with three children.

In this period from 1901 to 1936 there had been a steady decline in marital fertility, from a MFR of 243.8 per thousand in 1936 (O'Neill 1979a: 128-129). The low levels of the 1930s have been attributed to the effect of the depression[6], but in historical context these levels appear as an extrapolation of a decline which began as early as the 1870s (Neville: 6-7). During the 1930s there was postponement of marriage and of first and subsequent births, a trend which was to reverse after the end of the 1930s and into the post-War years. However, the delays of the 1930s did result in declines in the number of couples reaching higher parity births (Pool and Sceats: 103). The completed family size of those who married before the War, in 1935, was only 3.16 for those who had children (Appendix IIIb).

The rise in fertility rates after the second World War especially from 1945 until the end of the 1950s - commonly called the "post-War baby boom" - was the result of several related changes. Not only did deferred births occur immediately after the War, but the proportions ever married rose and these people married at progressively younger ages. The mean age at first birth and subsequent births declined steadily, as did the mean interval between marriage and first birth (O'Neill op.cit: 131, 132). Yet the post-War situation was even more complex than this. Although a fifth of those married in 1936-40 would remain childless (op.cit: 133), the completed family size of those who did become parents (recorded for 1981) was estimated as 3.81 - as compared to 3.15 for the cohort married before the war (Appendix IIIb).

Since the late 1960s marriage rates have dropped and age at marriage increased (Pool and Sceats, p 103). Although these factors have contributed to the decline in fertility experienced since then[7], the increasing social acceptance of de facto marriages indicates that marital fertility rate , which O'Neill argued was the major factor in reducing fertility between 1962 and 1976 (1979a: 134), understated more recent family formation patterns (see Pool and Sceats: 95-112). In the absence of cohort data for completed family size, total fertility rates prove the most useful time series comparison (see Appendix IIIc). By the late 1970s New Zealand fertility was similar to that of other 'developed' countries, although located in the upper range of those with very low fertility. Current fertility behaviour is characterised by high levels of efficient contraceptive use[8], compressed child-spacing with short interpregnancy intervals[9], and a high (over 20%) exnuptial fertility ratio[10]. Total fertility rates, recorded at 2.27 in 1976 (Pool and Sceats : 120) now appear to be levelling at about 1.9, a little below replacement level (Population Monitoring Group 1984: 10-11). The incidence of childlessness is unclear. This is discussed in Chapter 11.

The 1984 Population Monitoring Group report contained four scenarios of possible future fertility patterns. Unlikely scenarios are those resulting from either rapid fertility increase or from a decline in total fertility to levels of 1.5-1.6. More likely scenarios proposed were (a) those involving a gradual increase in fertility to about replacement level as a result of reduced fertility decline at younger ages along with a recuperation of delayed births or, (b) maintenance of current levels, implying a slight recuperation of delayed births by women in their early thirties (P.M.G. Report: 12).

Although the data shown in Table 7.1 represent mean figures derived from cross-sectional (rather than cohort) measures, they do indicate the parameters of what O'Neill termed "a demographic revolution" in the New Zealand family up until the

Table 7.1 New Zealand Family Life Cycle at Selected Dates, Mean Years.

	Dates		
	1900-02	1960-62	1971-74
Woman first married	26.5yrs	22.7yrs	21.8yrs
First child born	27.9yrs	24.1yrs	22.9yrs
Mean interval to first birth	1.4yrs	1.4yrs	1.1yrs
Woman's last child born	38.0yrs	28.5yrs	27.1yrs
Childbearing span	10.1yrs	4.4yrs	4.2yrs
Last child marries	64.5yrs	51.2yrs	49.6yrs
Parents alone together	2.8yrs	18.5yrs	21.6yrs
Childrearing as % of total life	50.8	35.1	35.1
Postparental period as % of married life	6.9	39.4	45.1

(Source : O'Neill 1979b : 13).

1970s (O'Neill 1979b: 13). Especially notable is the compression of the childbearing span, a consequence of both fewer children and shorter pregnancy intervals. Recent data, however, indicate that the woman's age at marriage and at first birth have increased since 1974, along with an increased first birth interval. These changes represent delays of family formation and thus are unlikely to produce large effects on the other parameters O'Neill tabulated.

Sociological explanations of such changes in family formation patterns contribute to the cultural context of the present study. Olssen & Levesque (p 16) assumed the early fertility decline was economically-linked. With increasing urbanisation, they wrote, children "ceased to be potential producers and became competitors for scarce resources. As expectations rose, especially between the mid 1890s and 1925s, each additional child denied the family more comfort and status". Such an argument has a basis in transition theory. Gilson (1970: 65) also advanced economic explanations for more recent fluctuations:

> during the last 40 years fertility rates have tended to fall during times of economic depression and war, and to rise in times of prosperity and stability, a pattern which implies a desire for children tempered with concern for family welfare and security.

Both arguments are cast along lines of an economic paradigm. In a slightly different manner, McCreary (1969: 18) noted an ambivalence about children which, he suspected, derived from the earlier period - while children hinder their parents' quest for present status (etc), they at the same time embody the parents' aspirations and hopes for future status.

The primacy of parental roles, however, has been observed by

literary reviewers. Alcock (1970: 260), for instance, observed the dominance - in fiction and in reality - of parental roles in the home, not only towards children but between parents themselves. To family and strangers alike some adults still call each other "Mum" and "Dad". Is this some last-ditch effort at reinforcing those roles which might be lost sight of at a time when children are fewer, more independent of their parents, when fathers are absent from home for long periods, and mothers occupied with a dozen other activities? Or is it explained, as Alcock suggested, as a reflected glory of "having begotten, albeit in fantasy, themselves"? Is the 'value' of children that they create parents?

In the hundred years since 1840, New Zealand children have been portrayed by recent historians and social commentators in terms of utility. In the early years they were, as in Britain, regarded as a source of labour (though one has no more justification than one might with regard to Britain for claiming this was their 'use'). In later years children have been regarded as potential; their 'use' was as future citizens, who from childhood could be deliberately moulded.

After the second world war an emphasis on helping and guiding (rather than moulding) reflected growing recognition of the individuality of children, culminating in a concern with tolerance (some might say indulgence) which was reflected in the world-wide youth movements of the 1960's and 1970's. The ideology of child individuality had been formally accepted by people the world over with the adoption, in 1924, of the 1923 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, by the League of Nations. This declaration persisted until 1959, when the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child heralded an era whereby not only the health and welfare of children were safeguarded, but also their rights and statuses as individual human beings (Wilkerson (ed) 1973: 3-6; see Appendix IV). Although the United Nations Declaration was not

ratified by the New Zealand Government[11], this most recent ideological stance did challenge the traditional view "that children's best interests are synonymous with those of their parents" (McDonald: 51)[12]. One might expect to find, therefore, little support for any notion of 'economic use' as a rationale for the childbearing behaviour of New Zealand parents.

It will be suggested in this thesis that contemporary New Zealanders now place more emphasis on the role of mother, than on the role of children, not so much for what the child, intrinsically or potentially, 'is', but for what it means to 'be' a mother. Family policy in New Zealand would tend to support such an emphasis.

In addition to raising the question of what <u>is</u> 'value', this thesis is concerned with the relevance of the specific cultural (New Zealand) context. Part of that context is its colonial heritage, the history of children, parents and families in this country. Some of this heritage is institutionalized in policy, but most of it is likely to be reflected in the everyday interactions of people with, and about, the children in their lives. This section has summarized, albeit briefly, the cultural background to the present research on contemporary 'value' of children in New Zealand[13].

7.3 Research Method and Analysis

The fieldwork for the present study comprised two main components, a formal survey and a series of informal discussions. The first provided something of a statistical overview, restricted to the kinds of data and analysis which could be deduced from structural questionnaire responses. The latter component was designed specifically to provide material which could be subjected to interpretive analyses whereby the

researcher would attempt to use the language and conversation of the people studied to reflect their shared experiences of children, parenting and activities and thinking regarding children.

In many ways these two approaches represent opposite points of view in value of children research, one a tried-and-tested survey method deriving from a Durkheimian perspective, the other a somewhat innovative approach derived from a Weberian tradition. The modes of analysis resemble each other in that, as with all observations and investigations, the 'reality' which is perceived and recorded reflects the researcher's own selectivity, and that this 'reality' is given a particular structure. But the role of the researcher differs in imputing understanding to the resultant data. Paradoxically, it might be argued that in survey research, where the researcher frequently claims objective neutrality with respect to his data, the 'results' often represent first and foremost the prior constructs of the researcher and only secondly (if at all) the real-life perceptions of the subjects. By contrast, in interpretive research the researcher may be intimately involved with the subjects but in acknowledging this and accounting for it, the understanding gained might approach the reality of the subjects themselves.

The rationale for the interpretive component of this research was a consequence of a personal scepticism as to the adequacy of questionnaire instruments in revealing understanding and meaning. When analysing the survey responses I believed I 'knew', as a member who shared the cultural world of the respondents, that their experiences were not reflected adequately by the response categories imposed on them by the structure of the questionnaire. Not only were their lives (with respect to children and families) much fuller than the survey instrument allowed for - something which most survey designers readily admit, since this can be perceived by them no more than as a problem of logistics - but, I believed, the meanings they gave to those experiences were of a different

kind to that imputed to the survey data by the researchers. These subjects knew what questionnaires were about; they understood the structured questions and the kinds of answers which would be appropriate. To that end they could adopt, for the purposes of the survey, the researcher's paradigm. But they did not, I believed, experience their own lives in this way. The informal fieldwork documented in section 7.3 (ii) was my attempt to discern for some subjects what meanings they gave to children and what understandings they derived from them. The theoretical background which led me to this approach was described in Chapter 6.

Being grounded in my own shared membership of the subjects' world, my interpretations made as a consequence of this approach are subjective. But in being subjective they are no different from those of the survey analyst whose interpretations are grounded in (subject to) his membership of the 'scientific' world. The 'scientific' world is not outside of or apart from culture; it is only a particular kind of cultural abstraction or set of rules perceived by researchers, who then use this perception to claim, erroneously, objectivity. The sets of rules or mode of interpretation are not external to the researcher but, like those of the interpretive researcher, are in his head. The survey researcher's understandings are as subjective as are those derived from the interpretive analysis described in this thesis. But to enable the reader to (also) understand, the rules, or perspectives, must be made explicit. This explication forms the "research context" for the investigation at hand.

7.3 (i) The ESCAP Family Formation Study

The Family Formation Survey commissioned by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs for ESCAP (United Nations) was conducted in Hamilton and the surrounding Waikato area during

1980-81[14]. The study consisted of two parts, termed the "Maori component" and the "Pakeha component" (see Appendix va). The Hamilton area had been selected for this survey, which was to act as a pretest for future cross-cultural surveys, because the region contained a relatively large maori population within a predominantly European (pakeha) one. It was therefore ideally situated for such a comparative study.

The maori population was selected for this test survey because of the apparent resemblance between it and other populations in the Asian-Pacific region in terms of (a) family structure and (b) fertility. The pakeha sample, with different family type and much lower fertility, would provide a suitable test of the portability of the questionnaire used for the survey. It was intended that the ESCAP questionnaire should be a standardized instrument, although allowing for some cultural specificity. In addition to items intended for eventual cross-cultural comparison, the questionnaire thus also contained questions designed specifically for maori or pakeha respondents.

An evaluation of the survey, as required by ESCAP, has been reported on elsewhere (Pool 1981; Douglas 1981; Cameron 1981). The present research refers only to some particular issues dealt with in the survey, and only to the pakeha component of the study. In this context the ESCAP survey was useful as an attempt to define 'family' and provided information on family formation among pakeha New Zealanders. It was also a means of eliciting information relevant to the thesis topic of 'value' of children.

In addition to 'core' questions on the topics formulated by the study directors and ESCAP secretariat staff, the questionnaire contained a 'value of children' module. (See Appendix vd). Questions pertaining to 'value' of children referred to what conventionally have been termed 'values' in fertility research: childlessness versus having children, large versus small families, economic and social 'functions' of

children, 'costs' of having or not having children (including contraception and adoption costs), and psychological 'attitudes' to children. Most of these questions were original but some were based on the East-West Crossnational study design[15].

Fourteen interviewers were recruited by personal contact. All had had some training in social sciences and most had had some previous interviewing experience. Each interviewer received an average of fifteen hours training. Details of training and the interviewing experience are appended. (Appendix v (b)).

Respondents in the pakeha component of the ESCAP survey were 'pakeha' by self-definition: that is, respondents, not researcher, decided whether they were or were not 'pakeha'. If not born in New Zealand they were to have lived here since their thirteenth birthday. The eventual sample comprized couples where the female partner was aged 26-54 years, plus men and women, of similar age, who had at some stage lived in a marriage-type union. All respondents were currently resident in Hamilton city (1981 population 97907). Details of sampling are included in Appendix v(b)).

Statistical analyses revealed that the sample had a 'better educated', 'white collar' bias compared to the total population of the Hamilton urban area; there is thus no justification for claiming that the results of the ESCAP survey are representative of the population of Hamilton city, let alone of pakeha New Zealanders.

The ESCAP survey was the first phase of an innovative project in fertility and family planning studies. While there has been considerable research of the KAP survey type, most of this has concentrated on the wife, and usually on family limitation.The ESCAP project was intended to relate fertility behaviour (not just birth limitation) to the family context of the couple. In addition to attempting to operationalize 'family', the ESCAP

survey thus also differed from many fertility surveys in that both husband and wife were interviewed, at the same time but separately, by male/female interviewer pairs.

Despite the impracticalities of including men in the sample[16], it was concluded that their contribution was of significant importance to an understanding of family formation in New Zealand. At the same time, it became evident that interviewers were having a personal impact on many couples, provoking them to think about aspects of their family life which they in some cases had not considered before and, perhaps more importantly, being responsible for these issues being discussed by the respective spouses as a consequence of the interview. Researchers must accept responsibility not only for intruding into respondents' lives, but also for unwittingly bringing about some changes in the respondents' own perceptions of themselves.

In the context of the survey, the interviewers were at once both subjects and researchers. They were required to negotiate a social situation in order to achieve their end and in so doing provided some valuable insights to both the research process and the social context in which the research took place. These insights will be referred to where appropriate in later chapters, but in particular it was noted that women respondents talked with more ease, but men at greater length, during interviews. Interviewers gained the impression that whereas many women were quite familiar with household surveys generally, and clinical and quasiclinical interviews in particular, for many men this was the first time they had talked at length about many of the issues addressed by the questionnaire. Later feedback indicated that men appreciated this opportunity.

In a few instances other people (children) were present at some time during the interview but in most cases their impact was overcome by leaving 'delicate' questions (use of contraception,

attitudes to children) until the children left the room. Of greater concern as regards validity of responses was the impact of 'life at the moment'. Several respondents observed how the timing of the interview affected their responses. Referring to how the interviewee felt, (whether tired, happy, depressed, busy etc) and to what the children were doing at the time (asleep, ill, argumentative, etc.), one woman exemplified our concern thus:

> If the interviewer had come back a week later I might have given her completely different answers.

Such a comment supports the view that because attitudes change, even fluctuate, over relatively short periods of time, they are poor indicators of behaviour. Furthermore, the utility of questionnaires for gaining attitudinal information must also be questioned.

A second general comment relates to how respondents perceived the survey. They had had it explained to them that this pakeha survey was one of two components of a study, the other being a maori survey. According to one interviewer, to some respondents

> This seemed to provide a good opportunity for telling Pakehas that Maoris had close family relationships whereas 'usually we do not exhibit this so markedly'.

This "good opportunity" was reported as the respondent's perception of the survey. My own experience during follow-up discussions reinforced this view, that some respondents saw the questionnaire as a way of seeing how they (or all pakehas) 'measured up' against a perceived 'maori standard'. It is likely, therefore, that some respondents felt quite defensive during the interview.

During the survey, respondents usually saw the interviewer as a fact-gatherer. The emphasis was on answering the questions

which the interviewer asked, and answering 'correctly' - several respondents later asked me if they had answered "correctly" or "properly", that is, had they given the interviewer the sort of answer he/she was looking for? Respondents' answers were seen to be 'correct' if they were what the researcher wanted. If there was dialogue between interviewer and researcher, this was not recorded; interviewers were given no expectation that they could or should record it. Their job was to obtain concise, quantifiable data which could be regarded as 'factual'. Most respondents shared this perception of an interview. Interviewers noted that respondents observed a specific end-point to the interview, changing their manner and in many instances initiating a social interaction at that point by making invitations to supper, etc. The talk that had preceded was 'survey response' talk, with each party playing the role ascribed to them.

There is no reason to suspect that any respondents were deliberately dishonest or misleading in their responses. But the questionnaires returned, and the accompanying comments from interviewers, indicated that some people gave rather perfunctory replies, and that others gave answers in the form of stock clichés or socially-acceptable judgments ("It's not right, is it, to have too many kids when there's so many starving in the world" etc). However, others made considerable effort to give the interviewer a full account of their opinions. It was these people, who had indicated their interest both in the research and in the topics, who appeared to be prepared to verbalise their feelings, and who were articulate in their responses, that I first turned to in exploring follow-up interviews.

At the conclusion of the interview respondents were offered the opportunity of gaining some information from the survey. Many expressed dissatisfaction that they had previously given their time and, sometimes, personal information to surveys and had "never heard any more about it." The offer was a popular one

in principle. In some cases where respondents were hesitant to agree to participate this offer was made at the outset and was invariably instrumental in gaining their cooperation. A year after the interviewing had taken place all participants were sent a relatively brief and simple summary of some of the results. Feedback indicated that, whether it was read or not, the report was appreciated. Respondents were also invited to a meeting to discuss the survey - 5 came, and formed the "discussion group" referred to in Section 7.3 (ii). At the same time other respondents were being approached for follow-up discussions on their own. The research thus moved into the 'second stage' of the thesis study.

7.3 (ii) Informal Interviews and Interpretive Analysis

In conducting the ESCAP survey an overview, or sketch plan, of people's views about and actions concerning childbearing and children had been sought. I, personally, as researcher, was removed from the interview situation. But despite my "neutral" stance, it was me who structured the respondents' statements, whether beforehand during questionnaire design or later in the coding of open-ended questions. During the informal interviews I was intimately involved, a participant as well as an observer. These informal interviews were not just research situations, but were also recognised as social situations.

The aim of the interpretive study was not to see how all people act towards and concerning children and family, but to try to understand how some people act. As a series of case studies, this component of the research was an attempt to try to 'see' family and children from the other person's point of view. It was expected that this understanding would be different from that gained from the survey. During the informal interviews I had my own position, as researcher, woman, and a mother, to take account of in our interaction - respondents knew I was a

researcher, they saw I was a woman, and they sometimes asked me if I was a mother (and I expect, that because of my age, many others assumed that I was). I also had the research situation to take account of, first the quasi-clinical survey interview, and then the less formal discussion situation. How respondents interacted with me would depend on their perception of our construction of the situation.

Selected couples were approached and asked if they would like to have an informal discussion with me about the survey and about some particular issues raised in which I was interested. Six couples participated. Four of them had taken part in the survey proper and one spouse of another couple had been one of the interviewers. Discussions with these five couples lasted from one to three hours. Another couple, one spouse of which had taken part in the pretest, provided more limited material during several, shorter, interactions.

I had met none of the first four couples, but they all took me into their homes as a guest. I suspect they were flattered that I was interested in them and they were particularly keen to 'co-operate' by helping me with whatever I wanted to know. They also accorded me the 'respect' of the person who knew all about the survey - I was to be a source of knowledge to them. This was not the case with the other two couples, who knew me as a friend and colleague.

However, even with those who had been strangers to me, the 'professional barrier' gradually broke down as they identified my 'other roles', in particular that of a parent myself. With two couples I had to give rather more of myself (filling in background) than I had with the others before they began to give of themselves. The others talked enthusiastically with little direction or prompting. As the conversation flowed I tended to let it take its own course and discussion of the various 'topics' on my mental list followed rather naturally, with little probing. The survey questionnaire provided the

focus for discussion, but neither restricted nor structured it. My concern was not to adhere rigidly to my own items of interest, but, where it happened, to let the respondents talk about their interest within the general family-children framework. Respondents, by and large, still saw these interactions as kinds of interviews, but not as the fact-finding missions that the previous experiences had been. One woman later said,

> You'd been asked to reveal your relationship with your family, which is a fairly touching thing, and there'd been giving at an emotional level.

Yet all of these people wanted to talk about their families, to tell me what their 'set-up' was like. They saw themselves as unique, expressed in phrases like, "well, we're a bit different", or "you wouldn't come across another lot like us", and they wanted to share what they saw as their uniqueness.

These six couples have, for the purpose of this report, been called the Sumners, Brownings, Oldes, Coxes, Learys and Milnes. They varied in age from late twenties to mid fifties, with children ranging in age from one to mid twenties (one couple had no children). What they said has been used in the report to elaborate on various topics raised during the survey, but there are other instances where these conversations raised new perspectives on the research (my perspectives, not theirs).

A second phase of the interpretive research was the setting up of a discussion group. This group arose out of the survey and comprised the five people (plus myself) who voluntarily came to a meeting "to talk about the survey". As with the couple conversations, my role was seen first and foremost as 'researcher' and secondly as female. But whereas most of the conversations with the couples had been directed at me, and less often just between the two spouses, in the discussion group the conversation went on around me, and for long periods I appeared to be ignored by the participants. My role, from my

perspective, was more that of an interested outsider, who had set the situation up, and could now listen to it proceed. The individuals at this meeting were the Sumners, and three others I shall call Janet, Anne and Mat.

The third component of the field investigation was a selective documentation of my own social world. In this context both the survey interviewers and I were regarded as subjects as well as researchers. Interviewers' perceptions as interviewers, and also as people-in-the-world, have been taken account of. Verbatim responses credited to "research participants" (as distinguished from "subjects" or "respondents") were made by interviewers, coders or clerical assistants in the survey research. Their interest in the research material often provoked them to offer their own experiences or points of view. Such anecdotal evidence is used not as representative evidence, but to illustrate specific empirical issues.

My own role of participant-as-observer was adopted in order to attempt to define, from my perspective, the situation in which I studied these people-of-the-world, the situation in which I saw them living, acting and talking. In a cultural sense, their social life was also my social life - as a pakeha, of similar education and (socioeconomic) status, as a wife and mother, a 'family' person, my social world coincided with the social world of many of my research subjects. In much of my life I live in their world. To that extent I believe that I am as justified as is an anthropologist from some alien culture in inferring from my perceptions of their world, <u>to</u> their world.

The mode of analysis employed in the qualitative investigation might be described generally as conversation analysis. Conversations and discussions were taperecorded in the field and analyzed for form and content, that is, not just for what people said but also for how they said it.

Although less structured than informal interviewing usually is,

these discussions were not, strictly speaking, pure 'natural conversations'. They had a form and structure which was focussed on children and family, but a form and structure which was intrinsically different from the verbal interactions which had taken place during the ESCAP survey. The form of investigation thus also differed from that of sociolinguists, whose interest is the structure of the language used.

Theoretically, conversation analysis is grounded in certain assumptions about the role of 'natural language' in the construction of reality. Everyday conversation is not only a social skill whereby one's 'place' in 'society' may be identified or even determined, but it is also the means whereby thoughts are structured, beliefs and information received, accumulated and transmitted, and whereby, as a consequence, one's perception of the world is determined.

It has been argued (Schwartz & Jacobs 1979: 348-349) that natural language can be treated as a medium through which culture operates and a means of discovering people's "points of view". It is as such an heuristic device that the conversations referred to in this thesis have been employed: in analyzing how 'children', 'family' etc. are conceived of in everyday conversations one might learn about the nature of these phenomena, as mental constructs, from the subjects' expression of their lives.

Such a practical endeavour has led to a second mode of analysis which derives specifically from sociological phenomenology. Phenomenologists claim to be sensitized to the importance of the subject as the source of all knowledge. At the same time, phenomenology might also be described as a "first-person method": only by living in the world can the sociologist come to know its structures and meanings. To those adhering to the positivist tradition there is a methodological contradiction in such a stance: if individuals are acknowledged as unique (ie, there is always individual bias or subjectivity) how then can

aggregate patterns, based on assumptions of common likeness, be deduced? (op.cit: 360-362). This concern (termed by Schwartz and Jacobs, p 362, a positivist "paranoia") ignores the common elements of culture which are individually mediated, and disregards the possibility of any actor - researcher included - recognizing and accounting for his/her own subjectivity. The research described in the following chapters incorporates a "first-person" method (outlined on page 202) as a familiarity with culture, the social context in which the research took place. The context is described not how it is, but as how it is perceived to be.

7.4 Summary

The initial aim of this practical exercise was to discover the meaning of 'value ' of children to a small group of pakeha New Zealanders. As the research evolved the focus changed, to become an investigation into how such meaning might be discovered. Whereas most of the research documented in Part One of the thesis was concerned with why people have certain numbers of children, this exercise has been restricted to the question of why have any children. If the answer to the latter question can be phrased simply in terms of biological or cultural determinism ("it's natural" or "society expects it") then the research question must become why is this so, or in common language, "how come?"

Data have been derived principally from two sources. The quantitative material, derived from the ESCAP Family Formation survey, has been analyzed statistically for generalities and patterns of stated ideas and beliefs, representing the "social facts" of Durkheim. The interpretive material, derived from informal modes of investigation, has been analyzed for meanings, the understandings of Weber. The practical component of the informal investigation has been conversation analysis,

supplemented by the researcher's own experience of living in the world.

Chapters 8-12 present the 'results' of the different forms of investigation described in this chapter. Issues pertaining to children, of interest to both myself as researcher and to my subjects in their everyday lives (as these were represented to me in discussion), have been analyzed under various labels: family, immortality and continuity, economics, biology, parenthood and childlessness. The classification of these topics by chapter is purely for practical purposes. It is not to imply that the subjects necessarily structured their experiences in this way, or delineated these issues as separate interests. Indeed, several of the issues so labelled are overlapping in everyday understanding. Respondents do, however, understand a structure in their lives, and a purpose to their actions, but this is separate from the research issue. The principle task is to exemplify the meaning that children as perceived objects of the subjects' concern and interest, have to people and how we, as researchers, might come to know this.

In communicating knowledge there is a risk that the writer will be seen to be objectifying it. The 'knowledge' elaborated upon in the following chapters is not the subjects' knowledge, but my knowledge. What is presented as 'known' is an interpretation of the understandings I believe my subjects have. That is, second order constructs are to be distinguished from the subjects' first order constructs (see Chapter 14). Responsibility for the research interpretation therefore rests with the writer, not the subjects. There is nothing unique in the qualification that the research statement is, in the final analysis, only my perception. Even those writers who claim objective neutrality and seek to present knowledge as externally verifiable 'facts', in the end present only their interpretations.

Unlike those supposedly 'objective' researchers however, I at

least acknowledge, and certainly am aware, that I have superimposed my world and perceptions onto my subjects' world. To some extent, like survey researchers, I did this before the fieldwork was undertaken in that I had ~~by~~ my own expectations of the kinds of experiences and understandings that people had in the world. I gained these expectations not from my research experience, but from my own experience of living in the everyday world. Mostly, however, the structure has been imposed as a form of analysis after the discussions had taken place, and after they had been listened to repeatedly not just as disjointed comments (as the survey responses could be construed as being), but as complete statements which had their own form.

Nevertheless, the final research statement remains my statement of their (our) world and experiences. In acknowledging this subjectivity the reader might reach his or her own interpretations. This is a somewhat different specification of the 'value' of children to that which has been stated 'factually' in earlier work described in Part One. In the course of my analysis this perspective has been developed to resemble one which might conventionally be described as phenomenological. Such an approach seemed to me to facilitate the 'leap' from the kind of understanding being sought by those writers, such as Caldwell, who have sought to free their investigations from the facticities implied in 'scientific' explanation, but where understandings were being obscured by the trappings of a positivist mode of thought, to a kind which really does derive from the common sense, everyday, world and is not clouded by the structure and labels of 'science'. The specification of the phenomenological endeavour as 'method' for value of children research forms the concluding section of this thesis.

Notes to Chapter 7.

1. Total fertility rate (TFR) is the sum of age specific birth rates per thousand women aged 15-44 (or 15-49). As a period index it shows what a cohort would achieve if it were to experience for its entire reproductive span the patterns operating in any one year. (See Population Monitoring Group 1984: 7).

2. It is noted that over this period infant mortality (0-1 year) also declined dramatically, from over 90 per thousand live births in 1890 to 75.2 in 1900, and 50.6 in 1920 (Pool 1982: 15; Gilson 1970 - see Appendix IIIb). Pool pointed out that the decline before 1901 was due to vastly improved socioeconomic conditions (rather than to health or sanitation measures), to reduced fertility (few higher parity, high risk births, and reduced risk of cross-infection from many siblings) and to changes in nuptiality (decreasing risks to babies of young mothers). By contrast, declines in the early 1900s might well be related to health administration reforms. (Pool op.cit: 16). For age specific mortality rates from 1901 to 1976 see Zodgekar 1979: 94-95).

3. The Act referred to by O'Neill was passed in 1877, not 1887. Its passage was facilitated by the abolition of provincial councils in 1875 and the establishment of a central department of education in 1877. Responsiblility for financing free, secular and compulsory education at primary school level was assumed by central government in 1877. The school leaving age was raised to 14 in 1901, but attendance for the full (rather than half) school year was not made compulsory until 1910. (Dakin 1973: 18-24).

4. Government policies included the 1901 Education Act which provided for free post-primary education, the Child Welfare Act of 1925, the introduction of a universal school medical service in 1912, and a free school dental clinic system in 1921, and the introduction of Family Benefit payments in 1926.

   The most important nongovernment innovation in this period was probably the founding of the Society for Promoting the Health of Women and Children (Plunket Society) in 1907.

   McCreary (1969: 17) suggested it fulfilled the void created when migrants left behind them older parents on whom they might model their childrearing in the course of everyday interaction.

However Olssen's early history of the Society revealed an upper-middle class membership and an authoritarian and puritanical ideology. According to the founder, Truby King, support for the Society's ideals came from the 'self-supporting' classes. The lofty ideals of 'true womanhood', however, are likely to have been quite irrelevant to the ignorant and the poor; in addition, they were specifically orientated to improving the 'white' races. (Olssen, 1979). Salmond (1975: 52-60) indicated that Plunket was still a predominantly white, middle class service. This was epitomized in the comment from a respondent that "Babies that are seen as part of a nice family are helped by the Plunket nurse" (p59).

5. The Women's Christian Temperance Union was founded in 1885; Plunket has promoted 'scientific' mothering since 1907; Home Science became a degree subject at Otago University in 1912. (Olssen and Levesque: 8-9).

6. O'Neill (1979a; 130) has calculated that most of the decline in fertility between 1921 and 1936 had already occurred by 1931, thus casting doubt on the role of the depression in immediate fertility decline. Secondly, since changes in the marital structure before 1931 were relatively unimportant most of the decline was facilitated by changes within marriage, ie, by contraception or abortion.

7. CBR 1976 = 17.68, 1981 = 16.09, 1982 = 15.69 per 1000 population. MFR 1976 = 104.7, 1981 = 94.9 per 1000 married women 16-44 years. (New Zealand Official Yearbook 1983: 114-115).

8. Two major studies in New Zealand, in the Hutt in 1975 (n=909 ever married women aged 20-45) and in the Manawatu in 1978 (n=1676 women aged 16-44) showed that about three-quarters of women not either pregnant, or in a voluntary sterile union, were using a contraceptive at the time of the survey (Hutt 71.6%: Manawatu 79.1%). For both samples the pill was the most commonly used method. In the Hutt 22% of women were in voluntary sterile unions and for the Hutt-equivalent sample in Manawatu the proportion was 33.5% (24% of the total sample). (Reinken and Blakey 1976: 2-6, 16; Trlin and Perry 1981: 1-6, 27, 34, 47). Sterilization notifications for New Zealand indicate that over 70% of persons sterilized have either 2 or 3 children (see Appendix III).

9. Mean birth intervals for the 1931-32 birth cohort have been cited by O'Neill (1979a: 131) as 2.12 years from marriage to first birth, 2.29 years for b1-b2, and 1.87 years for b2-b3. The first birth interval is smaller than for any other birth cohort since that of 1901-05. The proportion of first births occurring within the first year of marriage has recently declined from 30.84% in 1975 to 25.34% in 1981 (Vital Statistics 1979-80, 1981).

10. To some extent this figure is an artefact of the marriage rate, and to some extent reflects the recent acceptability of de facto marriages. Rates of exnuptial births, except at ages below 17 years, have remained relatively static.

11. Peggy Koopman-Boyden, pers. comm, October 1983.

12. For example, the 1969 Status of Children Act removed legal "illegitimacy" status; the 1970 Age of Majority Act lowered legal "adulthood" to 20 years; the 1974 Children and Young Persons Act gave legal assistance to all juvenile offenders. Children do not, however, have independent guardians: unless determined otherwise by law, parents are automatically guardians of their children.

13. For relevant sociological literature on the New Zealand family see Koopman-Boyden 1978. For an overview of social and economic correlates of demographic changes in New Zealand see Neville and O'Neill 1979. New Zealand population changes up until 1966 are documented in Gibson 1971, while Pool and Sceats 1981 provide a comprehensive analysis of New Zealand fertility.

14. Hereafter the term "ESCAP survey" unless otherwise stated, refers specifically to the pakeha component of the Hamilton Family Formation Survey. The entire survey was funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the terms of its bilateral aid programme.

15. See in particular questions 49, and 56-59.

16. See Appendix v(c).

'Families'

Chapter 8

DEFINING 'FAMILY': THE CONTEXT OF CHILD 'VALUE'.

> It is interesting that the study of fertility has been very separate from the study of the family. Not only has the former tended to be separate from sociological concerns, but even where a sociology of fertility has been attempted, there has been little effort to use the insights that might be gained from a sociological understanding of family life. (Busfield 1974: 11n2)

8.1 Introduction

If one accepts Blumer's second postulate, that "the meaning of ... things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (see p 163), then family life must be recognised as of central concern to value of children researchers.

Apart from issues of theory[1] the practical issue is who is 'family' - ie, who are those 'significant others' whose social actions help people define the meaning of children? Determining who 'is' family was one of the tasks of the ESCAP Family Formation Study. The analysis presented in this chapter refers primarily to this survey, but is supplemented where appropriate by informal interview material.

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1. Footnotes to Chapter 8 are placed at the end of the chapter, p 241.

8.2 Defining 'Family': A Researcher's Problem

Despite Busfield's comment (p 211), it is pertinent to note that the sociology of the family on which demographers might base their studies is theoretically limited. But in the absence of theory, a proliferation of definitions of 'family' might be found in the literature. Of these definitions the classic one is that attributed to Murdock, who defined the "family" as

> A social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation and reproduction. It includes adults of both sexes, at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship, and one or more children, own or adopted, of the sexually cohabiting adults. (Murdock 1949: 1)

This definition is useful primarily as a point from which to depart. Despite reference to acts of "economic cooperation and reproduction", it is a structural definition, which says little about process. Almost every clause in the definition might be challenged: "adults of both sexes", "common coresidence", "children of the sexually cohabiting adults", etc. Such structural definitions persist in the literature however. For instance, to Murdock's "family of procreation", "family of orientation" and "affinal family", has recently been added a "family of gerontation"[2], all of these being defined as "nuclear families". There is no certainty that such definitions are useful instruments for the analysis of 'significant others' in fertility research.

Murdock's classification raises the issue of 'nuclear' versus "extended" or "joint" families, which has become an important issue in some demographic transition literature[3]. 'Nuclear' families are by convention restricted to parents and their children. In notes prepared as a basis for discussion of World Fertility Survey data[4], Caldwell raised numerous issues which relate to family differentiation, including in particular,

(a) whether it is numbers of people or relationships

between them which is important,

(b) whether coresidence, or communal eating (or both) are more important than a network of "primary obligations",

(c) whether families should be analysed in terms of their life cycle stages[5], and

(d) as far as <u>any</u> link between family 'type' and fertility is concerned, whether it is "not what the data seem to show, but whether there is any reason why the data should show anything". (1978b: 5)

Caldwell reflected the concern of a number of demographers when he wrote

> The family of the fertility survey is often an artefact of the survey. (1977b : 65).

Adherence to a dichotomy in family type based on structure is methodologically inappropriate, and might well be the reason why, for instance, results of many studies attempting to link the form of marriage and family structure with fertility (such as the World Fertility Survey) have been "surprisingly and disappointingly limited" (Caldwell and Ruzicka n.d.: 13). As long as analysis of the family is confined to structural typologies the dynamics of family action in demographic processes will not be revealed[6]. The issue is not one of demographic definition, a researcher's construct, but a question of who people themselves identify as 'significant' in their understanding of 'family'.

'Family' as an everyday construction might be described rather differently to a researcher's construct. For instance, it has been suggested that "kinship is distinguished by its particular tone and emphasis on expressiveness, ... on inescapable moral

claims and obligations and a degree of trust that is not automatically possible with non-kin" (Morgan: 75). To refer to a relationship as 'kinship' in the biological/conjugal (structural) sense is not the same meaning as is given by an actor to any particular form of action which might distinguish kin members from nonkin. The ideology of kinship might incorporate a sense of obligation, but one must also recognise that

> since there are often competing obligations within the kinship universe as well as between kinship and non-kinship relationships, this association (between kinship and obligations) does not of itself tell us anything about a particular social event ... (Morgan: 77).

On the other hand, it has been suggested (ibid) that the ideology of 'kinship' is only a way of 'making sense' of a particularly unique form of relationship, something commonly understood and taken for granted - as expressed in the commonly-understood phrase, "they're like family to me". Morgan correctly observed, however, that

> Out of the total number of persons in a kin universe only a few are 'selected' for more intimate relationships. This selection process is influenced by degree of relationship, geographical distance and personal choice, usually in that order of importance. Within the category of degree of relationship the order of preference (for a married ego) is normally parents, siblings and others. (p 66).

The concept of affectional bonds has been used in theoretical arguments to define or characterise family types, the most notable perhaps being Stone's concept of "affective individualism" and Caldwell's concept of "emotional nucleation"[7].

'Family' differs from other people primarily as a matter of choice: one has less choice in interacting with kin, than with others, because of obligations to 'keep in touch' with kin, especially parents. The kin network is more permanent than

friendship networks. There is an expectation that the kin group will persist through time, without any external enforcement (Ryder 1978b: 221).

'Family' members might therefore be defined by those acts which people carry out with each other. Citing empirical evidence from England and America, Sussman (1965: 68-71) listed the following activities as the prime characteristics of a "viable kin network":

(1) Mutual aid - help patterns concerned with exchange of services, gifts, advice and financial assistance.

(2) Social activities - kinship visiting and joint recreational activities.

(3) Regular or occasional services - shopping, housework, escorting (etc) old people, childcare, providing accommodation for visiting or migrating kin, support during crises such as death, disaster, weddings, and support to maintain community status.

Argyle (1983) observed that conflict between kin frequently is caused by perceived failure to meet family obligations.

To these activities Argyle (op.cit) added a particular interest in weddings and childbirth (additions to the family). Similarly, funerals denote the loss of 'family' members. It might be argued that the ceremonies and rituals associated with births, deaths and marriages serve to reinforce 'family' identity and ideology.

Reiss and Oliveri (1983) have argued that 'family' members share a common perception of the world. They proposed that interaction within a family and its social world is shaped by this paradigm, which is "a set of enduring assumptions about the social world shared by all family members". Families, they

wrote, can be distinguished from each other by the nature of their paradigms (p 81). The way family members perceived their world was related to their "preferred kinship network" (size, interaction and solidarity). Although the authors considered the paradigm to be a fundamental property of the whole family, they concluded from empirical study that this paradigm was actually transmitted or mediated to children by the mother (p 90).

Several possible explanations for the maternal influence were proposed (p 89-90). Families may interact more with their maternal than paternal kin, or mothers rather than fathers may regulate and facilitate interaction with kin generally, or mother's emphases on their own kin may arise out of women having closer ties to their own parents (especially mothers) than do men to their parents. Alternatively, elderly parents, in seeking out daughters rather than sons to provide assistance, may be the instigators of close maternal ties. Evidence has been cited to support each of these possibilities, and they are not mutually exclusive. However, such explanations are mechanical; although they explain how the closeness is facilitated in a structural sense they do not explain the maintenance of a paradigm. The authors attempted the latter explanation by reference to family rituals, ceremonies, symbols and heirlooms, the "greater symbolic and experiential closeness to mother's side" (p90), as a way of establishing not just who are "preferred kin" but also with whom one shares a "value consensus" (usually mother-daughter). Shared kin preferences and values are part of the shared paradigm by which Reiss and Oliveri characterized and distinguished individual families[8].

Notwithstanding Reiss and Oliveri's idea of shared perceptions of the world, most notions of 'family' referred to in this section appear to imply notions of both 'structure' and 'function'. Despite references to moral and ideological

attributes of 'family', these also are perceived in terms of 'function', via education and nurture, dependency or socialization. Arguments returned to definitions or constructs which are artefacts of the mode of investigation. In solving the problem of "what is family?" the researcher has defined a construct of his/her own making which may have little meaning to everyday people in terms of their experiences of living in the world. Yet the real-world perception of family is of practical importance if this is to be construed as a context for fertility decisions and the imputation of 'value' to children. The present research included two rather different attempts to identify who were these significant 'family' members to pakeha New Zealanders, with respect to their childbearing and childrearing.

8.3 The ESCAP "Family of Obligation"

Accepting the variety of possible ways in which sociologists might define 'family', the ESCAP Family Formation Survey was used for the thesis research to explore the relationship (if any) between structural definitions or action definitions of 'family', and the family as a constructed reality. This thesis refers only to the pakeha component of the ESCAP survey.

Briefly, the survey as a pretest was administered in an attempt to obtain quantifiable data of a kind usually obtained by anthropological rather than statistical techniques (see Appendix va). The researchers were to attempt to differentiate familial from "socio-cultural" influences on family formation. Not surprisingly, early pretests on maori subjects indicated that this was impractical, as well as theoretically questionable (Douglas 1981: 11-12).

An essential task of the ESCAP Family Formation Survey was to identify what was termed the "family of obligation", an

page Members of family of obligation	Parents-in-law	Maternal grandparents	Paternal grandparents	Older Sister	Younger Sister	Older Brother	Younger Brother	Uncles	Aunts	Cousins	Others (specify)		Friends	Children	Workmate	Neighbour
Q.20 Whom do you consider to be other people in your family for whom you have done similar sorts of things and from whom have you received things?																
Q.21 Are there people we have missed from this list such as:																
Q.22 (For each person noted in turn) (a) Where do they live? Co-reside (same house) 1 Nearby 2 Distant 3 Deceased 0 (Go to Q.24)	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3		0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Q.23 (b) How often do you see them? Daily 1 Weekly 2 Less often 3 Never 0	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3		0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3	0 1 2 3
Q.24 Have you ever been able to help these kin & relations or friends in terms of the following -																
(a) Have them (or their children) lived with you (for 6 months or more)?																
(b) have them (or their children) lived with you (for less than 6 months)?																
(c) provide food for them on a regular basis?																
(d) provide food for them at any time?																
(e) help them in getting a job?																
(f) provide them with money as a gift or loan (amounts of $50 or more)?																
(g) help in dealing with police, lawyers or the courts?																
(h) help with education, schooling, or education grants?																
(i) have you ever gone to a funeral expressly at their request, or for their sake?																
Q.25 How about in reverse? Have you (or your children) been recipients of help from them in terms of the following:-																
(a) have gone to live with them (for 6 months or more)?																
(b) have gone to live with them (for 6 months or less)?																
(c) given food to you on a regular basis?																
(d) provided food for you at any time?																
(e) helped you or your children to get a job?																
(f) provided you with money as a gift or loan (amounts of $50 or more)?																
(g) helped you or your children in dealing with police, lawyers or the Courts?																
(h) helped you or your children with education, schooling, or grants?																
(i) have come to a funeral for your sake?																

Fig. 8.1 ESCAP INTERACTION TABLE

operationalization of the definition of family implied in Caldwell's wealthflow theory (see Chapter 4). It was assumed by those who designed the study that this 'family' would equate with the "family of influence" in family formation. Superficially, the definition was used as an argument to overcome the highly structural notion of nuclear/extended family based on biological and affinal relationship or residence. In practice a definition of "family of obligation" was difficult to formulate. For the purpose of the survey the ESCAP directors defined it as

> people affected immediately by any couple decision or behaviour, or who directly influence such decisions or behaviour. (Report of the First Meeting of the Study Directors ... 1 July 1980: 10).

In the first New Zealand report the 'family' was defined more precisely, in a manner which could be operationalized in questionnaire format, as

> those kin and affines to whom or from whom the couple owe and fulfill obligations, and from whom they receive gifts, gain favours and assistance, and interrelate closely (Pool 1981: 1).

In addition to kin and affines, the directors intended that "workmates, neighbours or others whom they (ie the respondents) judged particularly important" should be included (Report of First Meeting, op.cit, parenth. added). Neither coresidence nor kinship were to be essential criteria of "family of obligation". "The family of obligation", they wrote, "should be considered at present as a convenient tool and experimented with" (ibid).

The questionnaire contained three 'sets' of questions referring specifically to family interaction: a set referring to obligations and responsibilities with kin and affines, a set referring to interventions or influences in family formation,

and a set referring to familial influences on children[9]. The first two sets of questions are discussed in the following sections, along with informal discussion case study material relevant to the particular issues.

8.3 (i) Family Interactions

The questions referring to obligations and responsibilities, termed the "interaction table" (p220), were designed to test the "degree of familialism demonstrated by the couple" (Pool 1981: 14). Respondents were asked which of the following interactions they had carried out with their mother or father since the time when the respondent was married:

(a) Living with them for more than 6 months,

(b) Giving food on a regular basis,

(c) Giving money (more than $50),

(d) Helping with getting a job.

Respondents were then asked, "Whom do you consider to be other people in your family for whom you have done similar sorts of things, and from whom you have received things?". The question was followed by a probe, suggesting the 12 categories of kin and 3 categories of non-kin shown in Fig 8.1. For those kin volunteered, each respondent was then asked which, of the set of obligations listed, he/she had done for them or they for him/her.

As might be anticipated with a pretest, a number of design problems with these questions became evident during implementation and analysis of the survey. These have been documented elsewhere (Pool 1981; Cameron 1981; Douglas

1981). The Study Director's recommendation was that rather than placing particular credence on specific questions in the table, a "scale" or index should be developed, thereby enabling the researcher to "measure" familialism (sic)[10] rather crudely, but "for international cross-comparisons one would need to transform the scores to some standardised range such as percentile distributions" (Pool 1981: 18).

From a demographic (statistical) perpective, the most serious concern with the data was the effect of counteracting biases: those people who were members of large families (biologically) would have had a higher probability of having carried out interactions with any kin category, but if the number of interactions any person carried out was constant[11] then people from small families would have a higher ratio of interactions per kin member/affine.

An important problem from a sociological perspective was that the interactions table provided no way of defining intensity of any kin relationship; for example, what kind of relationship did the various interactions or obligations reflect? A rather different problem concerned lack of 'need' for specific services[12], and a similar lack of ability to provide such services[13]. In practice, the examples of interactions provided in Fig 8.1 'fixed' for respondents what was meant by 'obligations'. The ESCAP questions were framed in a context of interactions which the researchers thought would or should be important to do or have done. Case studies indicated that labour, childcare and company were also very important resources and were thus additional foci of relationships of obligation and responsibility.

If one is to define 'family' in terms of important interactions, one must do so in terms of interactions which are (a) important for the recipient to have done, and (b) important for the supporter to do.

Informal interviews also revealed that what a person had not done, but had been expected to do, might indicate 'significant kin' as readily as actual services would (see Argyle, op.cit). Mr and Mrs Browning, for instance, between them had volunteered only four interactions to the survey interviewers. They were, however, greatly concerned with family 'obligations' in the light of what they expected mothers and sisters, in particular, to do. Rather bitterly, Mrs Browning said

> I was in bed sick with three children and my mother said she was too busy to come (and help)

and Mr Browning added that during his wife's illness,

> ... at least I was willing to sacrifice a bit of dough (money, from time off work). She wasn't willing to sacrifice a bit of time.

It was not so much the lack of assistance itself which hurt the Brownings, but the apparent lack of a desire to help.

Mrs Browning : I was very hurt and upset, because as a person in trouble the natural thing is to go to your mother, and (I) can't.

Interactions with siblings were reported on similarly by the Brownings. Mr Browning had done work for his sister and brother-in-law. Given his apparent resentment about the lack of return for this he was asked why he had done it:

Mr Browning : It was a family tie ... I could've said 'No'. I nearly did. But it being family, that's why I did it.

He helped his mother because "blood's thicker than water I suppose". Lengthy conversation in a similar vein indicated that the Brownings' ideology of family obligation appeared to comprize three principles:

(a) family members should see a need for help and offer it before it is asked for,

(b) if one has to ask for help then one asks first those who one feels close to (family members),

(c) family members <u>should</u> help, because of their relationship with each other.

By and large Mr and Mrs Browning each talked about their 'own' relatives; 'family' was limited to parents and siblings during this talk. Mrs Browning distinguished what she called the "greater family" (including aunts, uncles and cousins) from the "immediate family":

> With my family I think of my immediate family, not of my cousins and aunts, <u>etc</u>. The immediate family is the ones you lived with as you were growing up, as a child.

Whether or not they <u>do</u> provide services (<u>etc</u>.) when needed these are the people who <u>should</u> feel obligated to help - the Brownings' "family of obligation".

In other instances parents and siblings had provided the same services that the Brownings emphasized. Mrs Sumner's parents had lived with them to care for the family when one of the Sumner children had died. Mrs Sumner commented,

> At the time one of us said, 'Who would have even thought that when we'd been married 13 or 14 years that we were still so totally dependent on our parents?' And that didn't come into any of those categories (in the questionnaire), but without them, their support emotionally, we would have been quite bereft.

Similar instances of emotional support in 'crisis' situations, were reported by other respondents. When Mr Cox's mother died his father (who had been separated from Mrs Cox for many years) travelled some distance to "be with his son" and offer

emotional support. When one of the Leary grandchildren died it was their daughter who stepped in, "doing all the nasty work, the phoning etc." The Learys also commented that even if they didn't like what it was that they, as parents, were expected to do, they liked the fact that they were expected to provide support for their adult children.

One might conclude that only people who are close emotionally can provided the kind of support each of these respondents discussed. But on the other hand this feeling of closeness is what defines 'family' to these people. As one respondent put it, when asked who she thought of as being her 'family', she spread her arms wide and then hugged herself, saying "It's - us". Perhaps 'family' is a circle about ourselves.

Family, to these respondents, were people you knew so well that you understood and just accepted each other's foibles, without any need for 'back-grounding', in the same way that 'close' friends accepted each other, without any need to explain. Such closeness needs time to develop. It is undoubtedly true, as Mrs Browing indicated, that it comes from living with someone as one is growing up; it is probably why most respondents in the survey restricted 'family' to their own kin. It is also perhaps why, in most cases, 'family' are considered closer than even 'close' friends .

From the survey one can deduce some minimal number of people who comprise a structural "family of interaction". But, as already indicated, there are a number of emotionally-important and, in some cases, physically-necessary interactions which are carried on between people who care about each other, interactions which were not included in the questionnaire. Furthermore, a lack of fulfilment of some perceived need might itself indicate or reveal the intensity of the relationship of the respondent with that person. The ideology of 'family' is grounded as much in 'should' and 'ought' as it is in 'did' and 'would'. The structural perception did not reveal the dynamics

which make the family 'work' and which reinforce and perpetuate any structural cohesion which is felt between interacting members.

The restriction of 'family' to immediate nuclear family conceals more subtle preferences. In the informal discussions there were two trends: people with young (school-age) children talked mainly about their parents and, less frequently, about their siblings (usually one or two particular siblings); people with adult children (and, usually, their own parents dead), talked about those children, and rarely about their siblings. It would thus appear that people 'centre' family around an adult-adult relationship and that perhaps as their own children become old enough to fill one of those roles, they take precedence over other adults, such as siblings. Respondents did not volunteer young children in the context of 'family'. Perhaps this was because they knew we had been interested in obligations which young children neither 'needed' nor could carry out, but perhaps also because respondents perceived young children as appendages of themselves.

In support of the interaction table, it is true that most of the respondents interviewed informally did indicate that their kin were restricted, in most cases, to the immediate nuclear families of origin. They also reinforced the importance of non-kin of similar age or life-cycle stage, particularly as regards interaction with children (provision of child-care, understanding 'modern' or 'city' problems, etc). The inclusion of childcare, labour and time as 'resources' could reverse any apparent service-flow of interactions which might be deduced from the table.

From superficial analysis of the interaction data it was concluded that there was a "low level of familialism[14]" among pakeha respondents (Cameron 1981: 7). There was a low incidence of interaction reported among kin; most interaction reported was with parents-in-law, siblings and non-kin; most

Table 8.1a ESCAP "Family of Obligation": Interactions

(Maximum possible inflow or outflow interactions recorded per respondent per family member = 9).

Family Member	No. of cases	Out-flow Inter-actions (to member)	Inflow Inter-actions (from member)	TOTAL (%)
Parents-in-law	54	77	72	20
Siblings	56	81	47	17
Adult Children	34	96	20	15
Aunts & Uncles	20	15	31	6
Cousins, Nephews, Nieces	13	19	2	3
Grandparents	8	9	4	2
Other Kin*	27	33	22	7
Nonkin	71	137	86	30
No-one	31	-	-	-
TOTAL (sample n = 154)	283	467	284	100

* "Other kin", in most cases, were brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

Table 8.1b ESCAP "Family of Obligation": Contact

Family Member	No. of cases cited	% of Respondents with contact: weekly or more	less than weekly	no contact
Parents-in-law	54	39	56	5
Siblings	56	20	63	18
Adult Children	34	45	35	20
Aunts & Uncles	20	0	80	20
Cousins, Nephews, Nieces	13	8	62	30
Grandparents	8	0	62	38
Other Kin*	27	4	63	33
Nonkin	71	47	31	22
TOTAL (sample n = 154)	283	29	51	20

* "Other kin", in most cases, were brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

contact reported was with non-kin, parents-in-law and adult children (Table 8.1).

The interaction table provides only a skeleton picture of family-of-obligation. Despite the advantages for cross-cultural comparison of a highly structural instrument such as the interaction table, it is also very important that the respondent be the person who defines what acts of obligation or responsibility are important to him/her. One also needs reminding that these acts are being used as a means of deducing who are the important people to the respondent, a deduction which cannot be made with great validity from the present table if it is taken at face value.

8.3 (ii) Intergeneration Wealth Flows and The 'Value' of Children

Although the survey design imposed some restrictions on uncovering the extent of services rendered from respondents to their own parents, the data collected from the interaction table were consistent with data collected elsewhere in New Zealand. In a 1967 Wellington survey[15] Gilson (1969) reported that the relatives with whom there was most contact were parents and parents-in-law, siblings and siblings-in-law, and adult sons and daughters (in decreasing order), while "cousins, aunts, uncles and other more distant relatives received few preferences and usually (only) when lineal relatives or siblings were living further away" (p 73). In a Dunedin survey relatives comprised 64% of visitors to elderly people, 28% of visitors being adult children (Koopman-Boyden 1978: 68), while in a recent Christchurch study it was shown that, despite geographic mobility, a large proportion of elderly people surveyed had siblings or adult children available to them in the same area (op.cit). The Christchurch survey also revealed a low incidence of (and lack of preference for) coresidence of

an elderly person in an extended family household - many elderly people expressed a preference not to impose such a 'strain' on a relative's family. Similarly, some Hamilton respondents said they would go to great lengths in supporting elderly parents in order to maintain their residential independence.

Another 'act of obligation' which occurred infrequently in these earlier New Zealand studies - as in the Hamilton survey - was financial assistance. Gilson noted that for her Wellington women, "money was exchanged more rarely than services", while in the Christchurch group three-quarters of the old people stated that any financial aid should come from the government[16]. However, no account appears to have been made in any of these surveys of what Morgan (p 64) termed "concealed" financial help, in the form of, for example, wedding or birthday presents, which ensures that "the main ideal of financial independence" is not compromised.

Reference has been made to the limitations on reported interactions imposed by lack of need, on the one hand, or ability to oblige on the other. It is therefore relevant to note Koopman-Boyden's observation that to some extent younger people expect to look after the elderly more than the elderly expect this source of support themselves. However, old people reported that if they did have particular needs, it was "one's family whose assistance is asked for first, and whose assistance is valued most". But among the younger Wellington women only half said they would ask a relative rather than someone else to look after their children in a crisis situation, or would ask relatives for temporary accommodation if their house burnt down, even though the majority had relatives within the city (Gilson op.cit: 74).

It has been suggested that the examples of 'interaction' given to ESCAP respondents may have been inappropriate in the New Zealand pakeha situation. Gilson noted that "relatives are

relied on extensively during the period of childbirth"[17](ibid) (supporting the contention made earlier that childcare is an important act of support). Among older Christchurch respondents the assistance needed involved "physical strength or skills which old people, especially women, no longer have or have never learnt" - mowing lawns, fixing things in the house, housework, shopping, transport, medical supervision, bathing etc.

An area, in addition to 'need' and 'ability to oblige', which was not discussed in the ESCAP survey was time allocation. Time might be seen as a resource which old people have, but their use of it often requires other people. Time is therefore something they can give, as childcare, for instance. Conversely, 'using up time' or 'filling in time' is something others can do for old people. In the Christchurch survey elderly people repeatedly said that "having someone to talk to" was the 'assistance' they valued most, while the contact of visitors played a major role in providing "psychological support" to elderly Dunedin respondents. Morgan has observed that it is not just 'whiling away time' or providing company which is important, but that "gossip or information may be as much an important part of the content of a (kinship) relationship as the mobilization of actual goods and services" (p 79). Informal comments in the present study indicated that women especially might rely on daughters to keep them in touch with what's going on, both in their families and in the community.

Time, on the other hand, is a scarce resource for many younger people, which has particular implications for the nature of the relationship between supporters and, in particular, the elderly. Most of the needs reported by the Christchurch respondents were met by women who were middle-aged, without dependent children, and by relatively fit peers (usually siblings). That is, these needs (unlike for example, financial assistance) required a considerable time input, and were met by

those people with time available. It is also significant, however, that the women involved in supplying this assistance were mostly daughters of the old people concerned.

In terms of value, as defined by the economic and social-psychological researchers discussed in Part One of this thesis, New Zealand adult children provide emotional and social support (keeping in touch) for parents, and at least expect to provide household help if this is required. Perhaps their greatest 'value' as perceived by the parents themselves is in just being there if needed. Adult children thus have a very real value as a form of security to their aging parents but so do parents to adult children. Parents can be called on, even by adult children.

But if 'wealth' is defined as labour or financial support, it would appear that there is relatively little 'flow' towards parents in New Zealand. That is, children have a low 'old age security' or 'utility value'. Such a conclusion overlooks indirect 'value' children have, collectively, as tax-payers, a situation which in practice closely parallels the community resource which children are in the peasant societies Caldwell described. However, in the means-end idiom of social-psychological or economic researchers, it appears unlikely that New Zealand parents would be 'motivated' to have their own children for such purposes.

Data on wealth flow towards the child, as a young person, was not evident from the ESCAP survey. It was assumed that parents nurture and are responsible for their own children. On the other hand, adult respondents were asked what parents had done for them. Again, financial help was limited. However, other services were relevant to both parents and children. Most of these involved time, as a scarce resource. That is, it was not childcare, company or household maintenance which was the crucial skill required, so much as time as a commodity to carry out these services. In the context of this discussion, time

'flows' (is given) to parents by children and to children by parents. This flow appears to be reciprocal and lends support, albeit indirectly, to the idea that the concept of intergenerational 'wealth' flows should take cognisance of there being different kinds of resources 'flowing' from parent to child than there may be from child to parent. As Bulatao implied (Chapter 3), it may be more a case of a redefinition of 'value' than a case of redirection.

8.3 (iii) Fertility Interventions

The protocols of the ESCAP survey stressed that the research was concerned not just with fertility limitation, but with fertility behaviour as a much wider issue (see Appendix va). The ESCAP researchers therefore sought data pertaining to the process of fertility decision-making itself. A rationale implicit in the survey design was that some people, termed the "family of influence" played a particular role in at least attempting to influence a couple's fertility. Identifying these people, and the extent of their influence as perceived by the couple, was a task of the survey instrument. To this end, for each birth interval respondents were asked,

FQ86) Did anybody, a member of your family or friend, talk to
MQ78) you about having children?

Additional questions from the value of children module were asked also:

Q41 Before you had any, did either of your parents ever ask you whether you were going to have children?

Q42 Which parent(s) put the most pressure on you to have children?

Q43 Is the pressure you feel was put on you to have children very great, a lot, or slight?

Q62 Did your parents treat you differently after you had

children?

Q35J As result of having children, is pleasing your parents now more important, less important or the same as it was before you had children?

Apart from the difficulty respondents had in referencing any intervention to specific birth intervals, they expressed more serious problems related to the nature of the specific questions asked. Interviewers noted difficulties regarding sensitivity of respondents to unpleasant instances of intervention, but a particular concern in this thesis research is the subtlety of attempts at intervention made by people. The term 'intervention', as conceptualised by the designers of the survey, would seem inappropriate, since it would seem that most attempts at influencing family formation were indirect and sometimes only retrospectively perceived as judgemental by respondents.

Interviewers also reported difficulty in eliciting from respondents the form of intervention which occurred. The questions were interpreted as referring to actual, stated interventions of the nature of (for example), "I don't think you should have any more children" or "What about trying for a boy?" Such indirect influences as, for instance, "There's plenty of room for a cot in this room" or "It's a good idea for you to get qualified in your job so you'll have something to go back to when the kids start school" (both comments which might be made to recently-married, childless couples) were usually neglected by both interviewers and respondents. There was no scope either for recall of nonverbal influences, such as the eagerly expectant grandmother busily knitting baby clothes. These 'influences' were discussed informally. The value of children question attempted to discover any reinforcement of childbearing which might have occurred from grandparents, but many respondents did not find it easy to describe how their parents' attitudes might have changed towards them.

Table 8.2 ESCAP 'Family of Influence', Survey Results (Q 86/78).

Person(s) Intervening	% of Respondents who Reported Interventions (Aggregate for all Birth Intervals) Couples (n = 65	Husbands* n = 64	Wives* n = 76)
No intervention reported	15	40	37
Wife's mother only	11	0	4
Wife's parents (both)	48	14	45
	59	37	49
Husband's mother only	11	9	0
Husband's parents (both)	36	28	12
	47	37	12
Siblings	18	6	11
Other wife's kin	23	3	34
Other husband's kin	14	19	1
Total wife's kin	82	17	83
Total husband's kin	61	56	13
Nonkin only	6	11	0
Nonkin, with others	55	27	26
Doctor	13	8	4

* Includes respondents not currently married ; couple n exceeds husband n because some men did not report interventions.

Table 8.3 Responses to Questions Regarding Parental Pressure (Q 41-43)

Sources & Type of Pressure	% of Respondents Reporting Pressure	
	Male n=71	Female n=84
Nobody asked if they were going to have children	73	73
Both sets of parents asked	17	10
Wife's parents asked	1	6
Husband's parents asked	9	10
No pressure was felt from any parent	86	77
Slight pressure was felt	9	13
A lot of pressure was felt	1	5
Pressure was very great	3	0
Most pressure came from*:		
Husband's mother	7	11
Wife's mother	3	6
Both mothers equally	3	1
Wife's father (equally with wife's mother, above)	1	0
Grandmother	0	1
Husband's father	0	0
No response	0	3

* Some respondents cited more than one source of pressure.

The aggregated results shown in Tables 8.2 and 8.3 suggest that the greatest direct pressure, or attempt to influence, regarding childbearing came from the potential grandmothers. The wife was more likely to be the recipient of this than was her partner. However, any pressure exerted was not, generally, felt to be great, and it should be noted that frequency of reported intervention in Table 8.2 tells nothing about extent or impact of influence.

The data derived from responses to Q35J and Q62 (see p 232-3) represented an attempt to evaluate qualitative changes consequent to having children. It is of passing interest that just under half the women interviewed reported a change in the importance, for them, of pleasing their parents after they had had children, and that for both men and women more said it was now more important, rather than less important, to "please" their parents. No explanations for these changes were solicited, so reasons would be purely speculative. However, the responses cast an element of reciprocity on the changes in parental attitudes which were purported to have taken place for a third of the respondents.

Those respondents who reported that their parents had changed tended to characterise this change as "becoming closer", "showing us more respect", "treating me more like an adult", as in the following responses:

> They realise you're an equal (an) adult ... (female)
>
> (We're) more like equals now. (female)
>
> More respect and treated as another adult as opposed to 'child to be taught'. (male)

Men cited acknowledgment of the responsiblity they had assumed as a reason for this acknowledgment of their adult status, whereas for women it seemed that their motherhood tended to emphasise their independence from their parents, especially their fathers:

> They acknowledged the responsibility I was undertaking in many subtle ways. (male)
>
> They're more tolerant, not so bossy, (a) better relationship, treating me like an adult. (female)
>
> My father with some awe - he really thinks of me as his little girl. My mother with more respect ... for her this has made us closer. (female)
>
> (I) related to my father better. (female)

Grandchildren also provoked more interest in visiting, and increases in the frequency of visiting were noted several times. In almost all cases where some change was reported, this was viewed by the respondent as a positive change, ie, that having children had improved their relationship with their parents.

These data imply that children not only have a 'value' in ascribing adult status to their parents, at least in the eyes of the grandparents, but that as in nonwestern societies children facilitate some feeling of family solidarity. It would appear that in a real, practical sense, children might bring the generations together. In so doing they reinforce, and perhaps redefine, who 'is' family.

8.4 Summary

The ESCAP survey was employed as a means of identifying 'family' in the context of the transfer of goods and services (as indicators of obligation and responsibility) and in the context of fertility intervention (as an indicator of influence). The case studies revealed other dimensions of family interactions, augmenting rather than contradicting the survey data. Data supported family sociologists' definitions of emotional nucleation and, to a lesser extent, financial independence and self-sufficiency in daily affairs.

The purpose of this chapter has been to ask who, or what, is the family? From the negotiations carried out it can be concluded that the family is a group of people caring for each other in a particular way. Families are assumed to care; "Family" is caring. Certainly the interactions listed in the ESCAP questionnaire did occur between family members, but the act of doing them did not itself necessarily give significance. Of equal - perhaps greater - importance were the 'little things' people did for each other because they cared and because the person was important to them: sharing Christmas, calling in to see if someone is allright etc. These were regarded as important acts by discussion respondents.

Family is also understanding. It is suggested that this understanding and acceptance needs time to develop, which is why close friends were old friends, why siblings and parents were closer than any other relatives, why own kin were closer than kin-in-law, and why, to most people, mother was the closest person of all.

This restriction of family to, in most cases, parents and siblings (or adult children and siblings) explains why the survey resulted in so few responses in the interaction table. Pakehas did 'see' family as what a sociologist would term a "nuclear" family, but only when the 'wider' family (extended family) was considered did people themselves actually visualise the family in structural terms (the family tree)[18].

The findings of the survey do point to an understatement by previous sociologists and demographers of the role of nonkin in family support. The concept of community, implicit in studies of peasant agricultural societies, may need to be reintegrated into theories of wealth flow in the west. Nonkin were not reported as frequent intervenors in family formation in New Zealand. However, unexpected interventions from nonkin reported in more recent ESCAP reports for some Asian

countries[19] suggest that further investigation in New Zealand might also reveal a greater extent of, for instance, peer pressure or modelling. In New Zealand the survey data supported the view that those who influence (or, more accurately, attempt to influence) family formation are restricted to those identified as the so-called "family of interaction".

Most attempts at influencing fertility were directed at women; parents intervened on their own kin (rather than son/daughter-in-law) more often than did other people. It might be concluded, therefore, that children have a specific'value' to grandparents, as well as to parents. The New Zealand pakeha 'family' is a restricted one, comprizing, initially, parents, children and their siblings and later, when the children are adults, parents, children and grandchildren. Family, therefore, is defined by the death of grandparents and the birth of grandchildren. This literal passing of generations constitutes the flow of each family's own life cycle. The issue of continuity is taken up in Chapter 9.

The people who took part in the later discussions may not be typical New Zealanders, or even representative of the survey sample. They did have different ages, family sizes (children), sizes and distribution of families of origin, and religious, educational and occupational characteristics. But collectively they exhibited the dynamics of family. It does not seem unreasonable to conclude that their "families of obligation" and "families of influence" - defined by my perceptions of intensity and importance of interaction and affectional bonds - radiate out from some vertical (intergenerational) relationship within the biological, or quasi-biological, family. This relationship tended to emphasize females.

The relationship does not appear as a conventional matriarchy, but appears as a prime affectional bond which is reciprocal and which implies duty, obligation, trust, understanding, and above

all, caring. Such bonds, it is hypothesized, are those most likely to influence family formation, in terms of procreation and marriage, and in terms of socialisation of children. It is argued that it is in the context of these bonds, manifested in caring and intimacy, that the meaning (or value) of children is constructed and defined.

Notes to Chapter 8.

1. A useful overview of these debates, of some relevance to the present work, is D. H. J. Morgan's Social Theory and The Family. It is appropriate to note that Morgan saw his book not as "another textbook dealing with the sociology of the family but as a dissertation on sociology and the family". (p 6).

2. Family of orientation being the family a person is born into, family of procreation the family created by one's marriage and birth of children, affinal family the family one has married into, and family of gerontation the generationally-linked family of grandparents, parents and children (Sussman 1965: 74-75). Other examples of family 'definitions' emphasize different 'functions' attributed by researchers to kin groups: procreation, status placement, biological and emotional maintenance, economic functions, education and socialization, etc. (see, for example, Sussman 64-65; Browne 1979: 130; Koopman-Boyden 1983: 8). Koopman-Boyden (1975: 44-54) has also referred to families in New Zealand in terms of "structural dyads", identifying the main dyads as sexual (couple), parental (couple-child) and sibling (child-child).

3. This dichotomy is a generalization. Census data indicate a complex array of family 'types' (see Mowbray & Khan 1983; Johnstone 1983).

4. Notes on the Analysis of Fertility by Family Type 1978a.

5. For example, Thadani (1978: 56, n9) reported that in Austria, in 1763, households where the head was young (aged 18-27) were classified as "extended family households" in 60% of documented cases, whereas only 15% of households where heads were over 58 years were extended. These data suggest that an extended household formed on the marriage of a son, the household including one or other (or both) spouses' parents. However, the older generation (of grandparents), if they headed their own household, did not tend to share it with more than one other kin group. Whether or not the household is 'extended' would appear to depend upon the circumstances of achievement of 'headship', which is related to lifecycle stages.

6. Problems of definition of 'family' have also been addressed by demographers studying migration. (See, for example, Harbison 1981: 227-229). The present

discussion refers primarily to the study of fertility.

7. Both writers presented undisguised functionalist arguments for the 'rise' of the nuclear family. Stone argued that the 'nuclear' family is one characterized by "affective individualism", ie, egalitarian relationships between spouses, companionable marriages, independence of neighbours and kin, and child-orientation. Such a family type, he argued, arose out of a shift in religious and social 'values', towards individualism, a growth in the amount of 'emotional capital' available per individual. The concomitant changes in child care patterns resulted in a decline in child mortality, which reinforced the change. (See The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500 - 1800, 1977).

   Similarly, Caldwell has argued that the emergence of the 'nuclear' family according to Goode's theory, was a result of 'westernisation' 'causing' families to turn inwards and become "emotionally nucleated", leading to disengagement from dependence on kin and community, and an internal focus on spouse and children. In addition, Caldwell placed emphasis on economic independence and investment within the nuclear unit, and shifts in intergenerational wealth/service flows from child ---> parent, to parent ---> child. (See Chapter 4).

8. The researchers sought to distinguish a person's "wider network" from a subset "preferred network", and to correlate these to "paradigm variables" labelled "closure", "coordination" and "configuration", these being constructs representing "a family's view of its social environment" (p89). Despite reference to perception then, the research exercise was conceived of in positivistic of structural terms.

9. The researchers were to attempt to differentiate familial from socio-cultural' influences on family formation. Not surprizingly early pretests on maori subjects indicated that this was impractical, as well as being theoretically questionable (Douglas 1981: 11-12).

10. In later reports the term used is 'familism'.

11. An assumption not borne out by the survey.

12. For instance, in a Christchurch sample (n=249 over 65 year olds), only 8% said they "needed" financial help, but 23% said they needed company and 48% needed help with house maintenance.

13. This inability to oblige was exemplified by a maori respondent who, when asked if she had ever helped anyone with police, education or getting a job, replied: "... they wouldn't ask me, I left school at standard six, I'd be useless." (Douglas 1981: 18).

14. In the pakeha sample 20% of men and 11% of women volunteered no person in any kin category, compared to 5% and 3% respectively in the Maori sample. On the other hand, only 20% of pakehas reported more than 10 interactions with kin compared to 81% of maoris. Pakehas rarely mentioned cousins, nieces, nephews or grandparents, but among maori respondents all categories of kin received significant mention. (Cameron 1981: 4).

15. n=942 currently-married pakeha women.

16. In New Zealand some financial responsibility for old people was officially assumed by government in 1898 with the passing of the Old Age Pension Act. There is also some state assistance with housing, and the majority of old people live in the community. (Koopman-Boyman 1978).

17. 60% had had their families cared for by a relative from outside the household at the period of childbirth.

18. Several respondents discussed the "family tree" at length during informal interviews. But as a representation of extended family, the family tree was to do with origins and structural linkages, rather than day-to-day interaction or obligation. This is discussed further in Chapter 9.

19. Preliminary results of ESCAP surveys in Bangladesh, Thailand, Nepal and Sri Lanka reinforce the importance of nonkin, suggesting "that conventional theoretical frameworks employed to analyse fertility attitude formation may require reconsideration". (Third Study Director's Meeting, p9).

Chapter 9

CONTINUITY AND IMMORTALITY: CHILDREN FOR THE FUTURE.

9.1 Introduction

Families, as understood from the discussions referred to in Chapter 8, are expected to exist through time. The birth of children ensures this continuity. If a couple has no children their 'branch' of the family "tree" is said to have died. Regarded metaphorically, families are expected to be immortal.

Superficially however, immortality and continuity have not seemed important in western countries. In part, it is suggested, this conclusion is a reflection of the manner in which the concepts have been operationalized by researchers, with emphases on names, traditions, heirlooms or inherited wealth, rather than on what it is that these symbols refer to. On the basis of the conclusions reached in Chapter 8, however, it is hypothesized that immortality and continuity are important to pakeha New Zealanders, and that these are symbolized by the birth of children. It is suggested that questionnaire surveys may not be an adequate means of understanding everyday meanings of immortality and continuity; these meanings might be expressed rather differently in everyday interactions than they are in questionnaire responses.

In this chapter both formal and informal modes of investigation are employed to ask firstly, whether in New Zealand names, traditions and heirlooms are given to children as symbols of continuity; secondly, whether there are other expressions of immortality and continuity which might be more relevant to these people; and finally, whether, to these New Zealanders, children do represent "life after death" or personal immortality.

9.2 Crosscultural Differences: Research Anomaly or Respondent's Reality?

Researchers of the value of children in nonindustrial cultures have included in their questionnaire schedules various items relating to immortality and family continuity. In the Value of Children Crossnational Study (Arnold et al 1975) the major code categories for content analysis of volunteered responses specified the following subcategories within "Kin group benefits" (op cit: 47)[1]:

> Continuity of family name
> Continuity of family traditions
> Having future grandchildren
> Children as heirs, someone to inherit family wealth.

In the crosscultural study "continuity of family name" was the advantage category most frequently reported as a 'reason' for wanting children for all Korean and Taiwanese socio-economic groups, and was the first or second most frequently cited 'reason' for Thais. Among Hawaiian Filipinos, Japanese (except lower class) and caucasians this 'reason' was much less important. "Children as heirs ..." was cited by all Japanese groups, and "having future grandchildren" by middle class Koreans. These two categories were among the five most frequently cited reasons among any of the 21 socio-economic cultural groups. (op cit: 54-56). On a scale of 45 attitude items, continuity and tradition rated high scores of agreement (mean 6.15, out of 7) in Korea, Taiwan, Philippines and Thailand, but moderate to low scores (mean 4.73, out 7) in Japan and Hawaii.[2]

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1. Footnotes for Chapter 9 are placed at the end of the chapter, p 270.

Continuity of family name was the most frequently cited 'reason' why the respondent wanted a son for all 21 groups except the Japanese and the rural Filipinos (for whom this was a third-ranked 'reason'). None of the specified "kin group benefits" were cited as major reasons for wanting girls (op cit: 68-73).

Continuity of family traditions, and having future grandchildren were also cited as reasons for wanting sons by 16% and 9% (respectively) of urban middle class Koreans. Similar trends were apparent when respondents were asked why they wanted another child.

These findings from the crossnational study indicate that 'values' related to family continuity (as wealth, traditions or name) are considered to be more important attributes of children in nonindustrial and/or rural societies (eg Korea, Thailand) than in industrial urban societies (eg Hawaii, Japan), and that they are more likely to be volunteered by men than by women. Arnold et al observed,

> In the culture where this stress (on continuity of family name) was found to occur, it is of course the husband's family name that is continued.
> (op cit: 98).

However, the analysis overlooks the fact that even in some countries where continuity of family name was not stressed, it was also the husband's name which was inherited. The nature of the questionnaire items suggest that these 'values' are unimportant to American caucasians, and to Japanese, a conclusion contrary to Hoffman and Hoffman's statement, that

> ...'carrying on of the family name' or 'continuation of the family' is a reason for wanting children that comes up often in American studies ... as well as elsewhere.
> (1973: 48)

However, Hoffman and Hoffman also concluded that men were more

likely to express these values than were women (loc.cit). Bulatao's international comparisons yielded similar results (1979b: 46).

Bulatao (1979b) and Callan (1980, 1981, 1982) did not consider family continuity to be a very important 'value' of children among Australians. Neither did Richards (1978) elicit from her Australian respondents any voluntary comments which indicated that this was an important aspect of having children. However, when New Zealand respondents were presented with questionnaire items related to family continuity they gave an indication that these factors were not unimportant to them (Tables 9.1 and 9.2). Acknowledging that as with earlier surveys, some positive responses to such items might represent acquiescence more than positive agreement or perceived importance, it is relevant to look further, to everyday occurrences and discussions, to evaluate whether such "kin group benefits" as those described by Arnold et al are a practical component of people's experience of children.

9.3. Bloodlines and Family Names.

In the New Zealand survey, ideas of family continuity and personal immortality were each presented to respondents as single items(Table 9.1, 9.2). For the purpose of the present analysis talk about "bloodlines" as referring to personal or family continuity has been distinguished from biological talk about "bloodlines" (which is discussed in Chapter 12).

Respondents, like the researchers referred to earlier, referred to family traditions, names, heirlooms, even family 'blood', as if they, as 'things', were intrinsically meaningful or valuable. People in everyday life consider it is important for a particular heirloom, for instance, to "stay in the family." To everyday people there is a meaningful symbolic

Table 9.1 Children and Immortality

% responding to the statement "A person can feel that part of him/her lives on after death if he/she has children" (Q 49M).

Response	Male n=70	Female n=84	Total n=154
Strongly agree	32) 72	19) 67	25) 70
Slightly agree	40)	48)	45)
Slightly disagree	15) 27	11) 30	13) 29
Strongly disagree	12)	19)	16)
Don't know/No response	1	3	1

Table 9.2 Children and Family Continuity

% agreeing that "to make sure your family traditions and name live on" is/was for them a reason for having children (Q56/57L).

Response	Male n=70	Female n=84	Total n=154
A reason for having a first child.	49	18	32
A reason for having more than one child.	40	10	23

connection between 'heirloom' and family continuity. If such objects have a 'use', in functional terms, it is to keep the family together over time, and to identify (reify) family continuity.

Traditions and heirlooms are seldom recognised by everyday people as instruments for the social construction of family or continuity in such an explicit manner. Yet in a discussion about "old family recipes" and who could or should use them, one respondent (Janet) said,

> That's why we have children!

Janet implied that the recipes, <u>because</u> they are identified as "old family recipes", contain a 'need' for family: we have children, she implied, in order to pass on those parts of the past which are important to us as family members.

While individual members are located at a specific point <u>in</u> time, 'family' extends <u>through</u> time, from past to future. Heirlooms, rituals, and traditions are physical expressions of temporal continuity: if they are not passed on they lose their meaning as belonging 'to' the family.

Previous researchers have categorized these rituals, traditions and heirlooms as important in value of children studies because children were assumed, apparently, to provide a means of distributing them through time and at the same time ensuring their continuity <u>within</u> the family (see p 244). However, it might also be argued that children are given such traditions, <u>etc</u>. in order to identify the children as members of the family. Traditions, rituals, heirlooms <u>etc</u>. symbolize 'family'; they identify who 'belongs' and who are 'outsiders'.

The symbolic importance of heirlooms was apparent in an anecdote reported during the present research. A woman had told the researcher about the worry she had in understanding

her husband's decision to pass a 'family' heirloom to his adopted grandson, rather than to a younger, biological, grandson. The significance of her differentiation apparently was lost on the woman, who reported her worry to the adopted child's mother. The grandmother resolved her ambivalence in the statement,

> Well they're <u>really</u> both the same to us.

The outsider was accepted as family despite his (biological) difference; her husband symolized this in his endowment of the heirloom.

If one is assumed to have a biological (<u>ie</u>. genetic) link, then family continuity is accepted as obvious by everyday people. Adoption therefore produces particular problems in that 'continuity' cannot necessarily be asumed. However, in our culture the doubt is resolved by the assumption of a common name. Children who are adopted usually assume the name of their adoptive parents, thus leaving any prior identity behind. Names symbolize belonging and they also symbolize legitimacy - the name (surname, or 'family name') tells outsiders whose child a person 'is'. Because family name, and family 'blood' are assumed to go together, adoptive situations are inherently difficult for some people:

Janet : ...people often want to adopt girls before boys, because there's this funny twist, they don't want a child that isn't their blood to inherit...

Mat : To carry the family name they've actually got (to have) the blood, whereas the daughter that gets married, her name changes anyway.

Janet : Yes, thank you, that's what I was trying to say; I think that's quite prevalent, that effect.

Mr Sumner : They feel that if they had a child it might be a son and therefore he will carry ...

Janet : Yes, yes. I think it's commonly known that they can't get enough girls for adoption, whereas

there's little boys hanging fire you know.

It might be suggested that Janet's apparent confusion regarding what she was trying to say reflects a tension which might be peculiar to patrilineal societies - that is, that the child is of the mother, but is seen (socially) to 'belong' to the father's family. The "common knowledge" which Janet reported, that people who adopt prefer girls to boys (which is the opposite to preferences for biological children - see p 254) is not evident in New Zealand adoption practice, although there is some support for her idea in the literature: Sorosky et al concluded,

> Most adoptors prefer a girl because she can fill the void of a missing child but not have to carry on the family name, which would be difficult for grandparents to accept. (p 74, emph. added).

This is the symbolism of family continuity. The difficulty grandparents might have in 'making (family) sense' of an adoption was referred to by the Sumners (see p 259), and also in the reference above. As will be elaborated on in section 9.4 adults want grandchildren, and they want their "own". 'Own' is made manifest in the family name, and reinforced by the passing 'down' of heirlooms and rituals.

Names, like 'blood', are also important to the parents of the child. This was conveyed emphatically by Mr Browning when he discussed sterilization as a method of contraception. Despite his wife's determination that she wanted no more children (stated here, and elsewhere during the interview), Mr Browning did - but only to get a son:

Mrs Browning : ...I've always said that I didn't want it (sterilization) because if anything happened to one of the children I'd want another. But I don't know whether I would go ahead and have another. You know, you come to an age in life when you really don't want little children around any more, regardless of what the ...

Mr Browning (interrupting): If anything happened to the boy I'd want another one.

Mrs Browning : (We?) might too. I don't know...

Mr Browning : We've got two girls. (But) I'm the only male Browning. Now Bruce is the only one...

Interviewer : And you'd be prepared to risk having another girl in order to get a...?

Mr Browning : Yes, definitely.

Although several respondents said, during interviews, that they did not agree with the idea that one might have a child to replace one who had died (recognizing that each child was unique and, as such, irreplaceable), Mr Browning feared that if his son died, his "male line" also died. He was an only son and his child an only son. The "line" was manifested in the name - hence his reference to himself and his son as "male Brownings". But the name, in turn, only symbolizes 'family'. The "male line" was important to Mr Browning because in his experience - his biography - there were only 3 or 4 generations, but they would go no further in the future: his daughters, whose name he assumed would change (or at least their children's would) would be of another family.

However, it would be overly simplistic to suggest that men want sons only for the name that they will carry on. Men and women appear to want sons or daughters for specific gender-related companionship and activities, although the emphasis of men wanting sons seems to be much more readily articulated by and for men. Hoffman and Hoffman (p 48) referred to this finding, and respondents in the present survey also revealed it:

Interviewer : ...do men basically have a stronger feeling for a son than women have for either sex? In other words, if for argument's sake you had three daughters, do you think men would feel much more strongly about trying again for a son than a woman would?

Mr Sumner : I don't know. Your comment about how do males behave in a group, well I guess this is one

thing that's mentioned, that 'you've got five daughters, well, you know, what's wrong with you?'

Mat : Well in my case, my wife produced three sons in a row, and I don't think she was particularly overjoyed about it, and finally the fourth one was a daughter, and that is it, finished!

Interviewer : For you or for her?

Mat : Everybody! That was the end of the marriage - but that (girl?) was hers, bang, finished, that was it. My brother's the other way around, three daughters, one son, he would've liked a dozen sons. It doesn't matter about the daughters.

.....

The first child always receives a lot more interest from the parents and particularly if it's a son, he gets the works from the old man because he's just going to be the greatest, and the old man is into him all the time. I know. I was as guilty as anybody...

The tradition of male before female, and older before younger, appears to persist in New Zealand as pakeha 'cultural knowledge', although it might not necessarily be stated explictly as male primogeniture inheritance. When the tradition is challenged as in adoption situations, family members (especially grandparents) need to negotiate the social with the biological significance.

Names and traditions symbolize family continuity. They receive different expression by men and women. Perhaps because of their biological role, women appear to 'see' the child itself, rather than its name or blood, as something of their own making. Part of the making is social, and involves transmission of ideas, beliefs and ways of acting (especially gender-related activities like cooking), as well as of material goods, which identify the child as a member of its family. Men, on the other hand, appear to identify their sons, rather than children generally, as family - they talk about their son as "a

real Smith" or "a chip off the old block", ie as reflecting themselves as male family members. Men emphasise their son's inheritance of tangible 'things' - the family name, and material goods (heirlooms). Sons make real, in a social sense, the family as a 'male line'; they receive more paternal attention in a family than do daughters not just because they are boys, but because they are their father's sons.

9.4 Children for the Grandparents.

Parents expect to become grandparents. A mother of two teenage children (a boy and a girl) told me,

> Our kids don't realize how we are waiting to become a grandmother. It's so hard...and you can't even be sure they will get married and have children. It's pretty tough on us mothers, this waiting.

Even though intellectually this woman acknowledged her children might not have children, emotionally it was an expectation. The importance of the expectation of becoming grandparents was referred to by Sorosky et al (1978: 84) in terms of this assumption, and also in terms of the grandparents' own status:

> Parents smile admiringly when their youngsters speak about growing up, getting married and having babies themselves. Becoming grandparents and seeing the fruits of their labor is second only to becoming parents. There is a great deal of status and enormous pride attached to the list of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Children are providers of grandchildren. That is not to say that this is why people have children, ie, to give themselves granchildren, but rather, parents, in having children, give their parents grandchildren. Children provide, among other things, a sense of the future for the grandparents. In the reality of everyday life the past is given meaning in the

interaction of grandparents and children. This interaction was discussed during this research in terms of (a) attempted influence by parents on their children to have children, and (b) interaction between grandparents and granchildren.

As noted in Chapter 8, if anyone had made an overt attempt to influence a respondent in his/her family formation it was most likely to have been the respondent's parent. But it is likely that most parental influence is subtle, more in the nature of an assumption than a stipulation. Mrs Browning's mother, for instance, had made indirect comments like, "One day you'll be leaving work and then you'll find yourself sitting at home..." but, she said, parental pressure was "a general underlying feeling." To both Mr and Mrs Browning, having children was an inevitability conveyed by their parents:

Mrs Browning : It's what is expected of you, to have a family one day.

Mr Browning : My Mum always <u>knew</u> I'd have a family if it was at all possible . I couldn't say 'No' to that!

This was despite Mr Browning's previous comment,

> Well I don't see any reason why couples should have them (children) just because society says so, like 'couples always have kids so you've got kids'. I don't buy that one at all. If you don't want to have one, you don't have one, but it's got to be between the two of you (husband and wife).

Mr Browning expressed the conflict he felt in his own preferred action. On the one hand he was aware of the expectations of his own social network or influence group ("society"). On the other hand he justified his rejection of this expectation on the basis of <u>his</u> personal (as compared to "society's" collective) right. Yet at the practical level it was his wife and his mother who would determine his action. He could reject "society" but he could <u>not</u> reject ("say 'no' to") his mother's assumptions. Mrs Browning, however, suggested acquiescence to

those very societal pressures which Mr Browning claimed to reject.[3]

An expectation of parents for grandchildren was referred to several times during discussions, as the following conversation indicated:

Mrs Sumner : A young girl who has been married five years has said to me that her mother has said, 'Well, maybe now you will...'

Janet : And I've had mothers say to me about their young married daughters, 'Well they've been married 4 or 5 years and they've got the house nice, you know. I wonder when they're going to have a family.' It's not ... they're a bit nervous to say it straight out; they know they'd better not, but they'll say it to a friend.

Mrs Sumner : Yes, that's right.

Janet : Like 'I'm longing to be a grandmother' they say.

Interviewer : And are they all women that are saying it?

Janet : Yes!

Despite the emphasis usually being placed, by respondents, on mothers' expectations, some fathers were also reported to have expressed anxiety about prospective grandchildren. A feeling of imperative was again evident in Anne's story:

Anne : Actually, my father was recently at a social group and this man, in his fifties, was saying about his daughter, that she was already 29 and they still didn't have a family, and if she didn't hurry up he'd get in there and do it himself!

Mrs Sumner : He was obviously concerned!

Anne : He wanted grandchildren, and his children hadn't produced any!

In these separate discussions both men and women expressed a tension which they perceived between the couple's own

preferences, their parents' desires and society's expectations. Expressed parental desires appear to be perceived as imperatives, which are difficult to reject: Mr Browning "could not say 'no'" to his mother. Conversely, women referred to by Janet hesitated to express their desires to their daughters, perhaps because they sensed the perception of imperative that they would convey. But 'society' would understand the legitimacy of such expectations (daughter - or son - married the appropriate period of time), and so society's members, the friends who are not, as family, an intrinsically interested party, are told of the parental desires. As members of society, external to the family, they are assumed to hold similar expectations. They will at least understand that people could have such expectations. Because of social consensus parental desires are considered to be legitimate expectations.

'Society', because it is perceived as external, can be rejected in theory - as Mr Browning did. But family, parents or mothers cannot be ignored since they, as family, are 'involved'. The tension becomes explicit when one's own preference conflicts with parental desires and societal expectations. Practical resolution for the son and daughter might be to acquiesce to the parent (not 'society'), and for the parent to seek approval and understanding of their desire from 'society' (not the child). Few such rationalizations are available to those who choose not to have a child; there are no visible, legitimate, supports for their case.

While conflict and tension were deduced in the triadic relationships between parents, their adult children and society, an expectation of order was apparent in relationships within the family. Such order was distinct from, but contained within, any order imposed externally onto the family. Mrs Sumner had had several miscarriages before her first child was born, such that her parents "learned not to ask...":

Mrs Sumner : Well they knew. They were always told when something was happening, and then they were told it was unhappening, you see!

Interviewer : Do you think either of them would have expressed disappointment if you hadn't had children, for whatever reason?

Mrs Sumner : Yes, yes. My father would have been bitterly disappointed and he certainly was disturbed and upset that as the eldest daughter I didn't have the first grandchild, that my younger sister did. O.K. we started earlier, but he was disappointed.

Several senses of order were conveyed in this conversation.

Firstly the parents "were always told when something was happening", making them party to these events - ie, not external as 'society', but involved, as 'family'. It has been suggested[4] that one might define 'family' as being those with whom one might share one's personal secrets - like becoming pregnant (at least until pregnancy is physically obvious). Other friends or kin might be privy to such "secrets" but, in the case of childbearing, parents (potential grandparents) expect to be involved. Mr Cox, for instance, said that his father "got all upset" that he had not been told about Mrs Cox's first pregnancy "straight away." So when she became pregnant a second time, Mr Cox telephoned his father as soon as the pregnancy was confirmed. His father was "delighted with the good news." Knowing one is becoming a grandparent - even if not for the first time - appears to be regarded as a right. It is part of the order of generation.

Secondly, the involvement of Mrs Sumner's parents implied an expectation that grandchildren would be born, and that grandparents should be involved in this, as this would be the act of their becoming grandparents. Part of the tension discussed above perhaps arises from this frustration of personal incompetence: parents desire to become grandparents but they cannot do it themselves. It is done for them (hence

the extreme statement in Anne's story: "he'd get in there and do it himself"). Grandparents are socially made.

Thirdly, according to Mrs Sumner, her father not only expected to have grandchildren, but also expected a 'natural order' of grandchildren, that first child should have first grandchild. Mrs Sumner implied that upsetting this natural order of descent greatly concerned her father.

These comments from repondents further indicate that it is one's <u>own</u> parents who are involved in the childbearing - Mr Browning couldn't say "No" to <u>his</u> Mum, the man at the party was concerned about his daughter (not his daughter and son-in-law), Mrs Sumner's father was disappointed that <u>she</u> didn't have the first grandchild, and it was Mr Cox (not Mrs Cox) that informed his father of their second pregnancy. Mr Cox had informed <u>her</u> parents of the pregnancy.

It appears that parents are concerned with their own descendants, rather than that their children have children <u>per se</u>. When discussing the difficulties Mrs Sumner had in bearing a child, the question of adoption was raised:

Interviewer : How do you think your parents would consider that? Do you think parents set a big store on...

Mrs Sumner : ...bloodlines?...

Interviewer : ...seeing them...

Mrs Sumner : Yes, I'm sure that's the case, although obviously they'd accept it, and realize it's better to have a family than...

The Sumners saw "bloodlines' as the issue with adoption. Adopted children would be second best, although <u>intellectually</u> one realized it was better to have adopted children than none at all. Men and women may think differently about descendants. But clearly they want them, and they prefer their "own

bloodline" to adopted grandchildren. Perhaps women express their desire for grandchildren more overtly, and more frequently than men. Perhaps, because women talk to women about these things (birth is a uniquely female experience), and men (if they talk about it) talk to men, I as a female, had gained a one-sided perception of "eagerly expectant grandmothers" and disinterested grandfathers-to-be. These conversations indicate that men, like women, are far from disinterested in having grandchildren, although men's emphasis tends to be on the social manifestation of birth, rather that on birth as a biological occurrence.

We did not ask in the survey what grandparents meant to children, although in response to other questions respondents told us that they had more contact with their parents after grandchildren were born, and that there was more interest by grandparents in visiting "because of the children." In our conversations respondents mentioned that grandparents gave <u>time</u> to children, but they also mentioned the trust and respect each had for the other. During my discussions with the Sumners several different aspects of the grandparent/grandchild relationship were referred to:

Mrs Sumner : There's a generation thing, a respect for that older age. I think they <u>treat</u> children differently simply because they were brought up in a different age. They expect it, they get it. They also have time to talk to children in a different way. They've got <u>time</u>. Well, think of your (Mr Sumner's) father, explaining in a great deal of detail to one of ours, why ducks have webbed feet. Now to me it was a tremendously long piece of paraphenalia, and I certainly wouldn't have answered at length like he did. But my child listened. And there's that lovely little quotation, that grandparents are people who've got time...

Interviewer : So it doesn't really matter what it is that they're talking about to the children? It's that they have got time to spend...?

Mrs Sumner : They seem able to exclude the other things they are doing, and devote their whole interest to

the child.

Interviewer : Now do you think that's important to the child partly because parents are people who don't have time?

Mrs Sumner : Yes I do.

Interviewer : And is that something that's peculiar to this generation of parents?

Mrs Sumner : About my grandparents...there's something quite intangible...they did have time to talk, to listen...

Mr Sumner : I think it must be the time. I recall awakening up early in the morning when I went to stay with my grandparents, and my mother sitting up in bed and saying 'Where are you going?' and I'd say 'Grandpa' because Grandpa used to say 'Come into my bed. It's not too early!'

Mrs Sumner : Our children have said they've missed getting into bed with my parents - they've done it with Sam's but not with mine. There must be some sort of intangible bond between the generations. It must be related in some way to the respect that the parents have for those people, because you wouldn't allow them to be in that situation if you didn't have some respect for those people.

Interviewer : It's almost trust, in effect?

Mrs Sumner : Yes, I think that's got a lot to do with it.

Mr Sumner : Well they see the way you're reacting to your parents - their grandparents - and they see, well O.K., they're accepted, they're part of us. Grandparents tend to spend more time, partly because it's a bit of a novelty. They're not continually being badgered, so when they're asked they answer and parents perhaps tend to say, 'well ask me another time' or 'Can't you see I'm doing this?'.

In this discussion the Sumners referred to intimacy, yet they failed to differentiate this from "time". Grandparents were people who were looked up to, respected, and they said, were considered to be "older and wiser". "They treat children differently". But this was explained by virtue of time: grandparents, they said, can do the things they do because they

have the time to do them. Time, and energy, which parents spread over many activities, the perennial action of making social their status as parents, can be concentrated into specific action as grandparents focus on children in the family, rather than being parents in 'society'.

It is therefore consistent that the explanation for grandparent involvement was given as being the intermittent contact with children that grandparents have. Many grandparents have been heard to say, "I love to see them come and I love to see them go". Grandparents may want contact with their grandchildren <u>because</u> they are family, extensions of themselves. On the other hand the grandparents are old, often have fixed routines, and they get tired easily. Mrs Milne's father, for instance, found "noisy boisterous kids difficult." He could take "just a little of them, for a little time" (Mrs Milne). Similarly, some respondents commented that when an elderly person (usually, but not necessarily, a grandparent) lived in their house for some time, it was the relationship with the <u>children</u> which suffered. As Mrs Browing said, "there comes a time when you just don't <u>want</u> little children around all the time". The potential difficulty is resolved by short and frequent visists, or, as children get older and are less interested in spending time with their grandparents, in just knowing they are there:

Mrs Milne : They (grandparents) see them on and off, and we've got them there; but some of them (children) would have no contact.

Symbolic relationships might well be considered more important than actual interaction. While Mrs Milne explained, perhaps excused, her older children's lack of contact with their grandparents on the grounds of their mobility (compared to young children) and having "other things" to do, Mrs Sumner made deliberate efforts to ensure that her older children saw their grandparents, to the point of having them to stay specifically for this purpose:

Mrs Sumner : It's important to them both ways, for the children to be familiar with their grandparents, and for the grandparents to be familiar with them.

She placed considerable emphasis on the 'living' experience, sharing mealtimes, etc, rather than just having them in the same house. While death of the grandparent will terminate the living relationship, the symbolic relationship can be preserved so long as there is memory or recall of the experience.

This familiarity relates to the degrees of intimacy the Sumners mentioned earlier. Intrinsic to the idea of grandparent-parent-grandchild is an idea of familiarity which is perhaps unique among kin relationships. Parents usually have the most intimate relationships with children. This intimacy extends to physical intimacies to which no other kin would normally have a 'right' - sharing a bed. In 'normal' parent-child relationships such physical intimacy is exempt from sexual (incestuous) connotations. Grandparents appear to share this 'right.' Mr Sumner recalled his experience as a child getting into bed with his grandfather, and Mrs Sumner said of their own children sharing their grandparent's bed that "you wouldn't allow them to be in that situation if you didn't have some respect for those people."

"Those people" - grandparents - were trusted because their intimacy was legitimate. After all, they are the parent's parents. Following this line of argument, that the grandparent-grandchild relationship is intimate because of the familiarity involved in the two constituent relationships, ie grandparent-parent and parent-grandchild, one can also attribute importance to the emphasis placed on passing on family rituals or stories, allowing children to play with a parent's "favourite toy", telling tales of what the parent did as a child. Grandparents recount to their grandchildren anecdotes of the child's parent's childhood to which they are privy because of the parent-child relationship in the earlier

generation. In doing so, family continuity is ensured, 'family' lives on, and the unique grandparent-grandchild relationship is reinforced. The parent is thus lived through.

This familiarity, receiving expression in many ways, may be essential in establishing the order of generations, the order of family continuity. Inheritance of ritual, heirlooms, etc may be secondary to this, merely instrumental. As instruments, the rituals and tales would seem to be most important when the children are young and relationships and perceptions of family are being formed. Respondents indicated that this was the case: to some extent the closeness of the relationship with grandparents, in both frequency and emotional intensity, depended on the ages of the children, diminishing as the children grew older. The idealized picture of grandparent and child is of a young child. But intimacy has been established and as long as the relationship is known to be there, albeit in a somewhat passive mode, the order of family continuity is sustained.

9.5 Children for the Future: Immortality.

In The Mother Knot anthropologist Jane Lazzarre wrote about her son,

> And when I look into his eyes I see myself and my mother and feel that he is my continuance. (1976: 59).

The idea of immortality has been recognised as a 'motivating factor' by most Value of Children researchers, with survey results confirming continuance of family name, inheritance (of wealth and traditions), and having some part of one's life to live on after death as stated 'reasons' for having children (see Hoffman and Hoffman 1973: 48, Arnold et al, Ch 4).

If family trees represent where one has come from, then children and grandchildren represent where one is going to. Both 'fix' a person's place in time, in the temporal order of the world. At the same time, both represent, metaphorically, immortality.

In elaborating upon immortality in their scheme of nine basic values of children, Hoffman and Hoffman (loc. cit) wrote,

> Perhaps in response to the evanescent quality of life, many people feel the need to anchor themselves beyond their own lifetime. Having children may satisfy this need because it is a way of reproducing oneself, having one's characteristics reflected in another who will live longer, and thus attaining a kind of immortality.

People experience places in time. But for time to have span it is necessary for people to give it reference points. "Family trees" provide a particular set of such referents. Children provide another set. By our knowledge that children will live into our future (beyond ourselves) we experience in a sense our own future: future is brought into the present, just as family trees bring the past into the present. In this manner our lives assume for us a temporal quality, not only of what is (ourselves), but of what has been and what will be. Hoffman and Hoffman's statement (above) might be sustained if it is argued that immortality, like mortal life, is also evanescent, which is why people seek to reify it by leaving part of their selves behind (children, names, heirlooms, etc.), and anchoring immortality (rather than themselves) tangibly in time.

Mortality, the relationship between birth and death, is acknowledged in cultures by a variety of beliefs and practices, including the idea of reincarnation of a dead ancestor in a baby and the influence of a dead ancestor over maternal fertility (Kastenbaum 1974: 64), and the practice (including in

our own culture) of naming children after dead ancestors[5]. The paradox of such beliefs and practices is that death precedes life. Life-after-death is symbolized in a different way by the practice of a woman bearing a child by her brother-in-law "for" her dead, childless, husband. Such an idea of continuance is of the same kind as the belief in our culture that it is undesirable to die without descendants, but it is rather different from the idea that it is better that these be genetic (one's 'own'), rather than adopted, descendants. Yet both examples might be offered by reseachers as 'evidence' that immortality is a 'value' of children, and motivation for having them.

It appears unlikely that people of reproductive age in our culture at this time are preoccupied with their own physical mortality to the extent that it is a reason for reproducing.[6] None of the respondents in the present research volunteered "immortality" as a reason for having children. However, as recognized by the importance placed on the name carried by sons, the idea of continuity, especially family continuity, is much more pervasive. Family continuity extends back in time, as well as forward. Such backwards continuity is perceived to, or through, grandparents (Lazarre's mother). It is thus for grandparents, whose tangible past has gone and who thus focus on their own extension into the future, and whose own mortality is imminent, that procreation might be an urgent concern.[7]

However, the observable manifestations of immortality - name, traditions, creation of a new individual with specific physical or behavioural characteristics - do not convey the sense of immortality which (I believe) Lazarre referred to. Certainly, at one level of analysis one might argue that Lazarre saw, in her son's eyes, her own physical resemblance, and that of her mother, and hence her (their) immortality. But children might not look or behave like their parents; they might reject their parents' lifestyle, heirlooms, traditions or even name. What Lazzarre was referring to, it might be argued, is conveyed by a

different level of analysis which has a spiritual rather than material interpretation: her continuance was life itself.[8]

9.6 Summary

'Immortality', as an explanation of fertility, has been conceptualized by both researchers and their subjects as family name, traditions and inheritance (heirlooms and wealth as well as physical resemblance). These New Zealand subjects discussed inheritance in such terms. Names in particular appeared important, at least to some men. It has been argued by previous researchers that people have children so that such heirlooms or names (etc) can be passed on, kept "in the family". Such answers, however, are answers to the wrong questions. Families or children do not exist for heirlooms or names; names and heirlooms exist for families. They represent and define who is 'family'. By inheriting these symbols of family, children, ie one's own children, are seen to embody them. Children, rather than the names or goods they have inherited, are thereby reminders of one's own place in the temporal world, bearers of one's own inheritance from the past. They represent our immortality. That is, children themselves come to symbolize life and death.

Various research findings (from both previous studies and the present study) indicate that children, as bearers of symbolic immortality, are more urgently sought by grandparents (or potential grandparents) than parents. Respondents told how the arrival of a first grandchild "took the heat off" other siblings to have children. The first grandchild is the one most urgently wanted. Although all children are expected to produce grandchildren[9], some 'natural order' might also be important: first child is expected to produce first grandchild, and 'genetic' grandchildren might be felt, emotionally (not 'known', intellectually) to take precedence

over adopted grandchildren. The principal necessity, however, is to have a grandchild, and thereby become a grandparent.

Grandparents are closer to their own demise than are parents. Negotiations over the 'meaning' of "bloodlines", and hence ambivalence about adoption, and inheritance of family names, were focussed on by grandparents more so than by parents. However, the day-to-day relationship of grandparents and grandchildren takes on its special character as an expression of past relationships, between the grandparent and the child's parent. In these relationships, which are intimate and privileged ones in the kingroup context, grandparents 'carry' the past into the present.

The meaning of immortality which is so symbolized is life itself. Life is ephemeral. Names, heirlooms, traditions, etc. are used to anchor life in time, thereby reifying immortality and infinity, and ensuring continuance. As symbols, names, etc. are used by respondents to represent continuity. But of greater importance in everyday living are the relationships which express and reinforce continuity, viz the relationships and interactions between generations.

Respondents indicated that personal immortality was not their only, or even their main concern. Family continuity - as represented in 'family name' - was mentioned frequently, and this might be more important to men than women. Tensions within the immediate family (parents/grandparents), and between the family and 'society', 'out there', arose as a conflict between expectations and sanctioned behaviours (to have, or not to have, children). The expectation that grandparents are involved, as of right, in childbearing supports the contention that it is not just for the grandparents that children are wanted, but for the family: childbearing is perceived as a family concern (which legitimates grandparental intervention). For grandparents, as individuals, having children is an act of becoming themselves, but an act over which they have no direct

control - they can attempt only to influence. This lack of power over their own (desired) identity is a source of frustration to parents who can see no grandchildren forthcoming.

If it were to be conceptualized in terms of structure and action, family continuity would appear as a sequence of overlapping dyads of parent-child. The perception of each parent as a child of its parent establishes a sequence of family interactions which is continuous in time. Failure to produce grandchildren stops this family continuity: immortality, the spiritual abstraction of social order, is terminated, as expressed in the term used to refer to family "trees" where a "branch" of the family "died out".

A theme of family continuity reflects perceptions of the family which see it at any time as both part of and outside of 'society' as a collective. 'Family' places its members in time (as they are seen as members-in-common, identified by 'family name' etc.) and through time (identified as discrete, though overlapping, images). Concurrently, 'societal' expectations and sanctions are mediated by the family members (grandparents) if there is no consensus. 'Family' in this context is restricted, specifically, to the sequence of parent-child relationships, is self-perpetuating, and, as such, is the meaning of 'immortality'. To have no child, or no grandchild, is to disrupt temporal order and thereby bring about family extinction. In this view of the world a child is, actually as well as metaphorically, life after death - reified immortality.

Notes to Chapter 9.

1. The question asked "In your opinion, what are the main reasons why people around here want children?" (op.cit: 179). Examples of verbatim responses which were categorized as "Kin group benefits" are given on Pp 206-207 of Arnold et al. (See also Appendix II of this thesis).

2. Mean scores for combined countries (2 groups) were calculated from the three items of VOC scale 1 (op.cit: 57): it is important to have children so that the family traditions will live on; A man has a duty to have children to continue the family name; A person can feel that part of him lives on after death if he has children.

3. In already succumbing to his mother's imperative, however, it is also possible that Mr Browning could now afford to claim to reject "society's" pressures, since these at least concurred with his mother.

4. Dr T. C. Palakshappa, pers. comm. - Seminar, University of Waikato, 25 September 1981.

5. The influence of religious or philosophical beliefs on such practices has been illustrated in Coulibay's discussion of the fertility of the Upper Volta people (1978). These people believed that after death the individual becomes a kind of anonymous, nomadic spirit. This prospect is frightening. The only way to avoid it is to remain in the memory of one's children or relatives who have known one when alive. Furthermore, children not only ensure against anonymity after death, but by reinforcing the "vital force" of the clan ensure that it also will be protected against anonymity (pl01-103).

6. This was acknowledged by Kastenbaum, who had hypothesized that "we fear death and that is why we reproduce" (p 63, emph. added). There is little direct evidence to support his hypothesis - there are ways of living on after death other than by reproducing children. On the other hand, some childless people claim that an influence on their decision to have no children is their own mortality - specifically fear of nuclear holocaust, or less dramatic effects of pollution.

7. It is not uncommon to hear an adult lament for the lost

opportunity to "inherit his/her past" which is gone forever once grandparents have died.

8. Reference to "eyes" is therefore not coincidental, since to many people one's life (aliveness) or lifelessness is "seen" in one's eyes.

9. For an elaboration of this theme as it affects those who elect not to have children, see Chapter 11.

"The idealised picture of grandparent and child is of a young child."

(pg 264)

Chapter 10

WHY CHILDREN?: THE EXPERIENCE OF PARENTHOOD.

"... well you're a parent, so you miss out".
- Lisa, aged 9.

10.1 Introduction

Children may be given social meaning as temporal extensions of their parents: they embody or reify their parents' immortality. As parents, children also provide the connection between the past (symbolized by grandparents) and the future (symbolized by grandchildren). For parents to become grandparents, their children must become parents. These 'generations' are the expected and perceived order of 'family'.

But what is a parent? By the biological acts of reproduction and nurture most adults in New Zealand become parents. That is, most adults in New Zealand both beget and rear children. Some do not bear the children they rear, but both groups are termed 'parents'. Others, however, do not rear the children they beget. If given parental status at all, their labels are qualified, eg, "biological" mother, or "putative" father.

This chapter is concerned with becoming and being a parent. Most fertility research has focussed on people who are parents; fertility studies on non-parents are relatively recent[1]. Value

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1. Footnotes for Chapter 10 are placed at the end of the chapter, p 319.

of children research has been specified as investigations of value of children to parents (Hoffman and Hoffman 1973), a specification which reflects an ideological stance of the researchers.

All parents have, or have had, children. The issue of this chapter is to what extent, or in what way, the 'value' or meaning of children lies in the very act of conferring the status of 'parent' on people who thereby become 'mothers' and 'fathers'. This chapter is not concerned with the reproductive act of becoming a parent, which is discussed in Chapter 12, but with the social acts of being a parent, the social meaning of parenthood.

To be a parent one must 'rear' a child. 'Rearing' is common language for the processes some sociologists refer to as 'socialization'. Each term has a specific imagery. 'Socialization', as used in much of the literature, is a mechanical term implying moulding and shaping a child, filling it with knowledge of how to behave in the world. 'Rearing' is synonymous with the phrase "bringing up"; it implies a development of the child to a 'higher' level, from helpless dependent baby to competent independent adult. The notion implies parental feeding and nurturing, influence, guidance, even control. The 'end result' is the parents' product; reproduction is social, as well as biological. In this chapter 'socialization' refers to a process of interaction, in which the child is an actor as much as is its parent. In the context of such generalities one might also begin to address the question, why are children the chosen objects with which a relationship has to be created[2].

10.2 'Being' a Parent is 'Having' a Child

When this research was planned its 'instrument' consisted of

questionnaire items cast in the economic cost/benefit idiom. These items referred to specific attributes of having children, attributes categorized as positive or negative by the researcher. Thus questions 56-59[3] were based on assumptions that the enjoyment of a baby was, by definition, a positive attribute but also that cost in time, energy or money was a negative attribute (where, as 'conspicuous consumption', they might be perceived positively). Some attributes however, such as the experience of pregnancy, were presented as both positive and negative aspects of having children.

These items were thus conceptualized in the form of several different attributes of children which were in addition to the positive/negative characterization:

> intrinsic 'values' of children (that they are "enjoyable", for instance, which need be no more than perception of a somewhat passive state),
>
> characteristics which implied interaction with the parent ("companionship"; help in old age),
>
> characteristics reflecting subjection to parental action ("responsibility", or the chore of looking after a family),
>
> characteristics which the child, by its action or mere existence, imposed on the parent (gaining 'status' in the community).

An alternative way of therorizing about these characteristics might be to distinguish passive from active or interactive attributes, that is, those which are present because children exist, and those which derive from interaction with their parents. The latter, however, still present the child as subject of or subject to the parent's action. Only in the reference to 'status' is the parent's <u>own</u> subjective state implied. The perceptions remain those of the researcher.

A third approach is to remove the concept of 'attributes', as appendages and to consider processes pertaining to getting a

child, and to having a child. Curiously, people in common speech refer to 'getting' a child as "having" a child. For research purposes, however, the distinction should be made. Such a distinction forms the subject matter of this chapter, viz, one can be a parent only if one has a child. A unique characteristic of children is that they make those who bear and/or care for them 'parents'. Only a child can make an adult a parent.

The items in questions 56-59 about what it means to have children reflect a very limited view of parenting. Certainly, if - as 62% of respondents did - one said one would have a child for the fun and companionship of children, it might indicate some prior social interaction whereby the respondent had discovered these attributes of children. But it might also be based on post facto knowledge of what interacting with children is like, or of 'socially acceptable' reasons for having children. Admittedly, the 'result', that more men than women cited enjoyment of a baby as reasons for having a child, is consistent with data from other similar studies (eg Richards' Australian data, 1978), but it is a fallacy to cite such congruence as grounds for generality.

Greater insight might be gained from 'negative' results. For instance only 2% cited "to gain status in the community" as a reason for having a child. It seems quite likely that this response reflected, in part, the respondents' interpretation of the word 'status', as specifically 'prestige', which to them is not a very laudable 'reason' for doing anything. Perhaps more revealing was the conclusion that for 78% of respondents (73% female, 85% male) the experience of pregnancy was not a reason for having a child, while for 21% (19% female, 24% male) the unpleasantness of pregnancy would be a reason for limiting the number of children they had. There is the likelihood that the experience of 'getting' a child (becoming a parent), for most people, is not a reason for "having" a child (being a parent).

Table 10.1a Reasons For Having Children (Q56, 57) (% of respondents agreeing with stated reason).

ITEMS	Reason for having first child			Reason for having more than 1 child		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
(n =	70	84	154	70	84	154)
A. To gain companionship and fun from children	70	56	62	71	63	67
B. To gain status in the community	1	2	2	1	0	1
C. To have help in running the house or business/farm	3	0	1	3	0	1
D. To provide security in old age	7	5	6	6	2	4
E. To see God's blessing on your marriage	19	9	14	14	11	12
F. To make you feel fulfilled as a man/woman	31	32	32	19	9	14
G. To keep (your wife) occupied	4	1	3	3	0	1
H. To help make NZ strong	6	6	6	6	4	5
I. To have the enjoyment of looking after a baby	47	58	53	33	59	47
J. To have the experience of being pregnant (your wife being pregnant)	15	27	22	10	17	14
K. To make a strong marriage bond	61	29	43	47	21	33
L. To make sure your family traditions and name live on	49	18	32	40	10	23

Table 10.1b Reasons For Not Having Children (Q58, 59) (% of respondents agreeing with stated reason).

ITEMS	Reason for having no child			Reason for limiting no. of children		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
M. The amount of energy children need	7	7	7	20	34	28
N. Your ability to have time for yourself (and your husband/wife)	31	29	30	44	26	34
O. The chore of looking after children	17	13	15	36	29	32
P. The amount of money available for you as a couple	39	19	28	49	70	60
Q. The stress and strain placed on your marriage	21	20	21	44	36	40
R. Crowding in your home	9	8	8	33	40	37
S. *The unpleasantness of (your wife) being pregnant	9	8	8	24	19	21
T. The importance of your freedom to do the things you want to do	33	29	31	31	45	39
U. The responsibility of looking after a family	20	19	19	20	31	26
V. *Your ability (your wife's ability) to have a career	24	18	21	24	23	23

* refers to wife.

Summarizing these responses (Table 10.1a, 10.1b) it would appear that reasons stated by the researcher for having a child, with which respondents were in agreement derive from intrinsic characteristics of children or babies, but that reasons against having any children derive from the costs to the couple rather than individual parents - particularly costs of time and money[4]. One can, from these responses, draw some conclusions about what it means to have children: they give fun, companionship and enjoyment, they use up time, energy and money, they are a chore and a responsibility. None of these characteristics is a 'new' discovery. Little weight, necessarily can be placed on them as 'reasons' for family formation, although undoubtedly they are advanced as responses considered acceptable to a research interviewer.

In response to an open-ended question (Q73), the largest proportion of women (31%) and men (43%) said that they did not feel they had changed at all in their thoughts and feelings about children since they were married and had children. For those who had changed, the most frequently cited change was an awareness of the responsibility of children and of how demanding, difficult or time-consuming they were. Women had changed more than men in this respect, and several indicated that before they had had children of their own they had rather romantic notions of what children and motherhood involved. More than one woman said that if she had known then what she knew now, she might not have had any. Men on the other hand, tended to find children more rewarding than they had envisaged. Several men said they had become more mature, patient or tolerant as a result of having children. Other changes cited by 4% or more of respondents are documented in Table 10.2. The wide range of responses suggests that time, marriage, and the experience of children bring many changes. Couples did volunteer the conventional 'costs' and 'benefits' of children such as time and effort, but they also volunteered abstract notions which have previously been given little more than passing consideration - eg tolerance, maturity, sensitivity and

Table 10.2 The Effect of Time and Experience on Attitudes to Children (% giving response).

Stated Attitude Changes	Men (n = 70	Women 84	Total 154)
No response, don't know	2.9	3.6	3.2
No changes	42.8	30.9	36.4
Children are more time-consuming, more difficult than expected ; wasn't aware of responsibility	12.8	22.6	18.2
Other negative attitudes to children	2.9	7.0	5.2
Children are more rewarding, more fun than expected	11.4	7.0	9.1
Other positive attitudes to children	14.3	11.9	13.0
Have become more tolerant, sensitive, patient	11.4	7.0	9.1
Have become more maternal, more feeling for children	2.9	11.9	7.8
Realize children are individuals, each is different	7.1	4.8	5.8
Have greater intellectual interest in children now	2.9	8.3	5.8
More mature, greater sense of responsibility now	5.7	3.6	4.5
Other changes (less than 4% of respondents)	14.2	19.1	16.7

recognition of individuality. There is apparently a qualitative, personal aspect to parenting.

Coupled to this qualitative component was the recognition that children affect a man and woman's relationship with each other, and with other people. This requires that the research focus is shifted from being on attributes of children per se to being on interaction. In particular one might consider the changes which occur in the interactions between husband and wife when they become a couple who are (also) mum and dad. A more adequate elaboration of 'value' of children might be made using these foci as analytic tools, than when 'value' is analysed as intrinsic attributes or appendages.

10.3 "What's it like...?

All interview respondents were asked what it means (would mean) to have a child, in the context of what they might tell someone who asked them "What's it like to have a child?" Some of these responses are referred to in other chapters. The responses presented here reflect what it means to the respondent as a parent. The experiences of these parents are conveyed in their own words. The significance of the reports of these experiences is perceived (by the researcher) in the context of the social construction of parenthood.

When a person has a child, whether by birth or adoption, that person's social identity changes from man/woman, husband/wife, etc, to also include mother/father. But identities do not emerge as ready-made packages which arrive with the baby. Identities are constructed by interaction with others, mother and father with each other and parent(s) with the world, both before and after a birth, as well as by interaction with the child.

In various ways, having a child has been expressed as a rite de passage. The Learys, for instance, referred to the

"shout" for the new father (see also Chapter 12: becoming "an adult" or "whole as a woman", etc). Looking forward, anticipatory parents appear to focus their attention almost solely on the birth and the baby. During this research a Parents' Centre tutor commented that is was very difficult to get pregnant women and their husbands to think beyond the birth. Mrs Leary, mother of eight children, supported this view, but 'made sense' of it not by referring to any milestone in her own life (or that of her husband) but by referring to concern for the baby's well-being. This emphasis might be due, in part, to the medicalization of birth, and knowledge of physical risk or possible abnormality.

Mrs Leary : When you're pregnant all you're thinking is, 'I'm going to produce this healthy baby that will be well enough to look after itself.'

Mr Leary : You don't think twenty years ahead.

Mrs Leary : I don't think you should. Gosh, if you did you'd be around the twist! You'd be completely round the twist if you had any idea of what was in front of you these days (laughing).

Yet self is involved: ignoring the difficulties of parenthood which lay ahead could be construed as self-protection. To go on having babies in the light of such knowledge would not 'make much sense'. Baby-care is particularly time-intensive, often stressful, and most importantly, lacking tangible rewards from the baby. Respondents referred to baby-care as being for young parents - older parents find it too difficult. Time, and perhaps the experience of several babies, diminishes any glamour or romance. Looking back, parents sometimes talked about baby-care as a positive experience, but not something they would want to repeat:

Mrs Sumner : ... I did in honesty say yesterday at kindergarten that I'm pleased I'm passed the stage where I've got to rock one in the pushchair while I eat my lunch, which so many were doing, or they had one under their arm and a bottle in one hand. I said I'm now enjoying being a mother, with one child sort of outside,

> and someone sort of said, 'Oh, oh well I really quite enjoy it' and I said, 'I guess probably (it's) because I've been through a number...'

"That stage", referred to by Mrs Sumner, appeared to have served its purpose. Once she had established that she had become a mother, she could now enjoy being a mother.

These reflections on babycare indicated the process by which one begins to become a parent. Celebrations of the baby's birth announce a new (biological) status. But identity, to be persistant, has to be created socially. In our culture a parent is parent to one's 'own' (whether born or adopted) children. 'Ownership' appears to be important to parents for its own sake, but parents themselves may find it difficult to explain. They are sometimes bemused that they are not keen on children "generally", but "one's own are different". 'Ownership' both combines and distinguishes the biological and the social. As discussed in Chapter 11, ambivalence about adoption relates to the children being "not your own." Yet if adoptive parenthood is accepted as legitimate - as it was even by parents who described adopted children as "not your own" - the children are 'own' children. The contradiction relating to children appears to be resolved by synthesizing the biological and the social - they are your own but not you own - within the identity of parent. Mrs Milne's comments reflected this synthesis:

Interviewer : Is there something, or what is the something, that makes one's own children special?

Mrs Milne : For us, just the fact that they are your children. I couldn't answer for the mother of an adopted child, a person who can't have a child of her own. I would think (one) must put adopted children into that same thing.

Interviewer : So you're saying it's not just a physical thing, is that right?

Mrs Milne : Oh it must be a physical thing, but a mother who can't have a child physically herself must have

> some extra mental attitude where she can accept that child as if it were exactly her own, because I really think that's what true adoptive parents do.

Importance of 'own' children tends to be referred to in the context of unique relationships between parents and a particular child. Uniqueness of the individuals and of the relationship between them is what makes each <u>family</u> unique. The Brownings discussed the importance of even minor happenings:

Mrs Browning : That's right. Sometimes when they're small, something will only happen once, and if you're not there on the spot to see it it's never the same if someone tells you.

Mr Browning : It's like having a family photo album.

Mrs Browning : You've got to have your camera ready all the time to catch every little...

Mr Browning : You'd miss a lot of them, wouldn't you? (laughs)

Acknowledging the personal, unique nature of such family interactions does not, however, contradict the <u>social</u> importance of them. Emphasis on 'own' children and discussion of "other people's children" indicate recognition, by parents, that others 'out there' are also, in their own unique, personal ways, 'being' parents. Awareness that they were but one of a much more general, socially constructed, category of 'parents' led some respondents to express concern for those who, by <u>not</u> being parents, were excluded.

Interviewer : Do you think that she, considering the fact that she hasn't had children because of her ill health, do you think that from your view she's missed out on a lot?

Mrs Leary : Yes, and she does too, doesn't she?

Mr Leary : Yes.

Interviewer : What sorts of things?

Mrs Leary : Yes ... like taking the kids to football on a Sunday or Saturday. He would pick you (Mr Leary) up and you'd go off to football with three of the boys. But they were not his kids, they were nephews ...

In going to football, with one's own children, a parent is exerting and creating his/her identity as a parent in the wider, social (cultural) context. Mr Sumner discussed such action in terms of "extending the (his) personality" by exposing him to new experiences. But in as much as those experiences are social experiences the parent as a social being, outside of his/her family situation, is also being created. He is doing these things with other parents.

Mr Sumner : They do extend you. You're in situations that you wouldn't otherwise be in; you get involved in helping with cubs or whatever; they say 'Dad will you take me to so and so' or 'Dad will you come and do this' and whereas without them you'd be, well, doing something else shall we say. So you do get involved in so many other things and I think this extends the personality.

To cope with the nonparent, who is excluded from the social generality, parents (members) might resort to various, somewhat devious, ploys.

Mrs Sumner : I think if it's somebody that has wished to have children, but hasn't, you tend to be protective about saying the good things. ... So you say, 'Oh wouldn't it be nice if they'd only shut up for a day!'

Interviewer : So you're saying to them 'You're lucky?'

Mrs Sumner : Yes. That's not the way you feel, but you're saying something that will be acceptable for them to hear.

The 'plight' of the childless, as deviants or non-members, is discussed in Chapter 11.

The social creation, or identification, of parent is continual.

As long as they both remain alive, child and parent maintain, at least for each other, those identities. Just as every person is somebody's child, so also every child has or has had, somewhere, sometime, a parent.

Being a parent, as the verb implies, means action. As parent to someone, the parent - as well as the researcher - is aware that parenting is interaction. However, children and parents are both part of a wider scene which includes, in particular, the generality of 'parents' and peers. Nurturing and caring for a child are minimal, biological, requirements of parents. To be effective (parents in action, as well as in fact), parents are also expected to 'rear' their child. 'Rearing' involves a contradiction. Children are 'reared' as if this influence, as a mechanical moulding and shaping, is for life. Early dependence is the means of achieving later independence. Parents believe in the permanence, in time, of their influence. At the same time, however, they know that any enduring influence will be continually tested, rejected or compromised by the child's (and perhaps, also their own) interaction with others. Time is thus a critical dimension to the continuation of parent-child effect after specific interactions have ceased. Mr and Mrs Milne discussed the dilemmas parents face as their children grow up, dilemmas which might be interpreted as threatening to their parental identity:

Mr Milne : I think if you're sure about what you believe and you make it clear to them, they at least know that you've got an opinion of your own and even though they mightn't agree with it they're going to respect that opinion as long as you're consistent with it.

Mrs Milne : We hope they'll respect it. It's a question of how long they'll respect it for, and this is where there's all the pressure of their peer group coming through, and a big thing I think depends on their friends at a particular time. We've noticed this with one of our children. If she had what we'd consider a fairly decent group of friends where they're out on the streets all hours of the night and the parents don't care what they do, there's been the fighting against

> the restrictions which she has to have on her. ... These types of pressures, morality, it could lead into the drug field, doesn't happen with all teenagers ... I think the whole pattern of children growing up, it's, if you have children for a certain time, they're at home, and they naturally move to a different phase of their life and your life changes and if you're a well adjusted person it's just part of life and living, and I don't know that ... (there are) any syndromes or anything like that.
> ... The only thing I would hope, if and when they did decide to leave, that they would be mature and what we'd taught them would carry them over a period of experiencing living on their own, especially if they've had a fairly confined upbringing that they are going to be able to cope and they'll find their own values ... The longer there can be some influence from home the better - 15 or 16 is too young.

The Milnes referred to "the pressure of their peer group" and other parents who "don't care what they do". Without imputing any causal connotations to it, they recognized that as their children's lives changed so also did the parents' lives. But the changes brought with them specific mental tensions, not least being the possibility of rejection by the child. The ultimate 'test' to being a parent is to continue to be a parent - love, support, care about the child - even in the face of rejection. In our culture 'wayward' children are not, with social approval, rejected by parents. Persisting as a parent is an ideal which parents know is expected of them, by their children, by their peers, and in some cases formally, by government officials. Not unexpectedly, parents therefore expect this loyalty from themselves, because if they failed, they would cease to 'be' (socially) parents. Mrs Sumner elaborated on these tensions in the following manner:

Mrs Sumner : ... because children are honest .... they're impulsive, they don't sort of plot and plan - well OK some children do, but generally they don't and in some ways it takes away from you, it strips you of your pride in yourself often, but by the same token the reverse happens, in that you prove yourself as a person.

Interviewer : What sorts of things would you quote that you would hope they (your children) would do for you when they're adults? ... Do you have any specific thoughts that you hope they would do, or even about things that you hope that they wouldn't do?

Mrs Sumner : Probably moral things, for myself. I think the sorts of things with the children that really upset me more than anything else, is telling me one thing then doing something else, being deceitful, dishonest. Well OK, I realise that every child will either go this way or that way, but I hope that they've got enough love for me, and I've got enough love for them, that they will be able to tell me when they have gone off the rails. And I will be loving enough and forgiving enough to never exclude them and that they still will want to come to me for, probably, what will be only emotional support.

The honesty of children, the lack of illusions, meant that children saw their parent as he/she is - by their honesty the parent "proved" him/herself "as a person". By contrast, therefore, the child's dishonesty suggested they were not treating the parent as a parent, but as something else. And because she would not then be herself, as parent, Mrs sumner had to "hope that they've got enough love for me, and I've got enough love for them". Love could no longer be assumed, as the relationship was something less than it had been. It is thus that in a dialectical fashion the being of a parent has to be recreated (continually), and it cannot be recreated by one party alone. As a social creation, a parent is 'made' by interaction of parent and child, which is ascribed meaning by the actors by reference to the context of the interactions and their definition of the situation. While dependent on the relationship for self-identity, parents at one and the same time assert their own individual identity, yet, also 'see' their children as their own creation:

Mr Milne : At least they know that you've got an opinion of your own.

Respondents told with pride and enthusiasm how they saw, or

were expected (by peers) to see 'themselves' in their children. Even in apparently independent actions the children were seen in the context of interaction with parents. Mrs Sumner referred to this at both an abstract, ideal level - "this little replica" - and at an experiential, interactional level - "children imitate yourself, (but also) creating something new".

Mrs Sumner : ... this offspring is partly you, and even in an adopted situation this must happen because of the copying, and suddenly here's this little replica that's half you and half your spouse and ... suddenly, there is this thing and you think, 'Yes, I've had a hand in creating that' and there is a tremendous feeling of wellbeing about that very often. ... There's something so fascinating about seeing children imitate yourself,or creating something new that you would have never dreamed of them doing.

Some respondents were less specific, referring in vague, occasionally romantic, terms to an ideal relationship. As Mrs Leary said, parents are "supposed" to see the resemblances between themselves and their children. In Mrs Leary's case, the expectation was confused:

> I'm supposed to see that she's like (husband), but I don't! His mother used to say this to me, that fathers love their daughters, usually, because they remind them of their wives. There are certain things about the daughter that they see in their wives and vice versa.

It is perhaps not coincidental that it was "his mother" who "saw" this resemblance, but of greater significance is the reference to any person outside the parent/child relationships, who by their expectations, reinforced the 'meaning' of parent.

The 'love affair' between father, mother and daughter had a romantic parallel in the imagery of motherhood which Mrs Sumner described:

> It's the most beautiful thing, when your little child looks up at you with their eyes, and says 'Ohhh Mummy!' You can't tell somebody who's wishing to have children

that sort of thing.

By such interaction children reinforce for parents the parental role. Respondents agreed that their children 'did' something special to them, but they had difficulty articulating this. Mr Sumner asked,

> How do you tell a person that they knock the edges off you? Puts you into a perspective ...

For Mrs Milne, having children, being a parent, "is just your whole outlook on life." That "outlook on life" does not arise unaided. It is negotiated around the conflicts and ambivalences of childrearing. Parents, as already mentioned, find it difficult to talk about the good <u>feelings</u> of being a parent; they themselves acknowledged that they found it "easier" or "kinder" to talk about the trivial or difficult aspects of childcare. The manner in which such talk might present a confused image of 'parent' was indicated by the Oldes. They had no children and their 'experience' was thus secondhand, by observation and through talk:

Mr Olde : We have sort of seen the extreme. We've been to people's homes, our friends' homes, where they have a child or children. Alright, maybe it's the time that we were there, but everything was on a nice even keel, everybody clicks together, everybody fits in, and they have time to talk to the parent and the parent has time to talk to the child. But on the other hand, if we go to our next door neighbours, I don't know ...

Mrs Olde : You see all types ...

Mr Olde : From that angle we hear a mother who literally screams at a child ...

Mrs Olde : ... and hates him ...

Mr Olde : ... and hates his daughter, he hates her something terrible. And she said the other day, 'Don't have kids', or she was looking after a baby and the baby got on her nerves so much that she could have actually strangled it.

As several respondents indicated, being a parent is an experiential thing - you have to do it to understand what it means. It is not only difficult to 'make' somebody understand the good things about having children; it is also difficult to make somebody understand the difficulties and frustrations. Current media focus on child abuse in New Zealand has emphasized that any parent can be 'pushed too far' by a difficult child. It is not necessarily a contradiction to say that the parent who batters, or screams at, his/her child also loves that child. Yet these are the sorts of conflicts and apparent contradictions which parents have to negotiate daily. Ambivalence is an everyday experience. Negotiations are made not just with the child, or between mother and father, but also with members of each individual's social network. Because the interactions are unique the negotiations are also unique, individually, though they are patterned on a basis of cultural expectancy. Mrs Olde, assessing the contradictory 'images' of parent which she experienced, concluded,

> ... you (husband) and I personally think ... that we can't gauge what our children are going to be like because they are our children. ... and I think that how your kids are going to turn out is up to you.

It is not just how the 'kids' turn out which is up to the parents, but how the parents 'turn out' is also up to the parents, and the children. One cannot 'be' a parent without children; but more than that, children and their interactions, and how those interactions are perceived and reacted to by peers, actually and continually 'make' parents. The observation, "she's a credit to her mother" identifies both roles and their interdependence[5]. To return to the question posed at the beginning of this section, "to have a child" is "to be a parent", not as a biological act, but by social interaction, as a social construction.

"It's the most beautiful thing, when
your little child looks up at you
with their eyes..."

(pg 289)

10.4 Husbands and Wives, Fathers and Mothers.

Having children was expected by the researcher to involve at least three important relationship changes: the change between marriage partners as their structural or interactional family unit is transformed from a dyad to a triad; the assumption of the over-riding mantle of 'mother' or 'father' on one's adult social status; and a change in relationship with one's own parents. Survey respondents were questioned about the "effect" of children on the relationships between spouses generally (Q 63) and the effect of their children on their relationship with their own parents (Q 62). They were also asked about their current attitudes to children and parenting (Q 70).

Despite an apparent belief, by 72% of respondents, that children are not necessary to establish or legitimize a marriage (Q 61), 60% of people (but more men, 71%, than women, 49%) said that children 'improve' a marriage. Only 3% said that children 'worsen' a marriage (although 40% said that the stress and strain placed on marriage would be a reason for limiting the number of children)[6] while 7% gave qualified answers, saying that children tend to exacerbate any stress already in a marriage but will tend to improve an already 'good' marriage. That 43% (61% men, 29% women) said in response to Question 56, that they would have a child in order to make a strong marriage bond, suggests that many people claim to accept that children would help their marriage relationship.

Most (67%) respondents said that their own parents did not treat them any differently after they had had children than they had done before the children arrived. For those who did report a change, the majority said that their parents had become closer, showed them more respect, and treated them more like adults than they had before. There was more interest and more contact because of the grandchildren. Several women

mentioned that they had stopped being their parents' "little girl" and were treated as equals now. Although men also reported achieving adult status by virtue of their fatherhood, they claimed this was because of the responsibility they had assumed, rather than because they had reinforced their independence from their parents, as was the case with a number of the women. In almost all cases where some change was reported, this was viewed by the respondent as a positive change, that having children had improved their relationships with their own parents. (See Chapter 9).

These represent the kinds of understandings which may be obtained from questionnaire responses. The structured questions restricted the dimensions that parenting may have. A wider range of attributes was volunteered in response to the open-ended questions. The structured items present 'things' parents and children do to or for each other, as action, but only in the idea of "fun and companionship" is interaction made explicit. The open-ended responses began to portray parenting as a social activity, by implying interaction with, specifically, spouse, own parents, and children generally. In doing so, the role of parent (rather than children) is implied and the 'value' of children through parenting suggested. But there was no scope in the questionnaire for making such meaning explicit.

When relationships with parents were explored during the informal interviews they appeared to be polarized around specific gender-relationships. As parents the younger men and women might be independent but as mothers, or to a lesser extent as fathers, there often emerged a new sharing between the generations. Mrs Milne, for instance, said that because she was her parents' child they (her parents) must "influence" her parenting, but they did not direct or judge her as a parent:

> ...there must always be times when they feel I've made a wrong decision...but they accept that that is my role as

> a parent, and my parents would never interfere.

On the other hand, she saw a bond with her mother ("but it doesn't say that I love my father any less because of it") which arose from sharing activities - "going out on a day in the town" - and commented, to her husband's amusement,

> I think perhaps that we're both females has a lot to do with it.

This means, in Mrs Sumner's words, "someone to talk clothes and things", or in Janet's, "the domestic" (things).

But does this bond or sharing have anything to do with the child becoming a parent? These respondents suggested it was more to do with becoming an adult and, according to Mr and Mrs Sumner, establishing an independent home:

Mrs Sumner : It was once I was married, because I had a completely different role in life, and I could appreciate what my mother's had been (emph. added)

"I could appreciate what my mother's had been" referred to being a housewife, but the same sentiment was reiterated by other women, with reference to being mothers. Janet elaborated as follows:

> The grandchild has been born and now mother and eldest daughter have something in common, because mother knew about childbirth, daughter has experienced this, having the baby, which has drawn them very close together. Grandma babysits and there is a lovely relationship starting up there...and the mother seems so much happier and so does the daughter; they seem to have become buddies.

I asked the group, "do men have similar experiences with their sons?", and was told by Mr Sumner,

> But the mother's always been involved with the children.

> (Because of work, fathers) don't get so involved, except at weekends, and so on.

Most said the relationships "go further than that": there is an exception for the first child "particularly if it's a son - he gets the works from the old man because he's going to be the greatest." Thus Mat cited his own experience, both as a younger son, and as a father. But this father/son relationship is markedly different from the mother/daughter relationship the women referred to. Several respondents referred to mothers wanting to have daughters and fathers wanting to have sons in order to share gender-related activities. But these activities were not given to include being, themselves, mothers or fathers.

The impression gained from the interviews is that it is, usually, daughters (rather than sons) who are accorded a change in status and/or relationships as they progress from being daughter, to wife, to mother, and that the status change is accorded them, usually, by their mothers rather than their fathers. In the main the questionnaire items may, in the minds of respondents, have subsumed wife (or husband) under 'parent' - it is possible that the change in relationship reported by respondents reflected changes to the status of wife/husband rather than to that of mother/father. But to most respondents themselves, the greater change in living experience (Q 60) came with having a child, (70% women, 64% men) rather than marriage. In New Zealand the transition from parents' household to own household has become blurred by the relatively independent life style adopted by many single adults even while technically living within their parents' household, but particularly with the advent of flatting and childless de facto marriages. Becoming a parent visibly establishes an independent household unit, especially if sanctioned by marriage as a formal event.

An alternative dimension to the argument, however, is an explanation of mother/daughter(mother) relationships as being

firstly a gender consensus, and only secondly generational (parental). In everyday life women commonly identify with their mothers, as mothers, and as wives (housewives). For women spoken to during this study identification took the form of pity ("I don't know how she coped") and understanding ("now I know how my mother felt"), but seldom envy. Sympathy over-rode empathy as daughters reflected back, where envy sometimes emerged as mothers reflected forward ("she has all she wants" - or "I don't know how she'd have coped in my day").

In such discussion of women's lives, children and housekeeping are part of the same. But there was also discussion between women as women, discussion which emphasised 'women's business' - much of which was to do with having babies. By being a mother one 'joins the club' of those who 'know', while to those women who were not yet mothers (but, it was assumed, would become mothers) there was verbal initiation, as Mrs Leary illustrated:

Mrs Leary : ...we were told nasty things (about childbirth), especially the old wives tales, the ridiculous stories that we were told about older women about this, that and the other thing. But mind you even the deliveries...have you got children ?

Interviewer : Yes

Mrs Leary : Well even the delivery of your baby - I suppose yours would be quite young - (John) is 25 this year, he's our oldest, and one of the things that really offended and it still would, but it isn't done any more, is to stick your legs up those horrible stirrups...

And Mrs Leary continued to recount the personal experiences of her various births to the interviewer, a complete stranger, but one who was a woman and who had children and so, presumably, 'understood'. In her account Mrs Leary indicated how even before a birth the perception of 'mother' was anticipated: birth itself made the imagined real.

Women, in new social situations, establish 'common ground' through their children and mothering or birthing experiences. Pregnant and newly-delivered mothers are regaled by the childbirth experiences of their female visitors (most visitors to maternity wards are female, a tendency which undoubtedly has little to do with the timing of visiting hours!). Mothers have real clubs as well as the abstract club of experience: Mothers' Union (the 'senior' graduation from "Young Wives"), League of Mothers, and Plunket Mothers for example. Fathers, as fathers, do not have such clubs. Clubs to which they, as fathers, might belong are for both mothers and fathers: Parent Teacher Association, Parents' Centre etc. Fathers are parents. Mothers are parents too. But mothers are also mothers, a kind of parent no father can ever be.

Despite the generalized conclusion above, the interviews and the survey indicated that individual fathers did see definition to their role. The male survey respondents referred to feelings of tenderness and affection towards their children. The dominating concern however, was of responsibility and caring for dependents (which probably also included their wives). The Milnes shared these perceptions of, and limits to being, 'father', even in their situation where Mr Milne was not the biological father of Mrs Milne's children[7]:

Interviewer : Do you, Mr Milne, feel yourself as outside Mrs Milne and the children, or within it as 'father' of the family? How easy is it to step into an established unit?

Mr Milne : You don't take the original place, I'm definite about that... but I feel that I am accepted in this family unit as the father at this particular point in time.

Interviewer : So you feel you are filling the role of father?

Mr Milne : Mmmm (doubtful yes)...

Mrs Milne : Well I accept Mr Milne as head of the household and in that sense he is the father of this family. But I think to the kids he is more of a very, very special friend...would you not agree?

> (Mr Milne seemed doubtful)... You know I think there's a difference, because in a natural father relationship, the way it was with our family, they would go to their father and physically have a cuddle with him, or cry on his shoulder, or whatever. Now at this stage - and it's probably because of the age of the children - there isn't quite that same... is there... and that's where I'm trying to say there's a difference. I believe he's very very special, and they love him very much, because of this, but they're not having to choose in any way between their real father (as in a divorce). Their real father I'm sure will always be accepted as their real father, but I'm sure they will always accept Mr Milne for what he is to me now.
> ...we have fairly definite ideas about roles in a family, don't we? Like even in our setup now, I think Mr Milne probably, well, do you feel that I have the ultimate say over what my children do? Like I ask him for advice, and I value his advice very very much and I don't think I've ever had the occasion to go directly against his advice, because we can talk about things, but I think he would feel that it would be my responsibility because they are my children. Just like we have his two nephews here at the moment, and when it comes down to the nitty-gritty, he's the one that has the final say, over what happens. Whereas with the children's real father, if he and I differed about anything, because he was their father and I accepted him as head of the household, I would abide by his decision. But I've accepted that role now with my children. But if it was something really very important now, I couldn't see myself going against Mr Milne's advice.

In trying to explain Mr Milne's relationship with the children, and with herself as their parent, Mrs Milne perceived the (researcher's) idea of 'role' as referring to responsibility and authority. To Mrs Milne her husband was regarded by her children as a friend, but as her husband, not as their father. Mr Milne appeared to have reservations about this distinction - being 'father' to Mrs Milne's children was the only experience of fathering that he had ever known. But to Mrs Milne the children were her children, her responsibility, although the male's role as 'head of the household' would at times override

her responsibility. Being head of the household, but not the children's father, would appear to hold some potential for ambivalence for Mr Milne, but neither he nor his wife indicated this. In an everyday social sense Mr Milne was 'father'. But in an historical and biological sense he was not. His own reservations about not being their father reflected the tension between these two perceptions. What is suggested is that in the absence of father another male can be the authority figure, the 'head of the household', but he cannot be father in a total sense. Father is associated with intimacy, and mention of physical intimacy cannnot be disregarded as being unimportant in defining the limits of 'father'.

No respondent said explicitly what they considered to be a good father or a good mother, but several implied this in discussing what they felt they should or could do with their children. Mr Sumner compared himself with his father, indicating the importance of doing things with one's children:

Mr Sumner : Oh, the particular example that I think of, was my father was an accountant and work never stopped, so rather than perhaps read to us or bath us he wouldn't do very much with us. He tended to, well 'get the table cleared and get on with my work please.' And I felt that was a very big missing-out stage for him, and for us. I suppose I'm guilty of doing it myself, but I don't want to be?

Interviewer : It is something that is real enough in your mind for you to be aware of it?

Mrs Sumner : Yes

Mr Sumner : Ah, I would think I have enough of an established contact with my kids now that I can talk to them far better than he can talk to us.

Mrs Sumner : Yes, I would think so.

Both Mr and Mrs Sumner placed considerable importance on communicating with their children, and being honest with them. With very young children this might mean literally 'getting

down to their level':

Mrs Sumner : But then I think I'm more relaxed with the children, having had a greater number. I'm more relaxed now than I was with the first two. So I'm not afraid to sit right down in the middle of them - probably with the first two I'd have sat on a chair and made sure that they sat up beside me. But that's just the sort of thing one learns, probably with the maturity of having children.

'Good' mothering was implied by several respondents when they referred to women and employment. To some, Mrs Milne and Mrs Sumner for instance, there had never been any desire to "have a career" and so (they said) they experienced no conflict between career and children. But in different ways several women implied - or stated - that mothers should be with their children, something with which a career would conflict. Mrs Leary for instance, had changed her job so that she could be there when the children came home from school, and she had much pity for a motherless child she knew who "came home to an empty house". These children she referred to were young teenagers.

In a slightly different context Mrs Milne said she disapproved of kindergartens, child centres etc - young children should be at home with their mothers. But it was Mrs Browning to whom the whole career/children conflict was so puzzling, so contradictory, that the only solution for the dilemma which she could see (and which she offered several times) was that the whole idea of (married) women having careers was only a passing fad. She described three such women she knew, all with some bewilderment:

> There's a teacher coming back to school, here next term, and her baby was born in the May holidays last year. And she's coming back to work this year. And there's another girl I know, who I worked with, who's just had her first child, and I believe she has marriage leave for twelve months until she has time to make up her mind whether staying at home is for her or whether she would rather be a career woman, and then have someone else to look after her bright child, as it would be...I sort of

> wonder if it's just a trend that will die, or whether it (career women) really will stay. I don't know.
>
> Yes, even for this friend that I quoted you before,who has one child and she's at work, the child is now 7 and she's never had another one, and never will. But she still says to me, she wouldn't be without (child) and yet she really doesn't spend any time with her. Like when the child started school, she took the first week off, instead of having time off in the August holidays, the week prior, which to me seemed rather odd, to take the annual leave the week the child started school, when the child wouldn't be home, the child wouldn't be there for her to be with. It seemed very odd to me, that. The child was very insecure and throwing tantrums and wanted to go and stay at grandma's all the time - grandma was better than mummy, and that was quite a difficult time for her. But the mother had never been home (during the week) for the whole 5 years of the child's life, apart from the odd weekend in the middle. So what does the mother expect of the child? Here's a case where grandma has given the child more than what mum has.

The impression gained from these respondents was that 'good' mothering - or perhaps just <u>being</u> a mother - involves being with your children. Even with grown-up children, the Leary's placed importance on 'being there'. Mrs Sumner hoped that even if children went "off the rails" she would continue to love and support them and Mrs Milne said of her children,

> I'd always like them to think there's a welcome here... I'd treat them all the same...if they got into trouble or even if one of them got into jail.

Fathers, it is suggested, cannot always be there, especially when the children are small. 'Good' fathers, apparently, make the most of the little time they have with their children, <u>doing</u> things rather than just 'being there'. Interestingly, the one father interviewed (Mr Cox), who did spend time with his young child while his wife worked, referred to this activity as "parenting". What he was <u>doing</u> would, by other respondents' definitions, be conventionally seen as 'mothering' - paradoxically, if he was taking time off work in order to care for a child (something Mr Browning did when his wife was sick, making, in his eyes, a considerable sacrifice of income)

it might even be that Mr Cox would be seen by others to be abrogating his role as father (breadwinner/head of household) in order to be a 'parent'.

10.5 Motherhood: Myth, Magic or Mystery?

An early working hypothesis in this research was that the over-riding 'value' of children is that they make women into mothers. I expected that women's talk about mothering would dominate discussion about children and that men, when they talked about their (collective) relationships with their children would talk primarily about mother-child relationships. This was not the case.

Although men did defer to their wives when discussing children, most of the discussion was not mother-oriented. Men acknowledged, explicitly or implicitly, that because they spent more time with them their wives knew more about children - especially if they were young children. Fathers did not see their relationship as a parent as less important than the mother's relationship with the children. Father was, conventionally, the material provider, mother the emotional provider and nurturer. Roles were different, but considered co-ordinate.

People's perceptions of the qualities of motherhood differ from those of fatherhood. To say that one was mothered, or was fathered, implies substantially different activities. Mothering is primarily a social activity, an on-going process. Fathering is somehow perceived as a mechanical activity, an isolated biological (sexual) act, or sequence of such acts. Children are the consequences, or products, of 'fathering'; they are the subjects of, or reason for being, of 'mothering'.

Because they are seen to go together (pregnancies are visible) biological and social motherhood are fused into one. Only when adoptive motherhood is discussed is the confusion exposed. The separation is that exemplified by the adoptive mother who wrote of her son,

> He has another 'mother' somewhere, but I am his Mother. He will have no memories of her - she was not there to comfort him when he was sick. She was not there when his fingers jammed in the door. She will not be there for his first day of school or for his graduation...
> (Sorosky et al: 81)

The mystery, or magic, is not in 'mother', which has a different meaning. It is an ideal Peck referred to as "myth", an ideal which incorporates fulfillment and glamour, science, religion and folk cult into a "motherhood mystique" (1971: 20-40). "The media", wrote Peck "are not manufacturing their maternal mythology. They are only exaggerating and idealizing it" (p60). "The media" go back in time to the biblical image of Madonna and child.

Part of this mythology is the 'maternal instinct' (see Chapter 12), a notion which Friday condemned because "it idealizes motherhood beyond human capacity" (1977: 35, emph. added). It is part of the maternal ideal that other mothers do have this instinct, and do cope. Biological 'instinct' is thus a social creation. Richards' comment about her Australian respondents could well apply in New Zealand:

> (Most women) went about the business of mothering, vaguely conscious of standards they could not meet, but doing their best. (p211).

In aspiring to meet this maternal ideal, a woman is caught in the confusion of her feelings. Negative judgements of childrearing are legitimate only if uttered by parents - who, one 'knows', really love their children; negative comments about children from those who do not have them are taboo

(Chapter 11). Although she might, as Mrs Leary indicated, hear all the unpleasant details of childbirth before she has children, the young woman is unlikely to have been forewarned of the difficulties of childrearing.

The image that researchers have of mothers is usually from the point of view of grown-up children. The 'good mother' was described by New Zealand respondents, like their Australian counterparts (Richards: 203-210), as always being there, loving her children even when they "go off the rails", implied as being selfless, compassionate, tender, understanding and stable. But, "most of us are not like her", wrote Lazarre (p viii). The uniqueness of Mother, according to Lazarre, arises out of the ambivalence of caring and loving, "the ever ongoing cycles of separation and unification with our children" (p ix). It is thus that New Zealand mothers report how they cannot wait for their youngest children to start school, and when they do mothers cannot wait for home-time to arrive; that New Zealand parents say they cannot wait for their eldest child to leave home, and when he does they worry about his independence and keep asking when he is coming to visit them. Separation is never total.

Mothers are different, because for them unification was once total. Women have written of the awe of this realisation, of the child who had once lived within them. Writers in Dowrick and Grundberg's book frequently claimed to have "fallen in love" with their babies - a phenomenon which perhaps explains the propensity for women to say they could never love any child like they do their own, or that they are "not mad about babies", but their own are different.

If mothers are different from fathers because of their physical unity with the child, this would contradict Sorosky's respondent, who gave primacy to "Mother" over (biological) "mother". The contradiction explains the ambivalence surrounding women who give children for adoption (see Chapter

12), in that they part with a part of themselves. But the contradiction is 'overruled' by social attitudes: as some of the Hamilton respondents indicated, adoptive mothers (note, not fathers) are expected to be "a bit special", to have the capacity to mentally compensate for not having given birth to the child. As indicated in the introduction to this chapter, Mothers not only bear children, but they also rear them. To give birth is sufficient to be a mother. To be Mother, birth is not sufficient; childrearing is sufficient and is also necessary.

Comparing cross-cultural experiences of mothering, Kitzinger noted that in many cultures childrearing is not an interval in a woman's life, as it is in our culture, but is the "raison d'etre" for her life (1978: 35). By having a baby, woman changes her identity and achieves a new status. This experience is not peculiar to the preindustrial cultures Kitzinger described, and might be universal.

The change in status for men as well as women occurs, in anticipation, once a pregnancy is evident. Fathers-to-be are congratulated, often with a wink which says, "I know what you've been up to!", thereby reinforcing the mechanical (biological) role of the male parent. Mothers-to-be are 'showered' with baby gifts, symbolic of their coming roles in childcare. Reporting experiences similar to these in Australia, Richards concluded that "pregnancy was a sociable experience, something shared, socially supported" for women (p135, original emph.). More emphatically, pregnancy in New Zealand (and Australia) today is a very public condition; even complete strangers appear to consider they have a right to acknowledge a woman's 'condition', offering her a seat on the bus, lifting her bags of groceries for her, asking when the 'happy event' is due to take place. The anticipated biological event is thus made social.

The "rite de passage" is again reinforced publicly once the

baby is born. A birth notice in the newspaper, announcing the date of arrival (sometimes even the time), the child's birthweight, mother and baby's physical condition, sometimes the father's emotional state, and so on, makes the birth a public social event. Fathers, again, receive congratulations and cigars; mothers receive flowers and baby clothes. Congratulations are loudest for the first-born. Even grandparents share in the receipt of congratulatory messages (they might also be included in the birth announcement). Births are thereby formally given social meaning.

Once the child is born, fathers seem to retreat to the background of the public stage - at least until the child is old enough to be taken to his first rugby match! As in Australia, many New Zealand fathers are fathers to children, not babies.

With her new baby, however, mother - now Mother - continues to hold centre stage. Her new status is confirmed continually in her public, daily routines. Duff (1979) referred to these changes which were accorded some of her New Zealand respondents when they (visibly) had a baby. Women with babies receive a particular kind of attention in New Zealand: strangers stop to talk, admire a child, congratulate the 'mother'; mothers are treated with respect, as women rather than girls. These changes in identity are very pervasive, as illustrated by Goodison (in Dowrick and Grundberg, eds) who wrote of her American experience,

> I have to accept that I am a person who sometimes needs to be helped...It seems that I am no longer so threatening to men: the baby suggests that I have accepted my role as a 'proper woman' after all. Sexual insults in the street are muted, shopkeepers treat me with respect, old ladies on the bus strike up conversations about their grandchildren...Sometimes I find myself patronised, or left out of serious conversations, as 'just a dumb mother'...These changes in social roles and the way you are treated do affect your image of yourself and your identity. (1980: 38-39).

Fathers do not usually change their social identity so publicly merely by begetting and assuming responsibility for a child, though they might change in the image of their more intimate peers.

Why is the maternal mystique so pervasive? Conventionally one might offer a biological explanation. In such deterministic arguments one reads of the human female's 'need to nurture'. For instance, Bardwick argued,

> The data suggest that attachment to others is more characteristic of females than males in infancy and in adulthood. The implications derived from the evolutionary perspective are that people may have both an ability to parent and a need to parent. (1974: 39, emph.added).

Nurturance of children, according to this perspective, may "gratify fundamental psychological needs" of parents (p41). In support of the argument Bardwick quoted Fremont-Smith (1960):

> This parental concern has a long biological heritage and is absolutely essential for the survival of most species. (Bardwick: 40).

Undoubtedly based on the need of an infant for close physical contact with an adult (an idea derived originally from Harlow's research, which was on monkeys, not humans[8]), this explanation has been extended to include the specifically human abstraction labelled 'love', and the idea that this love must come from the female parent. Yet both everyday experience and formal anthropological research evidence indicate that it is not always the female parent who nurtures, thereby questioning the next line in the evolutionary argument, ie, that females need to nurture.

Bardwick herself noted that infants become attached to anyone

who responds to the infant frequently. "On the basis of sheer frequency, in most families, the mother will be the person to whom the infant first turns" (p51). But, she argued, social probability is supported by biological propensity: "characteristics within females, especially adults, will make it more likely that the initial, major attachment will be to an adult female" (p52). In other words, she argued, infants are nurtured by women not just because of infants' needs, but because of women's physiological inclinations.

Nurture and love should not be confused. The first is a biological necessity and evidence of physiological or biochemical 'triggers' of nurturant behaviour, eg lactation, need not be denied in order to support the concept of 'mother love' as a social construction. The literature contains reports of women likening both childbirth and lactation to sexual orgasm (see Dowrick and Grundberg; Lazarre). This physiological experience is not the same thing as the 'falling in love' with a baby that women also describe. The connection is in the mind of women, as a means of 'making sense' in a social context of biological changes.

One need not refute the biological argument in order to support a social argument. Indeed, biologists such as Bardwick acknowledge the synergistic nature of biology and culture. Culture, they argue, reinforces biology. However, it would seem that a distinction should be made. The biological view explains, perhaps, why once a child is born, adult females, or an adult female, will 'mother' it. It does not explain any biological imperative to be a mother. The 'motherhood mystique' which is the topic of this section can be explained only in a social context.

Various New Zealand writers have argued that a 'cult' of motherhood and domesticity exists in this country[9]. The notion of such a cult might be invoked to explain how motherhood, as an ideal, is reinforced. But a prior question is, why does it

need reinforcing? What is so special about motherhood which has brought about so many cultural reinforcements and rewards? One possible answer is that the only inducement for a person to provide care, and sacrifice self, for life, to one's own children, is the promise of an identity so sublime and unreal that cynics have been led to call it a myth. Le Masters, for instance, adopted such a functionalist perspective when he wrote,

> When a social function is relatively difficult, as parenthood appears to be in our society, a romantic folklore develops to keep the role from being ignored or rejected by most adults. (in Hawke and Knox: 4-5).

The "folklore" is manifest by parents who take pride in their child's achievements, but will take greatest pride in the production of a grandchild; by the media's 'ideal family' image; by the church, with its adoration of the Virgin Mother and its Mothers' Union; by the government's tax incentives ("family benefit"), and by all those who celebrate "Mother's Day" - which seems much more important to most people than does "Father's Day". The inducement is not to reproduce, nor is it to be a father; it is to be a Mother. One can reproduce a child for anybody (and 'surrogate mothers' currently do). But one can be Mother only to one's <u>own</u> child.

Many women in low fertility societies such as New Zealand have never seen, let alone touched, a new-born baby before they have their own first child. We thus differ from those preindustrial societies where childcare is shared by many women, where fertility is high and so children grow up with babies around them (Kitzinger: 201-205). As noted previously, New Zealand women approaching their first birth are preoccupied with the <u>birth</u>; mothering is a mystery. Many of the survey respondents said that having a child was harder, more worrying, more wearying than they had anticipated. What they had anticipated was the motherhood ideal.

It is simple to argue that the ideal is perpetuated so that the species will survive. But the incentive to be a mother is qualitatively different from any hypothetical incentive to reproduce. Persisting within an evolutionary perspective, it might be argued that it is cultural (not biological) reproduction which is responsible for a persisting incentive to be a mother. Mothers not only are the prime socializing agents for their children, but traditionally women (mothers and grandmothers) also disseminated 'formal' culture (see Kitzinger: 63). It has been observed (Chapter 9), that in New Zealand it is women who 'do family', perpetuating the kinship system. Family - ie, children - give meaning to life. Mourning the death of his mother, one New Zealander epitomized this meaning when he wrote,

> As memories of her ebbed and flowed I sought a meaning to her death. But I saw that it was the meaning of her life that mattered, for it was all around us, a living biography in three generations. (Taylor 1982: 57).

Although tautological, the argument that one has children to have a family, and that having, or being part of, a family makes life meaningful, persists as a cultural explanation of motherhood. The woman without a child, without a family, is considered incomplete by others, especially her mother, and perhaps by herself.

Such cultural explanations, like biological explanations, are probably on too large a scale to be meaningful to individuals. The mystique is reproduced by men as well as women, but in specifically different ways. The first experience a person remembers about the female who cared for him or her, is usually that she was Mother; for many that is all she ever was. The male character might well be remembered firstly as an accountant or farmer or whatever his occupational role was - as Mr Sumner recalled.

Referring to New Zealand men born in the middle of this

century, and brought up at the height of the 'cult' of motherhood, Phillips in his chapter entitled "Mummy's Boys..." wrote,

> The excessive mothering of New Zealand boys left them permanently dependent on women. Not used to feeding or clothing themselves they were forced to look around for substitute 'mums'. Their wives, of course, filled the role and adopted the name. (in Bunkle & Hughes: 239)

Whether or not one agrees that New Zealand men were - or are - dependent on women, everyday experience in New Zealand in the 1980's is replete with examples of men who call their wives "Mum", even to strangers, and of men who express both their desire for their wives to become mothers, and their pride in the 'good job' being done by those wives who already are. In expressing this desire and expectation, that their wives actually become mothers, one might argue that men through their talk keep alive the 'cult' of motherhood in this country.

Women's expectations also arise from their mothers, but in these cases identification is direct. Women do not appear to want their husbands to be fathers, like their own fathers. Women want, or expect, to become mothers - like their own mothers. Furthermore, as evidenced by the incidence of pressure from the mother on a wife to have a child (Chapter 9), mothers expect their daughters to become mothers. This perception probably explains Mrs Browning's worry about the effect "career women" might have on their daughters: they might choose careers instead of (rather than as well as) motherhood.

The uniqueness of the association between mother, daughter and granddaughter is that of a direct physical link: the daughter's child grows in the uterus of the child the mother herself grew. This is physical immortality.

Women appear to experience peculiar associations with their own

mothers through pregnancy and birth, sometimes dreaming of them and even thinking they were their mothers (Lazarre: 28). Kitzinger observed such identification occurring in widely different cultures. As the pregnant woman lives through the timeless experience of growing, bearing and then rearing her child, she not only comes much closer in understanding to her own mother, but the older woman in turn "lives through the recollected emotions" of childbearing and rearing. Women in the Hamilton study recounted these same experiences. They also supported Fischer's observations,

> that when daughters become mothers, mothers and daughters tend to re-evaluate each other and become more involved in each other's lives...This entails a process of redefinition and renegotiation in terms of their relative statuses, their role-perspectives and their family structure. (1981: 613).

Rowland reported that her childfree New Zealand respondents received most negative reactions to their decision from their mothers, grandmothers and other women friends, and concluded,

> It seems that women are pressuring other women to conform. (Wheeler 1980: 5, emph. added).

This expectation, and the ideal, have arisen in the family experience of the daughter, who was mothered. But it is not necessarily conscious, or even intentional. Drawing on psychoanalytic accounts of gender formation, Chodorow argued,

> ...the contemporary reproduction of mothering occurs through social structurally induced psychological processes. It is neither a product of biology nor of intentional role training...women's motherhood reproduces itself cyclically. Women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering-capacities and the desire to mother. (1978:7).

This process may be mysterious and romantic, but there is nothing magical or mythical about it. Researchers such as Fischer (p617) have discovered that daughters, with the

experience of their own children, tend to idealize their own mothers. Richards reported that a 'good mother', to her Australian women, was described as being like the woman's own mother, sometimes her grandmother, and occasionally her husband's mother. But invariably the 'good mother' was an older generation mother (p201-6), who had the authority of age and parenthood. Reflecting back, as grounds for acting in the present or anticipating future action, creates the order of generations of mothering.

The ideal is revived and reproduced, never experienced - Jane Lazarre said of the 'good mother', "most of us are not like her" - but aspired towards. The ideal is not the reason for becoming a mother in the first place, but it might be the reason for perpetuating the expectation. As the adage goes, "hope springs eternal".

Myth, magic or mystery, most women do become Mothers. Only by having a child can a daughter hope to realize the ideal of her own mother.

10.6 Summary

Respondents who were interviewed informally spoke about children - their own, and children generally -in several ways. They spoke about them, for instance, in the context of being 'brought up', of the relationship of husband and wife, of the interaction with parents, and in the context of women's careers or employment. Through most of these discussions ran two common threads however. Firstly, children were discussed in terms of their impact or effect on the parents' relationships. Secondly, children were discussed in terms of the relationships of the adult children with their own parents, in terms of the adult children's 'status' as parents. The implication that by having children men and women become parents was apparently so

fundamental that these respondents saw no requirement to make it explicitly meaningful to the interviewer. Yet the qualitative difference of the male and female parental roles was indicated even in the absence of any explicit or deliberate construction of the concept of 'parent'.

People, when they talked about their children, did not neatly compartmentalize their opinions or attitudes into categories of, for example, 'advantages' and 'disadvantages', or of 'diadic' relationships, or of 'parent-focussed' or 'child-focussed' effects. Respondents referred to the appeal of a child's honesty and spontaneity, of it's continual activity and the delight of new experiences, of the satisfaction (or fulfilment) of caring for and guiding a child as it grows. They talked about companionship and friendship from older children, or pride in their accomplishments. Men and women also told how they had changed as a consequence of their children, becoming more tolerant, learning to care, undertaking new experiences. They talked about changes in their relationships. They also talked about the 'costs', especially in time and energy, about the worry of being responsible and about the activities they had given-up. Hawke and Knox called these the "trade-offs" in parenthood: "Parents sometimes have to sacrifice or restrict certain kinds of growth for the opportunity to develop other qualities." As Lisa said (p 273): "You're a parent, so you miss out". But the categories of sacrifice, rewards and relationships were constructed by the researcher, not the respondents.

Much of the subjects' discussion was anecdotal, and it is a feature of the parent-child relationship that negative and positive aspects were mentioned in the same breath. Jane Lazarre, writing of her own experience in The Mother Knot, explained:

> 'I would die for him... All those movies about mothers running in front of trucks and bullets to save their children are true. I would much prefer to die than lose

> him. I guess that's love...but he has destroyed my life and I live only to find a way of getting it back again.' I finished slowly, for without the second part of the sentence, the first part was a treacherous lie... We learned always to expect sentences to have parts, the second seeming to contradict the first, the unity lying only in our growing ability to tolerate ambivalence - for that is what motherly love is like. (p85, emph. added).

These relationships, the ambivalence which has to be tolerated, are never static, but continually vacillate. If this were not the case, the question "Why have children?" would not be problematic. The answer could be found in a cost/benefit analysis. But it is not.

Hawke and Knox quoted a critic who said:

> You're trying to make it too logical and academic. The real reward - the big payoff - is being able to love, and hopefully be loved by your own child. Admittedly, you have to put up with some crap to have that love, but it's such a special love that it makes the whole parenthood experience worthwhile. (p17).

Respondents - and critics - of the present research made similar comments. But it is a certain kind of 'logic' which is being criticized, the kind indicated by the word "reward". It is the logic of cost/benefit analysis.

If there is an answer to the question, "Why have children?" it lies in a dialectic of ambivalence, of love and dependency, of selfishness and selflessness,[10] of being in control but being controlled, of giving meaning to life and giving life to its meaning. The dialectic is one of emotional attributes of children and of adults. The synthesis is parenthood.

Children give meaning to adult human beings by making them parents. Most people expect to become parents, as part of the order of things[11]:

Janet : That was the thing I just expected to do. There was just no question about it.

Mrs Milne : ...the question of choosing not to have children didn't arise, because just as when a child leaves school they expect to find work, I expected that when I got married I would have a family.

Mrs Leary : I can remember before we were married saying...'wouldn't it be sad if we didn't have children', and little did I know that we'd have eight! And he said, 'don't worry darling, we'll adopt them'. So I must have, even then, decided that I'd thought that was my role, and that was to be my married life, and I don't regret it at all.

Mr Leary : I don't think I could even imagine (being without children).

Mrs Browning : It's what's expected of you, to have a family one day...Most people want a family, sooner or later.

Mr Browning : My mum always knew I'd have a family, if it was at all possible. I couldn't say 'No' to that!

Adults, and women in particular, have children because that is what they expect of themselves. Parenthood is the final rite de passage to adulthood, an assumption of responsibility, care and concern. Parents call this 'love'. Nothing is expected in return, but reinforcement does come as companionship, fun, household help perhaps, and the eventual responsibility of at least caring about, if not caring for, the aging parent. However, most of the "rewards" from being a parent are self-created, reflecting parent, not child - a sense of competence, of seeing one's own creation initiate and respond, of seeing one's own identity in the child and of perpetuating what has gone before.

Not just any child can provide these rewards. The answer to the question "Why have children?" might for many parents, be because nothing else can provide these emotional or psychological satisfactions. As will be noted in Chapter 11, many adults who reject parenthood deny the uniqueness of

children in providing such rewards.

The pertinent question is not "Why children?" but "Why one's own children?" One answer to the second question is, that only one's own children can transform men and women into parents. And once one is a parent, it is forever.

Notes to Chapter 10.

1. See Chapter 11.

2. A question first posed to me by Michael Goldsmith, to whom I am indebted.

3. See Appendix v(d).

4. There was no way, however, of knowing how much a respondent 'weighted' self in, eg., "time for yourself and your husband/wife". It is also possible that many individuals could not perceive of themselves as separate from their total family. To such people a question referring to, for instance, "time for yourselves" might be as meaningless as asking Asian peasants how they spend their leisure time.

5. One is reminded of Omar Khayyam's line, "who is the potter pray, and who the pot?"

6. This is not necessarily inconsistent - stress in small amounts can be considered a good thing.

7. Mr Milne was no stranger to these children before his marriage to Mrs Milne - he had shared social contacts with them and was bestman to Mrs Milne's first husband.

8. Harlow 1958.

9. See Chapter 7. As an example of the 'cult-thinking', Olssen (1980: 174) cited Dr Doris Gordon, who wrote that childbirth, with its attendant pain and suffering, produced "incandescent motherhood, woman perfected through suffering", a pathway which led to the moral superiority of mothers, which is an essential ingredient for the progress of the race.

10. See Chapter 11.

11. Respondents made these comments in separate interviews, indicated by dashed lines between quotes.

"He has another mother somewhere,
but I am his Mother..."

(pg 304)

CHAPTER 11

CHILDFREE OR CHILDLESS[1]: VOLUNTARY NON-PARENTS.

> When I think about never having children I feel relief - and sadness. When I think about having children I feel wonder - and fear... In either of these lives that I can choose, I will feel ambivalent at times.
>
> (Harper 1980: 5)

11.1 Introduction

As stated in the introduction to this thesis, most people not only do at some time become parents, but they expect and want to become parents. More importantly, as some of the respondents indicated, most people expect other adults to both want to be and to become parents. Parenting might be described as 'normative' behaviour[2].

If all adults satisfied this expectation then the question "why have children?" might indeed be unanswerable. But recognition by both respondents and researchers that some people never have children raises an awareness that there is an option. This chapter is not concerned with why most adults have children, but with why some adults do not. We are not concerned with physiological causes of infertility however. Rather, this chapter refers specifically to the voluntarily childless, those who choose not to have children, to be 'nonparents'.

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1. Footnotes to Chapter 11 are placed at the end of the chapter, p 362.

Estimates of the incidence of childlessness in New Zealand are based on the assumption that the majority of first births occur in the first four years of marriage, and on the assumption that almost all people who bear children will do so before their seventh wedding anniversary. Such estimates are compounded by divorces and remarriages, which may be more likely among those without, than those with, children in the early years of marriage[3]. The incidence of de facto marriages prior to the first birth might also bias the statistics towards earlier years of marriage.

In general terms, however, the statistics point to an increasing likelihood of childless marriages. O'Neill (1979a: 139) noted that the proportion of couples without children after 7 years of marriage rose from 14.7% of those married in 1962, to 20.7% of those married in 1969. On the other hand, the proportion of first confinements which occurred in the first 4 years of marriage has fallen by 13% since 1964, with a complementary increase in the 5 - 9 year marriage groups (rather than 10 years and over) (Table 11.1).

While distribution of first confinements by marriage duration for specific marriage cohorts would give a more accurate indication of changes in first birth trends than do the cross-sectional data shown in Table 11.1, the distribution of first births shown in the table does highlight the caution in O'Neill's conclusion (derived from 1962-1974 marriage cohorts) that it was not then clear whether increases in childless marriages at 7 years duration "reflect postponement or an abandonment of childbearing as a career option" (loc cit). More recent data suggest childbearing is being increasingly delayed, not abandoned.[4] For instance those of the 1969 marriage cohort who in 1974 had not yet had a child undoubtedly contributed to the dramatic increase of primiparity in the 5 - 9 years marriage duration of 1979 and 1980.

One can conclude from these statistics that the incidence of

Table 11.1 Distribution of First Confinements by Duration of Marriage, 1934 - 1980.

Duration of Marriage	Percentage of Total First Confinements						
	1934	1944	1954	1964	1974	1979	1980
0-4 years	93.40	91.11	94.01	95.58	92.93	83.51	82.14
5-9 years	5.49	7.36	5.05	3.56	6.52	15.69	16.83
10+ years	1.11	1.53	0.94	0.86	0.55	0.80	1.03
	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

(Source: New Zealand Official Yearbook 1982: 95)

permanently childless marriages in New Zealand is considerably less than the 18% O'Neill's figures suggested for 1976.[5] Differentiating this nulliparity into voluntary and involuntary childlessness is even more difficult than is distinguishing the permanently childless from the delayers. There are no New Zealand national statistics on infertility[6] and any estimates are, again, likely to be minimal figures. Many infertile couples may not have their infertility confirmed and either resign themselves to fate, or drift into voluntary childlessness by default. Others may have infertility confirmed, apply to adopt, but in a situation of limited adoption placements[7] also eventually remain permanently childless.

Both groups of involuntarily childless become 'lost' to the system of registering infertile people who remain involuntarily childless. Still others may 'cope' with their desire to be childless by remaining unmarried. Those who do register for medical assistance or support by an infertility clinic probably represent a small, but highly motivated, minority of involuntarily childless couples. From the information available to him, Graham (Gordon 1982: 6) has estimated that nationwide demand for artificial insemination by donor (A.I.D.) could be as high as 500 - and male infertility accounts for only 35-40% of couple infertility.[8]. Others have estimated that 10% of all couples are permanently, and involuntarily, infertile (see Chapter 12).

On the other hand, the incidence of permanent voluntary childlessness is difficult to estimate because any sample enumeration relies on (a) people volunteering that their childlessness is voluntary, and (b) people assessing it as permanent. By subtraction, the voluntarily childless probably account for approximately 8% of all couples.[9] However, only when permanent voluntary infertility is assured - as by sterilization operations - can one conclude permanent childlessness. In New Zealand approximately 2% of people

reported as sterilized for contraceptive reasons are childless, representing 167 individuals in 1982. Since 1978 the proportion of all contraceptive sterilizations reported for childless people rose from 1.6% to 2.6% in 1982 (see Appendix III(d) and III(e)).

Although the estimates referred to in this introduction are crude, they are relevant to this discussion as an expression of the incidence of nonparenthood in New Zealand. Whether their childlessness is involuntary and temporary, involuntary and permanent, or voluntary and permanent, these people, as 'deviants' might usefully provide information which could elucidate aspects of the thesis argument which as yet are unconsidered.

Couples without children are antithetical in a study of the 'value', or meaning of children. They are included because they lack what is being studied. As 'deviants' they specify 'normality' and social order. Moreover, through <u>their</u> perceptions of children one might add to the understanding of an intrinsic meaning of children. In addition, through their - and others' - perceptions of themselves as childless couples (or childless families) one might also gain an impression of what children confer when they ascribe parental status. Lamenting the lack of research on childlessness, Veveers (1973:356) explained,

> ... for to a large extent the social meaning of parenthood can be comprehensively described and analysed only in terms of the parallel set of meanings which are assigned to nonparenthood.

That is, the 'meaning' of 'value' lies in the notion of <u>parent</u>, rather than child. The latter might be the more useful perspective for any analysis of value of children to non-parents.

The author of <u>The Childfree Alternative</u> (Harper, <u>op cit</u>) felt

sadness about the lost experiences, relief that her "freedom" would not be lost, wonder at the notion of creation (a reflection of herself), and fear at her possible inability to cope with being a mother. She felt sad

> to think of the world going on without me... Yet the comforting thought that my children will be here to carry on when I am gone is little more than a sort of whistling in the darkest place of the cosmos. My life will end. (p12).

The ambivalence expressed by Harper illustrates the dilemmas and paradoxes experienced by individuals who might be permanently childless. More importantly, it suggests that the decision to have or not have children is not intellectually-rational, or materially based, as the economic demographers would have their readers believe, but is grounded in emotion. For the childless and childfree, having or not having (respectively) children is, usually, an act of decision-making, which makes their action quite unlike the nondeliberate 'drift into parenthood' which characterizes many acts of child-bearing of those who have children without effort or question. The childfree, in their action, deny a 'known' biological fact, but more importantly they also deny a social construction of the meaning of that fact.

11.2 Characterizing the "Invisible Minority"

Despite an increase in the number of academic studies of childlessness in America in the last decade [10], research in New Zealand has been restricted to Rowland's study (Wheeler 1980; Rowland 1982) of voluntarily childfree couples. However Callan (1982) has extended his study of value of children in Australia[11] to include voluntarily childless couples and his findings might well be relevant to New Zealand.

All of the above researchers of childlessness have acknowledged methodological problems, not least being that samples are necessarily self-selected (Veveers 1973:357), and are usually[12] small. Veveers characterized the sampling technique as "stalking an invisible minority" (1980:171).

Of 154 respondents in the Hamilton survey, only 13 (4 couples, 3 men, 2 women) had no children at the time of the survey. Of these, the wife of one couple was pregnant. Childlessness was stated to be a "deliberate choice" by 11 respondents, and all of these people except one man and one woman stated that they did desire children, ie, their childlessness was temporary and resulted from timing rather than limitation. All of the three respondents (one couple, one man) for whom childlessness was "the way things happened", wanted children.

In the total sample only three individuals desired no children: the wife of one deliberately childless couple (husband wanted three children) the husband of a deliberately childless couple (wife wanted two children), and the wife of a man who had no children (she had three) said she "would like to have had" none.

Considering the combination of desires, intentions and actual experiences of these respondents, one can conclude that there was an incidence of only two "voluntarily" childless individuals (not a couple) in the sample and even then both couples at that particular point in time included a spouse who wanted children. No partner in either couple had undergone sterilization to ensure childessness.

None of the survey couples who had no children would agree to a follow-up interview. However an interview was obtained with a childless couple who had been involved in the pretesting of the questionnaire. They explained their current state of childlessness, after 10 years of marriage as follows:

Wife : No, well it... our reason was initially in the very first two years was financial, because we didn't feel we could give that child a home, and it was financial, and there is a bit here about marriage guidance and things like that. Well, we didn't feel that we knew one another well enough to have a child; that we wanted to know one another before we, umm, had another member of the family to know. And then it because, umm, a question of jobs: umm, we were busy swapping our jobs - one of us working, one of us wasn't - so it was a question of that. Then it became a question of ... we got to the stage where no, we didn't want to have any children... any children didn't we? We got to the stage where,...well..

Interviewer : As distinct from you wanted <u>not</u> to have children?

Wife : Umm, in the beginning we were sort of not too fussy, and then we went through a stage, no we didn't want to have children. In fact, I think I would have quite happily gone and had my tubes tied one stage there, wouldn't I?

Husband : Mmmm...

Wife : And the same with you (H), because it didn't look as if it would be worth it, we ... you know the way the world was at the moment, and the future looked pretty grim. The whole world looked in a terrible mess and what were we going to bring those kids into? We went through that didn't we? And now, we've over the last few years, gone through stages where we love kids, and the world's going to be in a mess anyway, so ...

Husband : We may as well bring someone in who can share with us.

Wife : We may as well. Umm, there's so many little poor kids that we may as well contribute one and try and help them cope with what it's all about anyway. And we both feel more able to cope with a baby now.

Husband : Yes.

Wife : We feel our relationship's strong enough to survive with a child and that we could perhaps make it with a child, whereas up until now we haven't felt ... we've felt that a child would draw us apart, and ...

Husband : We didn't originally get married to have children.

Wife : No we didn't.

Husband : We became married because we loved each other.

Wife : For each other.

Husband : We wanted to live, you know, for ... to be with each other and that was our moment, but it's got to the stage where that moment hasn't passed; it's still with us.

Wife : We still need each other. We don't need a child to bring us together - certainly not! Ummm.

Husband : We'd had a genetic thing to start with but we got over that hurdle. But then again we were going to trip around the world. We couldn't have a child if we were going to trip around the world, because that child would have stopped us cold from doing what we wanted to do. But now, okay (so if) we got a kid, so we'd trip around the world...

Wife : Take the kid with you.

Wife : There's tests that they can do...Like I had made up my mind a few years ago that I wasn't going to be (pregnant) because I might have an abnormal child. That went through my mind too... we weren't going to have an abnormal child, and that went on for a couple of years, didn't it - the abnormal child bit. And then, now I'm told they do amniotic fluid tests when you're early in your pregnancy and you can avoid having an abnormal child - if you wish - so I feel quite happy now.

Each partner offered his/her <u>own</u> rationalization for not having had a child. The rationalizations each offered differed but by including the other spouse, as "we", they were offered as <u>joint</u> rationales. This couple did not expect to be permanently childless. They now wanted children - "but not yet". Rather than becoming committed to a childfree life as a consequence of repeated deferrals and doubts, they had now become convinced that children <u>were</u> for them.

It is appropriate to consider the process of becoming permanently childfree as explained in recent literature. Veveers observed that most couples never make any explicit decision to avoid ever having children: almost a third of her respondents had stated that they and their spouses had made an active decision when they married to remain childless, but over two-thirds of women remained childless as a consequence of a series of postponements, until "they gradually became aware that an implicit decision had been made to forgo parenthood" (1973:360 - emphasis added). Veveers produced a model of four stages in this deferment process. In the first stage the couple is no different from any couple postponing a first birth, except perhaps in their diligent practice of contraception in the early years of marriage: they assume they will have children - one day. Whereas that 'one day' of the first stage is clearly defined by such goals as, eg, owning a house or obtaining a degree, the second stage of postponement is more vague and is defined indefinitely as, eg "when we can afford it" or "when we are ready".

Veveers' third and fourth stages are the ones which are most pertinent to a value of children study. In the third stage, she postulated, couples undergo a "qualitative" change in thinking (1980:23). The pros and cons of having children are conceptualised and the possibility of never having children is acknowledged. One of her respondents pointed out,

> It's a lot more difficult to consciously decide to have children after thinking hard about it for some time than to just go ahead and have them because you're married. (1980:24).

The inevitability of parenthood is questioned, as well as the desirability. The deviant status of not having children is reinforced by the notion of not wanting children. To this extent, actively considering the possibility of not being a parent increases the chances of remaining childless.

An important factor in Veveers' third stage assessment is the continuation of what she termed a childfree, or adult-centred, life style - the "common interrelated themes of freedom, experience and self-expression" (1980:69). "Freedom" included adult-centred activities ranging from drug use and other "disreputable pleasures" to the choice of housing location (not determined by schools, play areas etc.); "experience" and "self-expression" included spontaneity, avoidance of routines, novelty[13] and travel. "Freedom" ~~also~~ included freedom for the wife to work, but also freedom for the husband not to work. The positivist economic argument was invoked by Veveers to justify and explain childlessness:

> Part of the uniqueness of the lifestyle of childless couples rests upon the simple fact of their relative affluence.... with the exception of the very rich these factors operate at all class levels to produce substantial discrepencies in the standard of living of parental and of childless couples (1980:86).

The eventual, stage four, decision to be permanently childless would appear to be made on quite different grounds from any apparent decision to have children. While parents change a known lifestyle for an unknown one in expectation of the positive experiences of parenting, the unknown has been anticipated as biological fact, and as such is reality. Nonparents, however, decide not to relinquish a known lifestyle for one which is unknown or expected to provide negative experiences. They refuse to realize the biological expectation, and make it social. The transition to stage four of this process is, therefore, "qualitatively different" from earlier stages in that the desire to enjoy a childfree lifestyle, which was not a major factor in early postponement decisions, does become a major factor in the permanent childfree decision.

Parenthood is irrevocable (which highlights the inappropriateness of sterilization being withheld from non-parents on the grounds that it is irreversible). For instance

the dilemma is that to elect to be parents would mean that the other options, the facets of the childfree lifestyle which they enjoy, would (they believe) be lost permanently. But to delay having a child would mean that the 'rewards' - if any - of parenthood might also be lost. Faced with time running out, an active decision would appear necessary (see Fabe and Wikler 1970).

The acceptance of permanent childlessness usually involves at least consideration of sterilization of one or other partner. Some couples, however, never reach this finality, but acknowledge that time itself will eventually implement their decision for them. And some avoid the decision, perceiving some future security in a symbolic 'adoption option'.

Childless couples who accept that they are different might employ various strategies to protect themselves from, or neutralise, the negative image of voluntary childlessness which they believe prevails. Their differences from parents are defined as advantages and their decisions legitimated by the organisation of, and their membership of, an explicit antinatalism 'counter-culture'. This, according to Howard Becker (1963: 17)[14] is "a final step in the career of a deviant". For the childfree in America, the 'counter-culture' has received expression in such organisations as the National Alliance for Optional Parenthood (formerly the National Organisation for Non-Parents).[15] In New Zealand, Rowland reported that some of her childfree couples expressed a desire for such an association to be established locally (Wheeler:5). Not only would this group provide a social identity, or reference group, for childless couples who might not yet have made a firm commitment to childlessness (one woman in Rowland's survey said she would like to talk to other childfree couples "and discuss the end result of their decision" (op cit)), but would also legitimate the childfree option.

Veveers hypothesized that there are two "types" of voluntarily

childless people, labelled "rejectors" and "aficionados" (p157). These "ideal types" are antithetical constructs, whose characteristics are summarized in Table 11.2.

Rejectors were characterized as people who reject children because they dislike them and what they imagine life with children would entail; their decisions to be childfree arise as a reaction against the disadvantages of having children. This is an argument in the economic idiom, a construct of the researcher : of her 374 New Zealand respondents, Rowland claimed only 14% said they did not like children (Wheeler p4). Reality does not 'contain' ideal types! Aficionados, on the other hand, were characterized by Veveers as those who either like children or are neutral about them. They are persuaded to remain childless more by the advantages of being childfree, than by the disadvantages of having children. In as much as that they might like children but have been successful in their plan to restrict or limit the number of them that they have (to zero), it is suggested that the aficionados may share more characteristics with parents who deliberately have small family sizes than with childfree rejectors. Veveers concluded,

> In future research on childlessness, it is important to maintain this distinction, and to recognize that in generalizations about childlessness, it is theoretically critical to differentiate the involuntary from the voluntary, and the rejectors from the aficionadoes. (p 159).

Defining those without children as <u>either</u> rejectors <u>or</u> aficionados represents a line of reasoning (by the researcher) which is qualitatively different from any <u>social</u> construction of nonparenthood. 'Reasons' for childlessness, as outlined in Table 11.2, are private and personal. Identity as a nonparent is created by social (public) interaction.

Table 11.2 Ideal Type Model of Kinds of Voluntary Childlessness

Dimension	Rejectors	Aficionados
Timing of the decision	Early articulators: decision to remain childless made clearly before marriage	Postponers: decision to remain childless made gradually after marriage
Consensus on the decision	High consensus: both husband and wife independently opted for childlessness	Low consensus: husband and wife negotiated decision: one 'converted' other to their view
Commitment to the decision	High level of commitment: parenthood rejected independently of present marriage and circumstances	Low level of commitment: parenthood might be accepted in different marriage or circumstances
Motive antecedents	Rejection of the negative aspects of a child-centred lifestyle	Attraction toward the positive aspects of an adult-centred lifestyle
Maintenance of variant worldview	Deviance avowal; acceptance-of-difference from parents; tend to dislike children.	Deviance disavowal; rejection-of-difference from parents; tend to like children

(Source: Veveers 1980:159)

11.3 The 'Childless' Image

New Zealand, Australian and American researchers have characterized childfree couples as being professionally educated, relatively affluent, and with the wife having a 'career' rather than a 'job'.

These three characteristics are linked and there is no justification for according any one (or all) of them 'causal status' for a decision to be childfree. Indeed, female career option could itself be a consequence of nonparenthood. However, a report on various early (1971-1974) studies on voluntary childlessness by Cutright and Polonko (1977:33) concluded that most couples "had above-average S.E.S, (Socioeconomic status) urban residence, low religous affiliation, later age at marriage, and very egalitarian sex roles". Callan (1982: 392) in Australia and Rowland (1982:20-21) in New Zealand reached similar conclusions. Citing Blake (1974) and Rogers (1962)[16], Barnett and MacDonald (1976:298) explained this tendency in terms of "innovation":

> ...in view of the strong American ideal favouring childbearing (Blake 1974), voluntary childlessness would seem to be an innovative concept. A review of research found that early acceptance of innovations is associated with high education and income and with low levels of dogmatism and rigidity. (Rogers 1962).

However, without running a control for self-selection, there is no indication whether such attributes characterize the childfree per se, or survey volunteers in general. Many people who are parents also exhibit these characteristics.

Many of the survey respondents did not actually know any couples without children. But it was not difficult to get these respondents to talk about the childless. Just as Richards (p90) experienced in Australia, most of these New Zealand respondents had a clear picture of what life must be like for people who, voluntarily, were childless. The survey

responses also facilitate some comparison between parents and nonparents in their perception of life with, or without children.

Responses to Question 49, agreement/disagreement with different statements about having children, revealed expected differences between individuals with/without children. The most marked differences were for the statements shown in Table 11.3.

Although there is little statistical significance attached to these figures[17], the differences do illustrate a trend which might be anticipated: couples without children were less likely than couples with children to say they considered children as inevitable, or providing special purpose or fulfilment to one's life or marriage, and they were more likely to emphasise the inconveniences caused by children.

Among both the non-parents and the parents, only a small proportion agreed that "couples who don't have children are selfish", but in both categories most of those who did agree were men. Informal interviews indicated that intellectually respondents might know that such people are not "selfish" - but practical reality is a different experience. Similarly, many less women than men (in both categories) agreed that having children was the most important function of marriage, and that one of our highest purposes in life is to have children. In other words, men appear to be more likely than women to ascribe to a 'normative package' of marriage=children (item J), childbearing = adult (items E,K) and childlessness = deviance (items F,G, L) (Table 11.4).

When discussing childlessness informally however, men deferred to their wives for opinions, as they did when discussing children. The wives, generally, focussed on the positive aspects of children, which childless people missed out on, but it was them, rather than their husbands, who attributed negative traits to the childfree. Several of the comments

Table 11.3 Survey Responses of Parents and Non-Parents, (Q49).

Questionnaire Statement	Agreement % of individuals with children n = 141	% of individuals without children n = 13
B. Having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life.	69	54
F. For most people it is inevitable that they will have children.	62	31
H. One's circle of friends changes when one has children.	74	46
I. Life without children in the home is pretty dull.	57	39
J. Having children is the most important function of marriage.	40	23
L. One of our highest purposes in life is to have children.	42	30
C. Couples ought to think seriously about the inconveniences caused by children before they have any.	69	77
D. Most couples would be happier if they did not have children.	8	15

Table 11.4 Male and Female Responses to Survey Statements (Q49).

Statement	% Agreeing Male n = 70	Female n = 84	Total n = 154
A. Mothers get more companionship from their children than from their husbands.	49	28	37
B. Having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life.	75	60	68
C. Couples ought to think seriously about the inconveniences caused by children before they have any.	75	66	70
D. Most couples would be happier if they did not have children.	10	8	9
E. A girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother.	20	8	13
F. For most couples it is inevitable that they will have children.	63	55	59
G. Couples who don't have children are selfish.	33	14	23
H. One's circle of friends changes when one has children.	74	70	72
I. Life without children in the home is pretty dull.	56	56	56
J. Having children is the most important function of marriage.	40	19	39
K. A boy becomes a man only after he is a father.	10	4	7
L. One of our highest purposes in life is to have children.	54	30	41
M. A person can feel that part of him/her lives on after death if he/she has children.	72	67	70
N. Children are precious gifts from God.	55	68	62

cited in Chapter 10 were made with regard to what a nonparent missed by not having children. Mrs Milne, however, linked marriage and children to a theme of common commitment, and in making this evaluation she introduced the themes of "materialistic" and "selfish" childless couples, explaining childbearing in an economic idiom in which money is symbolic of one's control over one's activities:

Interviewer : (re. childfree) What will that mean in terms of personal fulfilment, ie, a group of people with different lifesyles, different needs and different wants?

Mrs Milne : (re. childfree) I think 'wants' is one of the issues here. I think young people can go out and get a pretty good wage and get a car and travel or save for a house or whatever. They've got the opportunity to do it. And once they get that, they want more. They marry, they want a social life, they want the best of everything in their homes. And I can see young people getting married now; they are getting things that we ourselves have only just got in the last few years. We tended to have second-hand (etc.), and made do - but even so I acknowledge that we were better off than our parents, who had us young in the Depression days... there's just no comparison. But I sometimes think it's almost a selfish outlook by young people. They don't want to be bothered with nappies and bawling babies in the middle of the night, and things that will stop them from doing what they really want.

(re. childless who can't adopt) The ones who obviously want them must sense that there must be some fulfilment that they can't reach in their own ambitions or their own lives or something very deep, because they can't have children of their own.... But you also,...do you not think that the marriage unit of a lot of couples now who are opting not to have children, perhaps doesn't really mean quite as much, that there are so many people now who drift out of marriage, they see nothing wrong with it at all, and if there's no kids you see... nobody's hurt.

Interviewer : Are you suggesting that their view of marriage is of a less permanent.....

Mrs Milne : Yes - perhaps it's slightly shallower. They're in it for what they can get out of it and what

they can do... I don't know anybody like this, but the way that people are casting (marriage) aside, and a lot of them are young people... there can't have been that 'for keeps' thing. Our religion, we hope, would help us if we ever had strife...

Interviewer : ... Can one really separate marriage and family or marriage and children?

Mrs Milne : Yes, I really believe that's what marriage was instituted for; for providing care and a stable and loving home and place to bring up children, that it would be a natural sort of follow-through. But I also think that God gave us wills to exercise, and I believe it's possible for a couple to have a very good marriage and decide not to have children. But I still think in today's society it's the case with a lot who deliberately decide not to have them because of what they can get, personally, out of life.

Mr and Mrs Browning, however, doubted whether many people did choose to be voluntarily childless. Even parents of a one-child family were thought to be involuntarily unprolific:

Mrs Browning : It could be a trend. It may go. Because it's a novelty thing, this wife making a career, and children will only be in the way. It's a thing that's only come in the 70s really. Before that it was more people who couldn't have children for either medical reasons or some other reasons, I think.

People who didn't have children have "got everything they want, plus more. But that isn't much. They're missing out on a lot of other lives" (Mrs Browning).

Materialism and selfishness stereotyped New Zealand childless couples, as they did similar Australian, American and Canadian couples[18]. Higher potential household income is an empirical generalization pertaining to any childfree couple. Where both partners are employed, and there are no dependents, greater income is shared by fewer people, thus leading to the greater affluence that childless couples are seen to have. Parents see (or remember from their own preparental period, or imagine)

that without children one can spend more money - and time - on oneself, have more and better quality 'things', travel, entertainment, etc. Such perceptions play into the economists' arguments. But it is curious that while parents say childless couples can have or do these things because they have no children, the same parents are reluctant to see deprivation of materialistic and experiential benefits as being a 'cost' involved in their own parental status. Indeed as Mrs Browning and Richards' Australian respondents also (p93) did, parents may reject the material advantages as being inferior to the experience of having children. Reality is not economic rationality. To not reject the advantages of being childfree would appear to indicate to others that one would prefer not to have had one's own children.

Linked to the materialistic stereotype is the theme of "selfishness". Veveers' respondents were particularly sensitive to this characterization (1980:119), while in New Zealand Mrs Olde commented,

> Selfish is a dreadful word ... It sounds awful, doesn't it? It sounds as if you're grabbing.

She and her husband also raised the question of what one is being selfish about, distinguishing a literal meaning of self-ishness, from the ideological concept which is to do with materialism, in the economic sense:

Mrs Olde : People used to say, about the five year mark (of marriage), 'if you don't have children soon you're going to become so selfish that you're never going to want them! Well that's...

Mr Olde : Ah, but then again that 'selfish' has a two-way streak, in that we could have felt selfish about having a child prior to this stage.

Mrs Olde : Yes, we were selfish at one stage.

Mr Olde : We would have felt selfish toward that child.

To the Oldes, their selfishness was seen as involving wanting a child to satisfy their desire to 'have one' for its own sake, without consideration of their capacity to provide emotionally and materially for it, and without consideration "that if we had a child we would be bringing it into a world that... was in such a damn mess" (Mrs Olde). Rowland (p24), also reported concern with the unfavourable social environment, unemployment and insecurity as being influential in some of her respondents' decisions to remain chilfree. Expected to provide 'reasons' for childfreeness, respondents might invoke all manner of 'acceptable' explanations. "Selfishness" is not one of them.

As several other respondents indicated, all people are "selfish" to some extent. The Oldes indicated that there is selfishness involved in having children. In an article in Why Children? (Dowrick and Grundberg 1980) Lucy Goodison referred to the denial of selfishness which parents can adhere to:

> It seems strange that even now some people regard it as 'selfish' to admit that children bring any joys apart from those of self-sacrifice. But they give so much love. And honesty. And tenderness... (p36)

Denial of selfishness of parents appears in a dialectic relationship with denial of the material advantages of nonparenting. The notion of selfishness appears to derive from the notion of selflessness. If having children involves material, energy or time sacrifices (being selfless) then not making these sacrifices is considered selfish. Intrinsic in the argument is an assumption by parents of goodness, or desirability of voluntary selflessness. But one cannot in reality, 'be' self-less. Rather, parents deny their 'selves' in making sacrifices to or for their children. Children reinforce self socially - ie they make it whole again. It is notable that accusations of"selfishness" are rarely made of couples who are involuntarily childless (but presumably exhibit the material advantages of the childfree); they, conversely, are pitied for their lack of the advantages of having children!

Parents who denigrate the childfree for their selfishness must relate this selfishness to others, (that is, one is selfish to someone). Unless one proposes that childless couples are being selfish to other adults by not 'doing their share' of childrearing (a view not proposed by respondents in any of the earlier studies referred to, but which was implied by some of the items in Table 11.3), then one must conclude that the childless are selfish to those who do not exist, their children, by depriving them of being. It is unlikely that any respondents would extend their argument to such a philosophical degree. Rather, "selfish" is conceptualised as 'lack of sharing'.

In this context it is relevant to introduce an additional dimension of selfishness: not only is it selfish not to have any children, but it is also selfish to have only one child. Why? Because the parent is depriving the child of a sibling, and there is a risk that the child will then become selfish! People 'know' a child 'needs' interaction with other children in order to become a social being.

In the Hamilton survey respondents were asked the advantages and disadvantages of being an only child (Table 11.5). Nearly a quarter of respondents said there were no advantages (for the child); the same number were able to provide three or more disadvantages. Only two people said they saw no disadvantages in being an only child. There was little difference in responses by age or family size except that fewer of those people who had, themselves, only one child said there were no advantages. There were, however, differences in emphases between men and women. Women were more prone than men to emphasise the social or personality advantages or disadvantages - the advantage of the child having more time and attention to itself, greater chances for educational or cultural pursuits or suffering through loneliness, high parental expectations or too much adult company.

Table 11.5 Advantages and Disadvantages of Being an Only Child (% giving responses)

(a) Advantages	M (n= 70)	F 84	Total 154)
No advantages volunteered	30.0	22.6	26.0
Attention, time, from parents	37.1	47.6	42.8
Economic - money, material things	32.8	35.7	34.4
Social, educational, greater chances to fulfill potential	11.4	17.8	14.9
More involvement, communication with parents	8.6	5.9	7.1
No need to share with sibs; no hand-downs	7.1	7.1	7.1
No sib conflict	0	3.6	1.9
No response	11.4	5.9	8.4
(b) Disadvantages			
No disadvantages volunteered	1.4	1.2	1.3
Loneliness, lack of companionship	51.4	70.2	61.7
spoilt, selfish, nonsharing	61.4	51.2	55.8
Don't learn to socialize with other children	30.0	29.8	29.9
Too much time, money etc.	15.7	15.5	15.6
Overprotected	5.7	7.1	6.5
Too much adult contact	2.8	5.9	4.5
Parent's expectations too high	1.4	4.5	3.2
High responsibility to parents	0	3.6	1.9
Sole responsibility for parents in old age	0	1.2	0.6
Other disadvantages	11.4	8.3	9.7
No response, don't know	1.4	0	0.6

Most respondents in the Hamilton survey (70% of women, 58% of men) said that they desired, at the time they married, two, three or four children. Men generally desired larger families than did women. Of 154 respondents, only one woman had wanted one child; two women and one man said they hadn't wanted any children. These data support American, English, and Australian findings[19] that the one-child family is certainly too small, and may be considered less desirable than having no child. As in New Zealand, respondents had argued repeatedly that an only child is lonely, and is in danger of "being spoilt" or becoming selfish. In Australia, the parents of only children were also considered "selfish". The one-child family, like a childless family, was a practical impossibility.

Hawke and Knox discovered that pressure to have a second child could be greater than pressure to have the first (p50-51), while more recently Blake has observed that her analysis "for over 40 years of nationwide American surveys on reproductive preferences finds the one-child response to be almost an empty cell" (1981: 43). Reviewing research on only-children, Blake concluded:

> ... the disadvantages of being an only child may lie primarily in the eye of the socioculturally biased beholder. (1981b: 46)

On a range of social and personal traits, only-children did not differ significantly from children from small families. The parents of only-children, however, tended to exhibit the demographic and social characteristics of nonparents cited earlier in this chapter, more than they resembled the parents of multi-child families who were Blake's 'control' group.

In a value of children study of American women, Beckman (1976:7-8) found that those who desired to be only-child parents scored between nonparents and multi-child parents on various parameters of perceptions of 'benefits' of children, but they did not see higher costs from children than did those

who wished to have large families. Only-child mothers actually reported lower cost-perception than did women who desired large families. Such results are consistent with the differences and similaritites between parents and nonparents cited here. They also tend to support the view that nonparents and only-child parents are more akin in their perceptions of 'child value' than are either only-child parents and multi-child parents, or parents in general and nonparents. Furthermore, the stereotypic parent of an only child (especially the mother) is seen to be similar to the stereotypic nonparent in being "selfish, neurotic, cold and otherwise maladjusted." (Beckman 1976: 1)

Given these similarities it is perhaps not inconsistent that such advocates of childlessness as Ellen Peck are also advocates of one-child families. Peck legitimated her claim, that if one has to have children then one should have only one, by recourse to the concept of 'value': if one loves a child one will want to love just one; the "cheaper by the dozen" approach has a quality antithetical to love; accepting a one-child family means "that we are beginning to value and love children" (1977: 5-6). One child was seen by Peck as a compromise between none and some, a compromise between social pressure and personal desires. Beckman concluded:

> In comparison to higher parity women, women with one child who desired to bear a second child did not do so because of the personal satisfactions to be gained from children, but rather because of normative pressures and altruistic concerns involving first child and husband... these results suggest that mothers of only children generally are not enamoured with childbearing. (p11-12).

A third characteristic of the childfree stereotype, not reported by the New Zealand survey respondents, is that childless couples have dogs. Certainly the only childless couple in the New Zealand survey to be interviewed informally did have dogs (and the wife said "... they're my babies"), but

Veveers' comment regarding the incidence of pet-ownership among her Canadian sample should be noted:

> Available data suggest that the fact that about two-thirds of childless respondents owned animals is about what would be expected among couples in general. (1980:34).

To some Canadian couples (and some of Rowland's New Zealand couples)[20] the pet did serve as a positive child-surrogate. One of Fabe and Wikler's respondents expressed the nurturance and dependency ideals of childcare thus:

> (Children) love you, they hug and kiss you, you're their mother, and they depend on you to love them... But to be honest, I think of my dog Penny in the same way...But Jennifer's (daughter) a good deal more trouble than Penny, and she takes up a great deal more of my time. (p35-36).

More commonly the experience of pet ownership reinforced the disadvantages that dependency of a child might bring and only reinforced any decision not to have children. People with children might also perceive either characteristic in their pet. The prevalence of the child-surrogate theme in the childless stereotype is a logical, but emotional, extension of a perception of the 'normalcy' and desirability of nurturance.

Another dimension of Veveers' stereotype reflected an assumption that childless couples dislike children (a view also advanced by Cooper et al (p91)). Rowland (p23) observed that dislike of children was not reported as a reason for childlessness by her New Zealand couples, though it was claimed to be an important influence by over half (53%) of Bennett and MacDonald's 173 National Organisation for Nonparents (N.O.N.) members - perhaps a reflection of the ideological basis of N.O.N.. Veveers' respondents sometimes went to great lengths to prove that this was not the case, only to find themselves in the "Catch 22" (no win) situation of being told "see what a wonderful father you would make" (p120). As noted in Chapter

10, parents may relate only the disadvantages of having children (an expression of their selflessness) but such opinions serve to confirm the childless person's selfishness and dislike of children. In yet another paradox, Mrs Browning said she didn't know why her friend had had a child, given that she didn't seem to pay much attention to it - ie, assuming the mother disliked the child and/or childrearing (ie, was selfish), why didn't she remain childless (ie, be selfish)?

The resolution of these paradoxes lies not in any resolution of "selfishness" itself, but in an explication of the normalcy of nurturance which underlies ideas of both selflessness and selfishness. Most explicit comments refer to women. People assume women want to nurture. Therefore they have children. If they either have a child and do not nurture it according to some perceived norm, or choose not to have a child, they are considered 'abnormal'. Their deviant status is not usually conceptualised at an intellectual level as a physical defect, as it is with the pitied involuntarily childless, but as a moral defect. How else can those who have children, unquestioning, account for those who question, and do not?

11.4 Transitions to Parenthood.

A slightly different perspective on childlessness was gained by asking the Hamilton respondents how their lives changed with the arrival of children, and what they thought their own lives would be like if they had not had children. For several, the latter question was impossible to answer - "I don't think I could even imagine..." (Mr Leary). But for others, what life might be like without children reflected the things they thought they had given up or gained by having children - especially the 'costs' of time and energy for one's own interests.

Mr Sumner : I think it's partly because you have time to spend together doing things you enjoy doing, and once you have families you can only spend a certain amount of time, and unless your friends have families similar to your own (Mrs Sumner: "age-wise") then they don't get a chance to mix.

Mrs Sumner : We enjoyed entertaining before we had a family, but at the stage we're at now, unless you invite a whole family, you can't just have your close friends, minus their children, quite so easily. Unless you make ways, you miss out on a stimulating conversation and education. You've got to make time for those things and it would be very easy not to.....

Yet even here there was, at times, ambivalence about whether these 'costs' really were sacrifices.

Interviewer : Can you imagine what life would have been like for you without children?

Mrs Leary : I think I'd have been extremely selfish. I'm bad enough now!

Mr Leary : Oh I don't know, I don't think I could ever imagine...

Mrs Leary : No I can't imagine. It would be terribly dull, in many respects, but then I suppose we'd have done other things... but you get to an age when you can't do some of the things that you did before (you had children). I suppose study and intellectual things, would be something you could go on with. But lively things, sport and what have you, you can't keep those up forever. But I do think though, when you do have a large family, you make a much more determined effort to do things. For instance, I make a very determined effort to keep fit. I fight quite a losing battle...I fight hard to get some time to myself.

Time for themselves was also one of the important things that the Oldes thought they would have to make an effort to maintain if they had children. They also, raised the point, however, that this is difficult even without children.

Mrs Olde : I don't think that we will really have to sacrifice anything personally don't.. that's my

> personal feeling, but I feel that we're just going to have to be aware of the things that happen and make time to talk. We have to make the time to talk together now, with us both working... and the lives we lead, don't we? We're used to having to try and make time.

Nearly three-quarters (70% women, 74% men)[21] of survey respondents agreed that "one's circle of friends changes when one has children". This is somewhat surprising if one accepts a life-cycle of family formation. Yet the statistics were supported by the Oldes, who said most of their friends didn't have children, and by several of the parents who said they didn't know, personally, anyone who was childless. Mr and Mrs Sumner explained both of these tendencies - being a parent whose friends also had children, and also what it is like being a nonparent among a group of parents:

Mr Sumner : But you also tend to mix, then, with people who have families of the same age, or the same number, or the same something, because it makes the whole thing harmonize...

Mrs Sumner : Yes. Well I can well remember the first four years we were married, going along to Young Wives' Group, and I didn't have any children, and I was an outsider.
Because at that stage they were so pleased to get out of the house to get away from all their kids, but they still brought all their problems. That's what they talked about because that's what they had in common to talk about.

Having and not having children, according to the Sumners, separates people into different identity groups. The literature on childfree couples also refers to the problem of social isolation. Rowland reported that close friends who had children tended to accept a couple's decision to be childfree but "some respondents commented that if friends did not accept it, they were 'dropped'" (p26). With childfree friends these New Zealand respondents felt "a feeling of minority group status" and they together formed a support group for each other (p27). Veveers' research supported these observations. The

childfree, she wrote, needed "tolerant" friends. They rarely associated closely with couples who were parents, but if they did these parents were people who shared similar views about children and lived their lives as if they were childfree.[22]

Disassociation is not necessarily rejection of parents by the childfree. Parents might be just as likely to reject the childfree. At least the childfree see themselves being rejected. Rowland, Veveers (1975) and Cooper et al suggested that this rejection is seen to be a consequence of jealousy or envy of the childfree lifestyle, or of suspected judgement by the childfree. Rowland observed,

> Comments made by the New Zealand respondents indicate that when they are questioned (about being childfree), they perceive it as an attack rather than a genuine interest in the issue, and react defensively. (p26, emphasis added).

Childfree people aren't (seen to be) interested in other people's children, and parents think those without children don't understand. As noted in Chapter 10, several respondents in this survey expressed the question "how do you explain to someone..." the joys of parenthood? So they talk about their problems. This is the 'picture' of childrearing presented to nonparents. With nonparents, however, there is the additional problem that others do not know whether their childlessness is voluntary or involuntary, thus creating uncertainty in their social relationships which stems from an inability to resolve nonparents into opposing categories either to be pitied or scorned. Any lack of understanding between these groups would thus appear to be mutual.

11.5 Making a Choice

Many, perhaps most, parents have made no deliberate, conscious,

choice to have children. Those who are voluntarily childfree have exercised a choice. Fabe and Wikler (1970:13) referred to this choice as "liberating", but, like one of Rowland's female respondents (Wheeler:5), they saw that choice as involving new, sometimes painful or difficult, complications. If one has a child and doesn't like it, one can't take it back. On the other hand as the title of Fabe and Wikler's book indicates, women who remain undecided are "up against the clock" in that if they wait too long to make a decision they will be too old.[23] Others have claimed that "it is hard to know how to choose, partly because the choice is so new that we don't know what questions to ask ourselves" (Fabe and Wikler:13).

More recently suggestions have been made for "parenthood tests". Tests such as "Am I Parent Material?", posed by the National Alliance for Optional Parenthood (N.A.O.P.), refer to life style changes as a result of parenthood, individual motivation ("What's in it for me?"), knowledge about childrearing, and the decision-making process. However, as pointed out by Veveers (1980:163-5), such tests[24] are all implicitly antinatalist, epitomised in the introduction to the N.A.O.P. brochure:

> If you decide to have a child, it'll be a decision that will affect you for the rest of your life. Think about it... Taking responsibility for a new life is awesome.
> (Veveers 1980:164)

For centuries there was, for all <u>practical</u> purposes, no choice. But medical technology has facilitated a choice: people can, by design, be "selfish". The idea of "responsibility" has been used to make <u>individual</u> self-ishness part of social self-consciousness.

Thoen's commitment scale (1977:5-6) covers items similar to the N.A.O.P. questionnaire, but she emphasised that the scale was "a vehicle for discussion and not meant to be prescriptive." As such it was less emphatically antinatalist than the N.A.O.P

scale.

Parental choice, as an issue, stems from the implicit assumption that parenthood is inevitable. Nearly two-thirds of the Hamilton respondents agreed with the statement that for most people parenthood is inevitable (Table 11.3), while several respondents said informally that having children was just what they 'expected' to do. They saw no choice. If, Veveers argued (p165), pronatalism was made explicit, childlessness would become a viable option, a focus of conscious choice. Various studies of childfree couples have produced a common 'set' of reasons for not having children. Rowland agreed with American and Canadian findings (Barnett and MacDonald: 304; Cooper et al: 76-77; Veveers 1980) when she reported,

> Career disadvantages, greater personal freedom, and a dislike of long-term commitments, and fear of spoiling good marriages; these are the most popular reasons New Zealand couples give for deliberately deciding not to have children. (cited in Wheeler: 4).

A survey of the literature suggests that the voluntarily childless redefine the 'costs' and 'benefits' of children. Some writers have suggested that nonparents "overemphasize" the costs of children, but both Beckman's American would-be nonparents and Callan's Australian nonparents had perceptions of the costs of children similar to the respective control groups of parents, although Australian childless men were more concerned than were fathers about the responsibilities and restrictions associated with having children (Callan 1982: 395).

However Australian nonparents differed from parents in their qualitative assessment of the 'benefits' of children. Nonparents tended to focus on the more traditional values. For example, loneliness in old age, which was also cited by Rowland's New Zealand respondents, was a much more prominent

disadvantage of being childless for nonparents than it was for parents.

Callan (p396) suggested that these differences are a consequence of the public/private manifestation of the various costs and benefits. However, against this conclusion one must consider the protestations of the childfree, that they get love and companionship from their spouse (or dog), and fulfilment from their careers and that these are sufficient. Indeed, rather than it being nonparents who are defective, in lacking whatever it takes to want children, one might conclude that it is parents who are defective, in being inadequate themselves to provide or sustain their "psychological rewards". Children, to the nonparent, are not just undesired, they are unnecessary. Such rationalisations, advanced in defence of the childfree choice, should not be confused with the process of postponement and deliberation which, in reality, might characterize the exercise of 'choice' by many, if not most, childfree couples[25].

In the final analysis the 'choice' is 'made' in two stages: a choice is constructed in that the inevitability of parenthood is questioned, and then, and only then, a voluntary decision is taken to follow one or other path, ie permanent parenthood or permanent childlessness. Becoming a parent, or remaining a nonparent, are social constructions, anticipations of an unknown, which arise out of individual perceptions of the lives of others in the world.

11.6 Rejection and Denial: An Analytic Framework for Childlessness.

Superficially, the economic framework is most appropriate for an analysis of voluntary childlessness. Not only can the researcher ask what costs or benefits parents and nonparents perceive in being childfree, but people themselves appear to

see nonparenthood in these terms. The term 'childless' itself implies cost, being without something, less than complete. The term 'childfree', however, is equally ideological, implying freedom from the costs, whether material, personal or social, of children.

Investigating childlessness in this idiom, various researchers have indicated that it is not a greater awareness, or exaggeration, of the 'costs' of children which distinguishes those who have no children (or one child) from those who have several. Rather it is a reduced awareness, or understatement, of the 'benefits'. Such a conclusion reinforces the economic paradigm as a researcher's tool: the 'balance' can be between only cost and benefit. There is no place in the equation for any person to say, "Yes, I see the cost; I see the benefits; but I don't want the goods."

The problem in the paradigm can be reduced to a simple set of equations:

cost + benefit --------> child
cost + less benefit ---> no child
cost + more benefit ---> several children

What cannot be included in this set of economic equations is,

cost + benefit --------> no child,

for that would contradict the very basis of this research perspective.

Despite the highly structured nature of his research, with its scales of values, Callan has pointed the way of departure from cost/benefit analysis, by highlighting perceptions of advantages and disadvantages as grounds for not having children. Firstly, he suggested that "the costs of having children are more public, while values are more closely associated to social-psychological needs which are less tangible and more private" (1982:396), invoking this difference to explain why nonparents differed from parents in

their perceptions of the costs of children. Secondly, he used this distinction to explain why nonparents differed from parents in their perceptions of the benefits of children, observing that only those who had experienced the emotional or psychological rewards from children would be likely to select these as 'values'[26]. Thus nonparents focussed on traditional values, de-emphasising achievement-oriented values. Thirdly, and in a line of argument which comes much closer to the theme of this section, Callan explained the possibility that,

> ...the childless purposefully select the more traditional values of children as they are easier to refute than more psychologically meaningful values like love, companionship and self-fulfillment. (p395).

While the deliberate selection of values might be questioned, the idea of refuting values, an idea suggested almost in passing, could be employed as a useful way of understanding voluntary childlessness.

The literature summarized in this chapter and the responses made by survey participants, reiterate common themes which are reflected in being without children, and in the stereotype of those without children which is held by people with children. Individual rejection and denial, conflict of altruism and selfishness, and the contradiction of societal expectation and personal desires are themes which permeate the discussion. All three themes, however, focus on adults, not children. The issue is not with having or not having children, but with being or not being a parent. Childlessness, even more than parenthood, highlights the meaning which children have in making adults into parents.

Couples who choose not to have children are deviants. Their deviance is qualitatively different from that ascribed to the involuntarily childless: the voluntarily childfree not only do not have children, but they do not want children. To those who seek to make sense of this choice it is not inappropriate to

add a third, explanatory, dimension which might actually be quite untrue, ie, they do not like children. The perception that nonparents typically have pets serves to reinforce this peculiarity by highlighting some assumed 'need to nurture'.

The deviant status of the childfree has been illustrated in several ways, from the scorn or pity bestowed on them by their parental peers, to their membership of or desire for 'support' groups. Most evidence for this perceived deviance - perceived by both parties - can be categorized as denial or rejection, some of which incorporates ideas of selfishness and materialism.

Nonparents, according to Callan, reject those very traits of children which parents cite as being advantages. That this statement was too sweeping was indicated by Rowland's respondents who said they would miss the rewards which children bring (Wheeler: 5). What is rejected by nonparents, is that children are the only means of acquiring such rewards. Rather than seeing restrictions on time for one's spouse as a cost, for instance, nonparents would be likely to argue that having time for one's spouse enables them to achieve the love or companionship that parents see as a reward from having children. Similarly, having money to spend on travel, or to try out new experiences, might parallel the ability to be creative that is a reward from childrearing, or the excitment and "sense of wonder" which some parents experience during pregnancy and childbirth. The term "fulfilment" is used repeatedly, in the literature and by respondents, to describe the rewards accruing to parents - especially mothers. Nonparents reply that they do not need a child to be fulfilled. Friday, for example, wrote that when people say she would regret never having a child,

> my reply would be... that I will never try skydiving or be the president of the United States. These must be very fulfilling too. I have learned to live without them... Because I have decided not to have a child doesn't mean I never dream of what might have been. (1977:429)

Deliberate nonparents do not do the things they do in order to fill a void created by not having children. Rather, they do not have children because they do not feel any such void in their lives or, more decisively, because a child would interfere with those things they enjoy doing. The benefits of children are not rejected by such nonparents;[27] their denial is that children are the only means of fulfilment. They are not denying that children are, for many people, rewarding.

The other side of the argument is the denial, by parents, that anything can replace children. Indeed, in this survey, Mrs Browning went so far as to query whether anybody could be voluntarily childless. Another research participant, a father, suggested:

Don : I think you'll find that most childless couples are nursing a hurt underneath.

Interviewer : You're assuming that having children is still their 'ideal'? Even if they are 'happy' or have accepted their childlessness?

Don : Of course. They have no choice about that.

Interviewer : What do you mean, no choice?

Don : Well everyone is socialized into believing it's right to have children. So it's everyone's ideal.

As Richards pointed out for Australian respondents, "'everyone has children' is a 'fact' taken for granted" (p87). Perception of parenthood as intrinsic to socially constructed order is what creates the deviant status of nonparents. To choose not to parent is seen, by parents, to challenge all that they have taken for granted. The greatest challenge, one reported by respondents in American studies, and stated in New Zealand by Mr Browning (p 255), is to one's own parents. Rejecting children, it is feared, is like rejecting everything one's own parents (especially mother) did and stood for in their lives.

(Peck 1971: 182-3).

Justification of the childfree state is seen to be produced by the tension created by the conflict between societal pressure and individual desires. Respondents elsewhere have reported deliberately misleading friends and relations, particularly parents, into believing that the couple "can't" have children, or do intend to eventually.[28] The conflict is coped with by denying its existence: "Really we would like to conform, but..." Many nonparents see a need to defend their decision. Others cope by acknowledging their difference and openly rejecting parenthood; social ostracism may be mutual.[29]

Parents, however, do see a void where there are no children. Their arguments incorporate a contradiction, that people are missing something unique by not having children, but are also seen to be selfish, materialistic and to have "too much". Whether they are selfish etc. because they have no children, or have no children because they are selfish, is unimportant. The argument is a moralistic one, propounding altruism,[30] for example, as a virtue for its own sake. Aware of this indictment, some nonparents make considerable 'sacrifices' for child-related 'causes'. One of Veveers' male respondents recounted:

> I always make a point of giving big to the United Appeal when they come round at the office. The guy next to me has six kids - he shrugs and smiles and says 'Hell, they should be giving it to me', and that's all there is to it. But I know if I didn't give, they'd make a big deal out of it, so I shell out even though I don't believe such charity does much good. (1980: 119-120).

Again there is a paradox in parental perceptions. They appear to argue, "we have given up things we like in order to have children; you should not have those things that we like but cannot have; you too should have children and have to make these sacrifices." If children are all that parents claim they are (in that they pity those who, involuntarily, cannot have

them), then why are the things one gives up of such importance that those who have not made these sacrifices (and as a consequence do not have the rewards of children) are resented? Or conversely, why should nonparents be expected to want to make sacrifices for something which to them, quite literally, isn't worth it? In the economist's jargon, one should expect to pay for what one gets.

These contradictions, which are the grounds of the tension and conflict surrounding the very idea of voluntary childlessness, reflect the intrinsic order of the social world. Reproduction is no longer a biological imperative - the childfree are testimony to that - but it is a social imperative. However parents deny the possibility that 'normal' people may choose not to have children, and in explaining this aberrant behaviour invoke biological or psychological deficiencies in the couple: selfishness, coldness, mental instability, emotional immaturity, sterility, or general sickness (Veveers 1980: 13; Callan 1982: 390). Reproduction is a social imperative and deviance is sanctioned by derogatory labelling ('materialistic'; 'irresponsible'), ostracism, and in the extreme, by denial of its very existence. It is not just the 'order of things' (ie, life stages) to become a parent, but it is part of the order of social life that adults are parents.

11.7 Summary

Questioning the unquestionable, choosing not to be a parent, is to deny what to many people is their reason for living. Children not only give meaning to marriage, or to parents, but they give meaning to life. This meaning is not made explicit by questionnaires or economic paradigms, but can be revealed by adopting a framework which facilitates the discovery of conflict which is inherent in the marginality of voluntary childlessness. As deviants, nonparents reflect the 'normalcy'

of parenthood. The meanings attributed to their childfree choice add further insight to the meaning, or 'value', of children.

Notes to Chapter 11.

1. In this chapter the term 'childless' refers to any adult without children, while 'childfree' applies specifically to those who have chosen not to have children. That is, the terms are used purely as labels and no value judgment on the part of the researcher is implied.

2. That is,to be a parent is both model and modal behaviour.

3. There is conflicting 'evidence' relating to the apparent incidence of childlessness among divorced people - see Chester, 1974: 11.

4. Some American data purporting to 'show' the increase in voluntary childlessness are similarly misleading, referring for instance, to the increase in incidence of childlessness among wives aged 20 - 24 years, and 25 - 29 years between 1960 and 1975. (Veveers 1980: 156, n1).

5. 20.7% were childless after seven years, but he added (p 140) that "even the highly reproductive 1947 marriage cohort produced only 2.9% of all its first births after seven years of marriage had elapsed" implying that this might be the most which could be expected for the 1969 cohort. This conclusion seems contradictory in that a highly reproductive cohort would be expected to have most first births early in marriage.

6. Pers. comm. Ken Daniels (Dept. of Social Work, University of Canterbury), April 1983. Mr Daniels is currently researching infertility in New Zealand.

7. In August 1983 it was estimated that of every 2000 New Zealand couples who had currently applied to adopt only one couple in 10 would have a child placed with them for adoption. While the number of children to be placed had fallen dramatically (nationally 1982 approx. 500, 1980 approx. 900, 1975 approx. 1800), the number of applicants had remained relatively static. Of 179 Hamilton applicants in 1981, 75 were childless couples. According to the statistics presented, only 5% of these 75 couples could expect to become adoptive parents. In some areas application lists had closed. Couples are being forced to consider the options which include becoming 'childfree'. (Source: Sherson 1981: 77-78; TVNZ "News" 19 August 1983).

8. AID (Artificial Insemination by Donor) is the major (not the only) method of assisting couples where infertility is due to male problems. An estimate of approx 1500 couples desiring assistance with respect to infertility is therefore conservative, and can give no indication of the total number of infertile couples, which must include those who have never sought any assistance with achieving pregnancy.

9. In the United States of America the proportion of college women preferring to be childless rose from 1% to 9% between 1961 and 1971 (Blake 1974: 34) and the proportion of white 18-39 year old wives expecting to be childless rose from 3% to 4.8% between 1967 and 1975 (Veveers 1980: 156). Harper (1980: 8) and Veveers (1973: 357; 1980: 2) both estimated in the range 5% to 7% of American couples as being voluntarily childless. On the other hand, Westoff (1978: 55) predicted that in the immediate future 10 - 15% of couples will remain voluntarily childless.

10. See Thoen, cited in Research Summary from Business and Professional Women's Foundation, 1977; Veveers 1980: 14; Cooper et al 1978.

11. See Callan 1980a, 1980b, 1981.

12. Eg. Callan's (1982) Australian respondents were 50 childless wives and 35 of their husbands (and a matched sample of parents) contacted by word-of-mouth referrals and notices in university classes; Veveers' (1980) total Canadian sample comprised 120 childless wives and 36 husbands solicited via newspaper, radio and television articles and advertisements, as well as word-of-mouth requests.

Cooper et al (1978) solicited 55 American childfree couples by personal contacts, advertising and from membership lists of the National Organisation for Non-parents (N.O.N.). Rowland's (1982) New Zealand respondents were 183 childfree men and 190 childfree women solicited via newspaper and magazine articles and advertisements.

Other unpublished doctoral research reported in the literature (eg Thoen 1977) also pertained to small self-selected samples, while such studies as those of Barnett and MacDonald (1976) which drew a systematic sample of N.O.N. members also relied, indirectly, on self-selection.

13. Some of Veveers' respondents acknowledged that giving birth to a baby would be a "new experience" and as such would be attractive, but at the end of it all one is left with the baby - for keeps!

14. The Outsiders, cited in Veveers 1980: 150 .

15. Veveers (1980: 150-154) has indicated the inappropriateness of aligning nonparenthood with feminist or Zero Population Growth (Z.P.G.) organisations. Feminism is essentially pronatalist, in that motherhood is assumed as one - albeit not the only - role of women. Z.P.G. advocates assume universal parenthood, in that it is excessive procreation, not procreation itself, that they are opposed to. Even NAOP itself is not explicitly anti-natal, implying as it does that parenthood is optional - a factor which influenced its disruption in membership and disassociation with the more militant advocates of N.O.N.. Rowland (1980: 24), like Veveers, questioned the importance of "over-population" as a motivation for remaining childfree.

16. References cited by Barnett and MacDonald were:

Judith Blake, 1974 'Can we believe recent data on birth expectations in the United States?' Demography 11: 25-44.

E.M. Rogers, 1962 Diffusion of Innovations Free Press: New York.

17. The total sample of childless individuals numbered only 13.

18. Callan 1982: 390; Richards 1978: 90-92; Barnett and MacDonald 1976: 307; Veveers 1980: 7, 113.

19. Busfield and Paddon 1977: 146; Callan 1980b: 20; Hawke and Knox 1977: xiv; Richards 1978: 231-6; Blake 1981b: 43.

20. One of the New Zealand childfree women is reported to have written: "we have a cat and find we can lavish our care on her without many of the problems of parenthood..." (Wheeler: 5).

21. But only 6 out of 13 childless respondents agreed with this statement.

22. Such couples might include those who regretted ever having had children, those who had only one child because more would bring the kind of restrictions the childfree also wish to avoid, and those who, despite children, persist in living an adult-centred life-style.

23. A report from the British National Association for the Childless stated that many couples do not realise that fertility decreases considerably with age. "Twenty-four is considered the ideal age, physically and mentally, to have a child but women who want careers and homes are likely to consider this at least four years ahead of their own personal schedules. So many couples run out of time." (Christchurch Star, 02/05/83, emphasis added).

24. For example, those by Elizabeth Whelan (1975) and Peck and Granzig (1978), cited in Veveers 1980: 163.

25. Veveers found that 2/3 of her Canadian respondents were postponers; Thoen and Cooper et al, referring to American respondents, tended to concur. These studies were conducted during the early-mid 1970s. By contrast, Callan and Rowland, studying childfree Australians and New Zealanders in 1980, indicated that postponers were the minority, and that most couples had made a firm decision to be childfree relatively early in their relationship.

26. This is a tacit acknowledgment that such 'values' can not be assumed 'reasons' for having children.

27. Veveers' "aficionados" who appreciate the advantages of being childfree, rather than the disadvantages of being parents.

28. Callan (1980b: 26) reported that Australian only-child parents resorted to similar deception, telling people they were unable to have more children. Such nonparents "felt that pity was easier to endure than criticism".

29. Veveers' "rejectors".

30. Altruism was listed as one of Hoffman and Hoffman's nine basic values. (1973: 46, 49-50).

Chapter 12

ECONOMICS AND BIOLOGY: PARADIGMS FOR UNDERSTANDING THE 'VALUE' OF CHILDREN

12.1 Introduction.

Parenthood and nonparenthood, like ideas of 'family', have been understood by imputing a sense of order to the meanings respondents were understood to have communicated. Not only has the research been ordered by discussing children in the context of family and parenthood, but it is believed that everyday people themselves understand having children by imputing such ideas of order. That is, these ideas are employed as paradigms for making sense of their fertility behaviour or for understanding what researchers call the 'value' of children.

However other ideas might also be employed in order to understand what having children means. The researchers discussed in Part One of this thesis referred to economic 'values'. In this chapter we ask whether everyday people do, in practice in the everyday world (as distinct from in theory, as expressed to a survey researcher), make sense of having children by recourse to explanations couched in an economic idiom. Alongside economic interpretations of 'value' which arose from academic arguments, are those interpretations which arose from the everyday people who were studied in this research. These include biological interpretations, which were sometimes alluded to in previous chapters. In this chapter these biological ideas are made explicit as we ask to what extent ideas to do with biology provide practical explanations of what it means to have children.

The concept of a paradigm has been only implicit in earlier

empirical chapters. As sense-making devices, paradigms are employed by everyday people as well as by researchers. In this chapter the use of these paradigms is elaborated on by considering how each represents the respondent's world. The researcher's paradigm is represented by the questionnaire survey, whereby understandings are deduced from responses to structured questions (coded, tabular, fixed-choice or structured-choice[1]) which were obtained by formal interviewing. Responses pertaining to questions incorporating 'economic' or 'biological' concepts are referred to as indications of the researcher's perception of the respondent's sense-making procedures, as they might be understood from the survey. By contrast, informal discussions with respondents are used as a direct method for understanding the meanings that they themselves expressed. In this manner the incorporation of notions of 'economics' and 'biology' in their own sense-making procedures is explored.

12.2 Formal Replies : The Researcher's Perspective.

'Economics' and 'biology' are appropriate concepts to employ in this investigation : many demographic studies derive from an economic model, while, from a different perspective, reproduction, organically or mechanically defined, is a biological activity.

The next step in the deterministic argument is without any logical justification, but is simply a step from the particular to the general: if biology and economics are considered relevant to fertility (even 'key' variables) by researchers, then they will (ie, should) be relevant also to the respondents being studied. Biology and economics are considered aspects of

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1. Footnotes to Chapter 12 are placed at the end of the chapter, p 408.

both worlds. Hence, step three, they will be factors in the equations everyday people are expected or assumed to deduce when in the process of determing their childbearing behaviour.

On the basis of this rationale, and in accordance with the variety of similar value of children research which has been reported in the literature, the following questions were included in the Hamilton survey questionnaire :

Q56. Which of these things for you are reasons why you had (would have) a first child?

Q57. And which things for you are reasons why you had (would have) more than one child?
C. To have help in running the house or business/farm.
D. To provide security in old age.
F. To make you feel fulfilled as a man/woman.
J. To have the experience of being pregnant (your wife being pregnant).

Q58. Which of these things for you are, or would be, reasons why you would not have any children?

Q59. And which things are reasons why you did, or would, limit the number of children you had?
P. The amount of money available for you as a couple.
R. Crowding in your home.
S. The unpleasantness of (your wife) being pregnant.
V. Your (wife's) ability to have a career.

Q49. For each statement I want you to tell me if you agree strongly, agree slightly, disagree slightly or disagree strongly.
E. A girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother.
K. A boy becomes a man only ~~only~~ after he is a father.

Q46. Now how many children would you (have) like(d) to have altogether?

Q47. Can you tell me some of the reasons why you would like to have (had) (x number of) children?

Additional questions referring to infertility and adoption were asked (see Appendix v(e), Questionnaire Q70-76). An open-ended

question regarding advantages and disadvantages of being an only-child was also expected to elicit some 'economic' responses.

Although they are not always made explicit, three dimensions to the 'cost of children' argument are implied in survey reports: the effect of financial resources (money, housing, possessions) on whether or not to have any children, on when to have children, and on how many to have (or when to stop). In Australia, for instance, Callan (1980: 1, 18) reported that the economic costs of children (potential for savings and cost of housing as well as material input) were mentioned in connection with all births, but were the most frequently offered reason for delaying a first birth ; couples justified their desire to limit family size on the basis of wanting "the best of everything" for their children (p45).

Responses to the Hamilton survey questionnaire tended to support Callan's conclusions. Nearly a quarter (23%) of all respondents volunteered their "reason for desiring x children" was to be able to give them enough time, money, etc. This proportion was broken down more significantly into 51% of those who wanted 2 children, 24% of those who wanted 3, and 5% who wanted 4, suggesting time and money as being a 'limiting factor', or the "threshold effect" Arnold et al referred to:

> A review of all the data from this study suggests that there is a threshold effect involving economic costs of children. While such costs are generally recognised, they do not become a controlling element until some minimum family size has been achieved. (p149).

The reasons respondents gave for stopping at a particular family size, rather than continuing to have children, were related to the financial costs of children. Respondents rationalized their family size limitation on financial grounds. In this context Ware's comment might be appropriate:

> It is socially more acceptable to say that one would like more children but cannot afford them than to imply that one puts some personal, 'selfish' goal before further childbearing. (1978: 24).

Indeed, respondents in Arnold et al's study did not say they would have more children if their incomes doubled.

In a similar vein, 28% of Hamilton respondents agreed that the amount of money available to them as a couple might be a reason for having no children[2], while this proportion rose to 60% as a reason for limiting their number of children. Even more dramatically, the 8% who agreed that crowding in the home would stop them from having any children, rose to 37% for limiting family size. In both instances more men than women agreed with economic reasons for remaining childless, but more women than men agreed that these were reasons for limiting their number of children.

A third of respondents (both men and women) volunteered economic or material gains as an advantage of "being an only child". Less than a quarter of respondents (24% of men, 23% of women) agreed that the wife's career opportunity would be a reason for limiting the number of children they had. For the structured items in the questionnaire (see Table 10.1,p278) the amount of money available was the most frequently agreed upon reason for limiting family size. There is some debate, however, as to whether a wife's career opportunity cost is seen by women in monetary, or financial, terms. For instance, Ware op.cit: 13) noted that to women from "developing" countries opportunity cost was "much more evident in the literature than in real life".

The three potential sources of information regarding economic benefits of children used in the Hamilton survey were examined from two points of view : (a) what the respondents or actors said or did about their children, or children generally, and (b) what they said or did about their parents. Economic

'benefits' were briefly dismissed by survey respondents. In the structured item only 1% (2 women) agreed that a reason for having one child, or more than one child, was to have help with the family business or farm, and 6% (5 men, 4 women) gave "to provide security in our old age" as a reason for having one child (4% gave it as a reason for having more than one child). No respondents volunteered conventional 'economic' reasons as justification for their desired family size. Conversely, very few of the respondents reported providing food, money or shelter for their own parents.

The preoccupation of the formal part of the survey with 'rational reasons' for fertility behaviour resulted also in a paucity of suggestions from respondents which could be classified, in the context of survey aims, as specifically 'biological' reasons. Responses to questions intended by the researcher to elicit such information are summarised in Table 12.1.

The responses in Table 12.1 indicate that biological attributes might be part of a post facto rationalization about fertility - or might even be considered prior to the reproductive act. But these responses suggest another influence on either the responses given or the individual reasoning process, viz. the gender of the respondent. Being pregnant, as a social or physical state, appeared to be more important to women than men - the experience of a pregnancy was desired by more women than men and the unpleasantness of pregnancy was said to be a reason for restricting fertility by less women than men, this despite the "unpleasantness" being considered being stipulated as unpleasantness for the wife. It would appear that women like (or tolerate) being pregnant more than men like or accept their wives being pregnant.

Conversely, men appeared to relate women's adult-gender status to parenthood more than did women, and more than either did for men. However, the question fails to distinguish whether this

Table 12.1 Proportions of Respondents in Agreement with Fertility-related Statements (Q 49,56,57, 58,59).

Survey Statement	% of Respondents Agreeing		
	Male	Female	Total
(n =	70	84	154)
A girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother	20	8	13
A boy becomes a man only after he is a father	10	4	7
A reason for having a first child was/would be to make you feel fulfilled as a man/woman[3]	31	32	32
A reason for having a second (or more) child was/would be to make you feel fulfilled as a man/woman	19	9	14
A reason for having a first child was/would be for the experience of pregnancy	15	27	22
A reason for having a second (or more) child was/would be for the experience of pregnancy	10	17	14
A reason for having no children would be the unpleasantness of pregnancy	9	8	8
A reason for limiting the number of children would be the unpleasantness of pregnancy	24	19	21

parent status was considered by respondents to be a physical state (ie, related to fertility or reproductive capacity) or whether it was a social state (ie, the social requirements of parenthood made people 'grown up'[4]). This sex difference was not apparent when respondents were asked if "fulfilment as a man/woman" was, or would be, a reason for having a first child. One interviewer commented, regarding 'a girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother',

> A lot of people took exception to that and a lot of men laughed at it, but on the other hand ... on (k), a boy becomes a man only after he is a father, ... there was a complete reversal and I think it used to shock me because they (men) would laugh or ridicule the women part but when it came to the man part it was a different story.

Questions pertaining to infertility and adoption also reflected 'biological' attributes of having children. The majority (96%)[5] of respondents recognized that either the male or female partner could be responsible for an inability to conceive. However, questions about the advantages and disadvantages of adopting children indicated considerable ambivalence. A third of the respondents saw no advantages, but only 12% saw no disadvantages. Choice of sex (16%) or avoidance of health problems (10%) were seen as advantages, but the greatest biological emphasis in adoption was on the disadvantage of not knowing about inherited traits, or "what kind of blood" the child might have (29%), and for some people, the worry that because the child would be likely to have been born exnuptially, it might inherit its mother's "bad blood". As indicated in Table 12.2, women mentioned most of these 'biological' characteristics more frequently than did men.

Yet despite the evident ambivalence and uncertainty, the majority of respondents in the survey (88%) said that an infertile couple should adopt a child rather than remain childless. Even if they could bear their own child, adoption,

Table 12.2a Advantages of Adopting a Child, Rather Than Bearing One's Own.

Stated Advantage	% Volunteering Advantage		
	Male	Female	Total
(n=	70	84	154)
No advantages	31	37	34
Avoids problems with pregnancy and birth	29	38	34
Can choose sex of child	10	20	16
Can help a disadvantaged child	23	8	15
Can determine health or age; avoid handicaps or genetic problems	9	11	10
It would help the marriage (if the couple can't have their own)	14	5	9
The woman can work until the baby arrives	0	2	1
No response given	6	7	7

Table 12.2b Disadvantages of Adopting a Child, Rather Than Bearing One's Own.

Stated Disadvantage	% Volunteering Disadvantage		
	Male	Female	Total
(n=	70	84	154)
No disadvantages	17	7	12
Ignorance of "blood", genes, etc ; wouldn't continue "family line"	26	32	29
Difficulty in bonding; lack of commitment to the child	26	8	16
Social problems - child upset at discovering it is adopted	13	9	11
Parents insecure about birth parents regaining the child	6	7	7
Lack of birth, pregnancy and nursing experience	3	10	7
Might have "bad blood" and personality problems (related to illegitimacy)	7	5	6
Child might have no allegiance to adopted family	4	4	4
Parents unable to tell child it is adopted	4	4	4
Adoption causes stress between couple and other children	1	5	3
Tendency to blame birth parents for any problems with the child	0	5	3
Miss out on the "wonder" about sex, appearance, etc of child	1	4	3
Other disadvantages (less than 3% mentioning)	17	31	25
No response	6	11	8

if they chose, was thought a "good idea" by 25% of respondents and to 43% it "didn't really matter" how people had children. Of those who thought it a "bad idea", several volunteered that this was because such babies should be left for infertile couples. Adoption, for other people, therefore appeared to have general approval.[6]

One might summarise these survey responses by concluding that economic factors do enter into fertility decisions for some people, especially those who have small (2, 3 child) family sizes or who desire few children. Money available to the couple, and crowding in the home, were also seen as limiting factors on family size. Economic benefits, as defined in the survey, are not regarded as 'motives' for having children. The experience of pregnancy was - as might be expected - important to more women than men as a reason for having children. Ambivalence about adoption suggests a concern with genetic continuity in family-formation although as a social act adoption for other people was acceptable. Finally, some gender differences were evident in the responses. One might conclude that men were more likely than women to mention 'economic' rationalizations for fertility, and women were more likely than men to mention 'biological' factors.

Such responses, from the researcher's perspective, indicate a process of childbearing which comprises a sequence of isolated 'rational decisions'. Most of these decisions appear to be made <u>after</u> a specific number of children have been born, although it is possible that some women might decide to have a child for the experience of being pregnant. But the 'reasons' are the researcher's reasons, not those of the respondent, and the respondent had only two options, <u>viz.</u> to agree or disagree with them. It is possible that neither agreement <u>nor</u> disagreement represents the respondent's actions. Whatever the correspondence <u>might</u> be between the two, the survey responses, like the questions asked, cannot themselves provide verification. The survey questionnaire might have been only an

intellectual game. Verification must come from the world.

12.3 Informal Responses: The Subjects' Points of View.

12.3 (i) 'Economics'.

By contrast with the formal survey responses, financial or economic aspects of childrearing were barely mentioned during informal discussions. Mrs Leary (who had 8 children) was somewhat incredulous when she said of her business acquaintances who gave economic reasons for limiting their families,

> They've got two children and they think that's all they can afford! They've got, they go away for trips...

The Brownings specified the material things Mrs Leary appeared to be about to mention. But to the Brownings (who had 3 children), this material gain "isn't much":

> Mrs Browning : ... to me there's more in life... you can only go so far with materialistic things, can't you? And then where do you go?

Mrs Sumner thought people of her parents' generation, who had brought up their children during the Depression, were more aware of the cost of things generally, and this affected their attitude to how one should bring up children. For example, if one paid for music lessons for the children then one (parent) must make sure they did their practice. She said this emphasis on money led to some disciplinary conflicts between parent and grandparent. But she made no reference to the perceived cost influencing ideas about numbers of children.

The only specific reference to costs associated with having children was made by the childless woman cited on page 328 ,

who explained their initial decision to have no children at all as being partly because they felt they did not have the financial ability to provide a child with a "home". It is possible then, that people are aware of how much, in monetary terms, children and associated 'needs' (such as housing) 'cost'. That the idea of 'cost' is perpetrated to the children themselves, was evidenced by an assignment given to a class of seven-year-olds at a Hamilton school: each child was asked to calculate, on the basis of 'current prices' what he/she was "worth". The anecdote (see Fig. 12.1) characterizes an idea of economic value of children as perceived by everyday people : economic cost is monetary (expenditure) cost; actual cost and perceived cost are not necessarily the same; tangible costs are emphasized over intangible costs ; it is assumed that what one pays (cost) is the same as what the price is; and in the final analysis the figures don't necessarily add up. In addition, the time span over which one calculates this cost is ill-defined.

The question and answer in Fig. 12.1 contain two theoretical assumptions which are significant in economic arguments : value (what one is worth) is equated with cost, and the significance of any particular cost is a matter of perspective. In asking the question, "how much are you worth?", the teacher - no doubt unintentionally - told these children that their value could be estimated in terms of monetary units. An alternative question such as "how much does it cost to keep you?" (which is probably what the teacher meant to ask) would have carried quite different implications. Equating such 'cost' with 'value' risks providing 'evidence' for the kinds of calculations referred to by H.N. Davie (see Fig. 12.2).

To reinforce individual impressions, media presentations inform New Zealanders that children do cost money - both parents' and the state's. Many of these statements, like those made in other countries, (see Dublin (ed) 1974), have been connected with poverty research. Such a statement, referring to Britain

Assignment :

"Think about all the money that your parents need to spend on you. Make a list of all the things that you need (especially books, clothes, toys, food). Look in newspapers or ask adults for the prices of these necessities.

How much are you worth ?"

A seven-year old's answer :

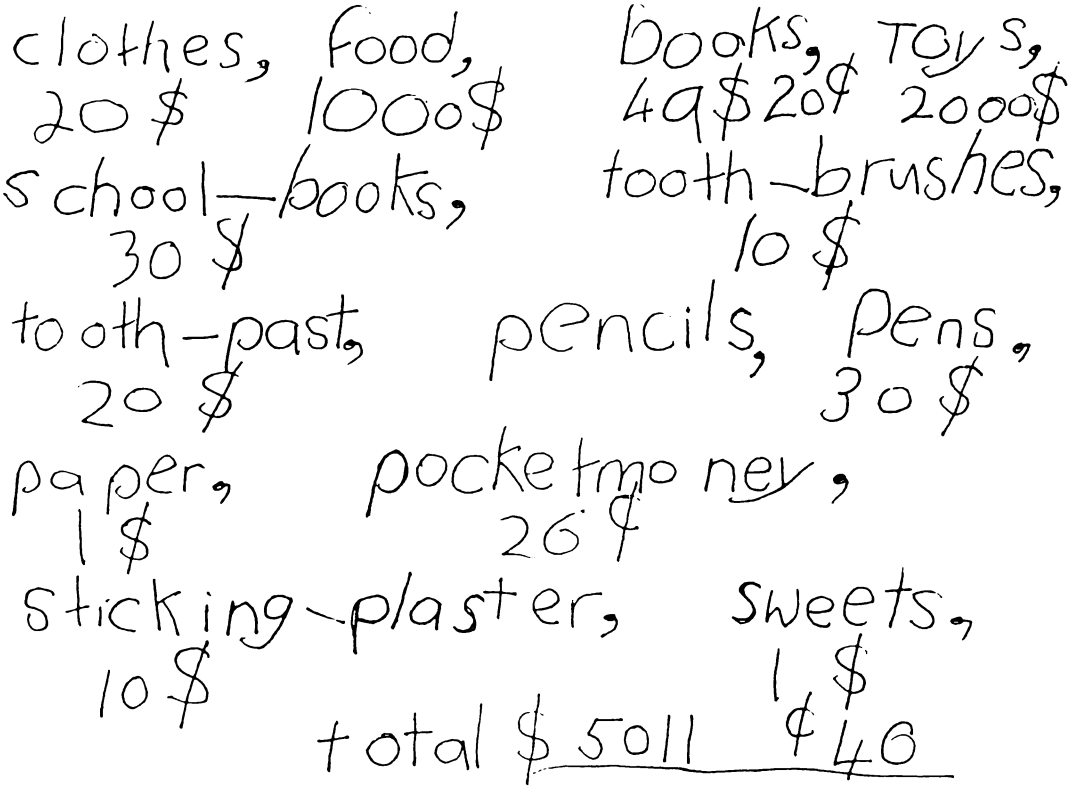
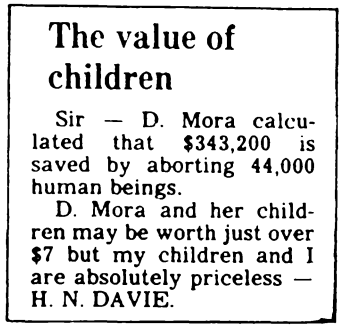


Fig. 12.1. The 'Value' of a Child - Child's Answer To a Teacher's Definition.



The value of children

Sir — D. Mora calculated that $343,200 is saved by aborting 44,000 human beings.

D. Mora and her children may be worth just over $7 but my children and I are absolutely priceless — H. N. DAVIE.

Fig. 12.2 The 'Value' of Children.
(Source : Christchurch Star, 6.9.83).

in the 1930's, as "children are usually born to those who can least easily afford to support them" (op.cit:30) had its parallel in New Zealand in 1981 when Mrs Leary said,

> ... it's the people on the lower income that do have the large families. It's sad, isn't it? I think it is.

Generally, however, monetary cost does not seem to stop people from having any children. Perceived 'cost' might lead to a delay in childbearing, and it probably is a factor in terminating family size, but the subjects spoken to during this part of the research tended to emphasize more their ability to provide 'adequately' for individual children yet to be born, rather than to talk about depriving parents themselves, or those children already born. Against this, one must recognise that of these subjects only one couple had what New Zealanders (as represented in the survey responses) would term a 'large' (5 plus) family, and all couples exhibited what the researcher subjectively categorised as 'above average' material possessions and financial status[7]. The situation of a low income or unemployed couple considering an extra child to provide for might be quite different: the relative deprivation to be borne by existing family members would be expected to be significantly greater in both objective terms (the amount of money and goods to go round) and subjective terms (how it is felt by the individuals).

'Cost' is a relative term. Certainly some subjects talked about, for example, the 'cost' of music lessons or private schooling ; Mr Cox said that "children are an endless pit on money and things". But these were statements of 'how things are', not representations of conscious decision-making with respect to fertility. Such references to 'cost' were of quite a different dimension from what might be expected from a person with few material assets, low or erratic income, and four children under the age of five, who might say he "cannot afford" another child (because) they 'cost' so much.

Just as few references were made to the economic cost of children, so also few subjects mentioned what are conventionally termed economic 'benefits' of children: labour, monetary contribution, or help in old age.

During the informal interviews passing reference was made to 'labour' by only two respondents. Mrs Sumner commented that her children were "very much inclined if there's help needed" but she did not make any issue of this. On the other hand, when Mrs Leary's younger children were babies the older ones had helped to look after them. But it seemed that this was not an automatic assumption, and neither was the family situation at all 'typical' of the survey respondents. When asked if this 'child help' meant the mother could spend more time doing other things, Mrs Leary was amused but replied emphatically,

> No, it just meant that I could cope!

In a similar way she referred to how "useful" one of her daughters was at housework, something appreciated because of the demands by other family members to be cared for. But Mrs Leary's responses do <u>not</u> indicate that is <u>why</u> they had children (they were Catholics and <u>said</u> they had no choice, but had always 'wanted' children). Conversely, child help was needed because of the size of the family (8 children).

Certainly the children of most of the respondents were younger than the Leary children. But when asked what they might expect their children to do for them, the Sumners, for instance, referred to less tangible actions - being honest, giving emotional support, being concerned and understanding. Although they said they hoped their children "wouldn't let us <u>want</u>" the Sumners referred mostly to the kind of emotional security which they and others discussed with reference to their own parents. With the exception of Mr Milne, whose father had had to be taken into Mr Milne's sister's home to be nursed by Mr Milne

and his sister, all these respondents said that they would not house their elderly parents if they could possibly help it. The 'reasons' were various. For instance, Mrs Milne said,

> I think that a lot (of social security) has led to families not being responsible for each other, whether we like it or not. You know, I can honestly say that much as I love my parents very much, I have to say that I treasure the privacy of my own home and my decision-making over my children without any interference, and I wouldn't like to have my parents living here at all. But, if there were no welfare society, I would be the last one who would see them out on the street. And I think that families, if they were forced to, then living conditions would be different. Like (Mr Milne's sister), they've got a granny-flat for her mother-in-law.

Mrs Sumner said that when her parents were physically unable to do things for themselves she would see that these things were done. Parents, she said, wouldn't want to live with their children :

Mrs Summer : My mother-in-law has always said that she has no intention of living with either of her sons if it can be avoided.

.....

It's in the European race, I think more than any other. It's probably a two-way thing. I had the experience of a grandmother who had lived with an aunt and uncle of mine who were very much younger, and had a young family. That particular woman wouldn't live with any other of the family. It was the youngest son that she wanted to live with, and she was a fair bear. And I think my mother has been aware of that situation. Her own father, they managed to get a house straight opposite mother's place, which was the next best thing. (Mr Sumner's) grandmother lived in a little house at the back of her son, almost until she died, and so was within the family, close concept.

I don't think I can imagine either of my in-laws living in this house if the time came. I don't think I would be prepared to give up my independence, because I think that's what it is. I've got a close friend (whose) father-in-law had moved in, and she has found it so much of a strain. She said she couldn't even speak to the children as she wanted to, because he was always

> there .... The relationships are altered completely.
> We really don't face up to why we don't want this (living in) to happen .... it's my intimacy with (husband) and with my children. And his also, because I think it alters. You tend to have your best face on all the time and if you do blow up, it's all out of proportion. Maybe if they were always there things would change after a year or so ... I don't know.

Despite the references by these respondents to situations where elderly parents had lived with their children, these were not reported as happy, or even satisfactory, arrangements for the parents or children. The general belief is that most parents do not want to live with their children ; parents have been 'brought up' to be independent of their adult children. Parallelled with this independence is the independence of the child, and his/her reluctance to share his/her own privacy. As if to protect this privacy, adult children sometimes reported going to considerable lengths to ensure that elderly parents are cared for, whether in their own homes or in institutions. Such concern does represent emotional security, but it is not economic security in the sense in which one refers to old age support in, for example, peasant societies.

My general observations in the everyday world have also revealed few explicit references to economic benefits of children. As mentioned in Chapter 7, the 'work ethic' is strongly adhered to in New Zealand, with children commonly expected to share in household tasks (see Laurence Brown 1967: 82-83). Observations do, however, suggest some support for Hoffman & Hoffman's conclusion that employed mothers are less prone to impose such tasks on their children than are either unemployed urban mothers or rural mothers.[8] It is possible that rural New Zealanders do perceive some economic benefit in children as suggested by comments which referred to the need for children to stay at home during holidays 'to help out' at peak times with, eg, lambing or haymaking. An Accident Compensation Commission spokesman made the following comment

during a radio programme[9] :

> Children are very, very handy to have on the farm. I know from experience. They can open gates, run messages, etc.

The A.C.C. man was actually referring to the dangers associated with children doing farm work, particularly driving and riding on tractors. The inconsistency of children being permitted to drive tractors on farms when children are not permitted to drive cars on roads, is somewhat similar to the lack of implementation of the compulsory education act in instances where parents 'needed' their children to stay home in order to work (see Chapter 7). In one case 'work' appeared to override education, in the other it overrides safety.

Despite active searching for economic references to children, however, they were found rarely - and almost all were made with reference to a farming situation. But farming in New Zealand is a way of life, a family enterprize, not a 40-hour-a-week vocation. It is a way of life for children as well as adults. Children do milk cows, drive tractors, prepare teas for shearers, open gates and run messages. Children are 'useful'. But there is no justification for concluding that that is why people have them, or that their utility even enters into a fertility decision-making process. Even passing references can mislead, as evidenced by a farmer's wife who told me that, because she was sick, her daughter

> ... sent out food today, casserole etc. Always rises to the occasion. Just as well we had her, wasn't it?

The woman, who at other times variously referred to the daughter as an "after-thought" or an "accident", would have undoubtedly been more than mildly insulted at any suggestion that the child was born in order to provide food for her parents in their old age.

What children are, once born, does not necessarily mean that is why they were born.

12.3 (ii) 'Biology'.

In their list of nine 'values' of children, which has formed the basis of most subsequent research on value of children[10], the Hoffmans did not specify any biological 'value' apart from that included in their category 3, "group norms regarding sexuality". Biological aspects of childbearing and childrearing were discussed, however, but the authors concluded that,

> the biological hypothesis is not useful for explaining cultural variations and historical trends. It has therefore been omitted from the value schema.
> (1973: 46).

In the light of the informal interview material obtained during the present research, this omission warrants some consideration. The Hoffmans appear to have excluded biological values because their argument was restricted to the biological nature of biology, not the social nature of biology. They argued that if one, as a researcher, accepts the universality of, for instance, maternal 'instinct', or responsiveness to babyishness triggers, as biological attributes, then these are not useful in explaining variations in childbearing behaviour or motivation. The authors appear to have overlooked the significance of such perceived biological factors if they are accepted (believed in) in a varying manner by the people they are studying.

Their neglect is a consequence of the research perspective taken. A similar example in my own experience came from a marine ecologist who asserted that the 'reason' people had children was, "Well, it's all biology, of course!". The

critic's occupation makes his comment significant. It seems likely that one of the explanations for the neglect, or relegation, of biological notions of childbearing by sociologists and demographers, has to do with their particular research perspectives. But a fundamental premise of the present research is that it is what the subject thinks, how she/he views the world, which matters - not how the researcher assumes the world to be. The two have to be distinguished .

In very simple terms, ordinary people do think about childbearing in biological terms. This thinking was reflected in talk which occurred informally, rather than in responses to questionnaire items. For many people their talk indicated that biology might be an important aspect of their thinking about childbearing and childrearing.

For heuristic purposes, biological talk might be categorized under three topics (which in some talk overlap):

Researcher's Categories	Respondents' Categories
ethology	behaviour "drives" "instincts" bonding
physiology	virility fecundity
genetics	"blood" "race" "colour"

While the labels of the researcher's categories are biological in a formal scientific sense, those respondents' categories in quotation marks, concepts so labelled by the respondents themselves, are biological in a naturalistic sense. Perhaps derived from a notion of science, they at the same time represent the reality they perceive, as 'natural' (from nature)

dimensions or qualities of human existence[11]. Respondents' categories not contained in quotation marks are the researcher's labels for biological notions expressed, but not necessarily labelled as such, by respondents - for example ideas of 'manhood' (virility) and ability to copulate (sexuality). The researcher's physiological category thus overlaps the ethological.

Social connotations of biology are not new. For hundreds of years barren women have been stigmatised. Even today, when many, perhaps most, people 'know' infertility is not solely a female problem, people focus on the childless wife of a couple. Often they do not know how to treat her; it is often considered less painful to avoid the topic altogether. For instance, Mrs. Sumner recounted a story of a childless friend of her mother's who felt 'left out' of child-centred ('family') activities, yet whom her mother did not want to bother with tales of child worries, or upset her, in her perceived deprivation, with stories of happy times with the children. It was considered that this woman was 'better off' kept apart from childish trivia. Yet the woman was reported to have said, many years later, that if only she could have been included, been "allowed" to take the baby for a walk or help with the children, "it would have helped".

Most people in the survey knew that either partner could be responsible for an inability to conceive. However, it was the woman who was expected to be concerned or upset about it. The notion of 'maternal instinct' (there is not talk of 'paternal instinct') was invoked to explain this perceived or expected concern. As Mrs Sumner explained,

> There is this thing called the maternal instinct, and I think that's a very very powerful thing.

The biological emphasis on childbearing was greater for women than men. Women were supposed to feel the 'urge' to have

children. Indeed, women might be thought to actually suffer if they don't have children. During a discussion, Janet said,

> If there's any problem, if the woman's tense, or having health problems, they say, 'Oh, that's because she hasn't had a family'. You know, you're just sort of different, aren't you, and people try and explain a myriad of questions by saying it's because you haven't had a baby.[12]

This woman thus linked childbearing, for women, with women's whole physical (ie, biological) make-up; childbearing makes women 'organically whole'. Men did not appear to refer to this organic wholeness or completeness, either for women or for men.

The nature of the perceived gender differences varied among respondents. Some respondents, for instance, suggested that a 'reason' men are more likely to make, and be the butt of, virility/fertility jokes is because women would be likely to be upset by such jokes. One of the more common jokes of this kind is the query to a childless man: "When are you going to prove you're a man?" The query has no female equivalent. Jokes also refer to sex preferences: Mr Sumner recounted hearing men say things like, "You've got five daughters, well ..... what's wrong with you?". That is, 'real' men create sons.

For men, fertility was associated more specifically with sexuality. A New Zealand farmer, for instance, told me that he was against vasectomies because "it'd make you just like a whether", ie neuter. Hoffman & Hoffman reported that such attitudes were not uncommon among rural American men, explaining, "who wants a chicken that cannot lay, or a bull that cannot effectively impregnate?" (p60). Fertility, fecundity and sexuality are thus confused. In this context it is relevant that in the early years of vasectomy availability in New Zealand there were said to be support groups formed for recently-vasectomised men. 'Outsiders' were concerned more with the consequences for sexual performance than for impregnation (which was 'known'). But emphasis was not on

organic wholeness; it was on sexuality as a behavioural capacity. By contrast, no such support groups for sterilized women have been referred to, but support for mastectomy patients does exist, focussing on the externally visible breast (rather than childbearing capacity) as a symbol of sexuality.

Manliness ~~is~~ has to do with sex. Men who have large families are teased about their sexuality, or virility. Women with large families, if they are talked about, are referred to as either "great little mothers", or "poor women". For women, womanliness is to do with maternity. Yet contradictions are apparent. The very existence of virility jokes, meaning ability to copulate effectively, suggests that ability to procreate, for whatever reason, is important to men. Jokes about procreation, not to be taken seriously, are like jokes about death: the jokes reflect anxiety about how to handle such emotionally-charged, personal topics. They reflect a double-standard, such as that referred to in the discussion of adult gender status and parenthood (p 371), and they might also reflect symbolically a public/private world dichotomy.

During the informal interviews discussion about adoption and infertility focussed repeatedly on 'biological' aspects of childbearing and childrearing. Infertility and adoption are areas of complementary marginality in Value of Children research, representing as they do couples who either cannot have their 'own' children, or couples who have children who are not "their own".[13] Perceptions of infertility and adoption by respondents are thus linked. They were perceived as social 'issues' - partly because of the (public) situational context of the research interviews. Both infertility and adoption were, at the time, being discussed in the media and the respondents were aware of this.

The current focus on infertility may be a consequence, most simply, of a lack of children available for adoption, and hence public visibilty of childless couples. Alternatively, it might

be a consequence of fertility control for the overprolific, or of voluntary childfreeness, both of which might be labelled 'ideological' concerns. Whatever the explanation, respondents were aware of the 'fact' that some couples were, and might remain, without children. One of the conflicts such couples face is being equated with voluntarily childfree couples. Vicki's letter (Fig 12.3) illustrates the turmoil of emotions associated with social recognition of infertility, and also illustrates the ideologies associated with 'being childless' or 'being childfree'.

To explain the feelings associated with infertility, and possibly to justify clinical concern, psychologists have proposed a 'grief' theory. 'Society', the world 'out there', expects couples to have children; when they find they cannot fulfill this expectation (which has now become their own expectation) they feel they have had something taken from them. The President of Hamilton's Parents' Centre described these couples as "grieving for the child they never had" (pers.comm). In the professional literature childless couples are characterised as by Sorosky et al:

> In most cases of ... sterile couples, the discovery that they are infertile does not come easily to them, yet they receive little, if any, help in understanding their feelings of shame, guilt and anguish. They have been conditioned by their families, friends, and society to have a family...The baby doesn't come. What starts out as a notion, 'We will have a baby', is transformed into a mission that becomes an obsession. Feelings of shame, guilt and isolation follow. The man often feels he is not virile; the woman thinks of herself as barren. They blame each other. The psychological reactions are similar to those characterizing the grief experienced in adjusting to a death. (1978: 74).

While Infertility Support Groups do provide clinical assistance to childless couples, their prime function is said to be to provide emotional support for those who cannot have children, to help them to cope with 'society's pressure' and to cope with their own grief (Auckland Group Co-ordinator, pers.comm). The

LETTERS No. 1 in the Waikato No. 1 in the Waikato No. 1 in the Waikato

Problems of infertility

Sir, — I am writing about two recent letters in your column, one by Silent Minority on June 8, and one by Noisy Majority on June 10.

I would like to know if Noisy Majority has children! If not, why not? Because if the reason is that he/she doesn't want children, then he/she would have no real understanding of the desire to do so. If he/she does have children, then I would like to pose this question. Why is it not selfish to want a child if you can have them, but selfish if you cannot? The desire to do so is still the same! It is just as well there are couples wanting to adopt, or there would be quite a few children brought up in the less usual type of home situation!

Is it the fault of the infertile couple that there are too few children available for adoption to fulfil them all, thus creating the "demand" you call selfish? I have discovered in the course of different conversations that the least sympathetic and understanding are those who have children of their own! All these people see is the uninterrupted play and careers, and the fact that these couples seem to have more money for homes, clothes, trips etc. Well, what else do they have to spend their money on? It's pretty cold, shallow comfort, though and most would exchange places with Mr & Mrs Average, lack of money, privacy and funtime at all! It's about time the public in general understood that infertility is a medical, not a sexual problem and that "naughty weekends", relaxing and taking vitamins don't cure any purely physical problem, including infertility.

Even some supposedly knowledgeable and enlightened doctors don't know this fact. So if you don't know much about infertility and what it involves, and most people don't, then please either find out from books or infertile friends, not from old wives' tales, myths and legends or don't bother to comment, because you could easily hurt, inadvertently, some defenceless person with your uniformed and tactless views! It is no myth that childlessness is unacceptable to some people, and naturally it is those who want children and who are infertile who are going to discover their infertility. Some childless-by-choice couples may be infertile, but they will never know! And why shouldn't Silent Minority prefer childlessness to be a chosen state? Is that not what Noisy Majority is advocating with his/her view on abortion? Abortion is a sad and traumatic choice, but fertile couples should be thankful they have a choice! Infertile couples don't. All Silent Minority is pointing out is that most of those who are having abortions are doing so because their bodies are in good working order!

Sure, doctors can recommend infertile patients to hospital, but because there is no proper clinic the investigations are often piecemeal and inadequate! The reason given on inquiring why is the infertile are not dying, but neither are those, with a few exceptions, who are having abortions! So these people having abortions have quick, even preferential, access to specialist care available to them, but those infertile couples, whose problems are, in fact medical, do not! And it's their public hospital too! Those having abortions are under great emotional stress, but so are the childless and a great many need not have become pregnant in the first place if they had been more careful! In other words, their prolific condition is often thought not always, their own fault, while the vast majority of the infertile are childless through no fault of their own.

One more point! To those who are guilty of asking "When are you having children"? Please don't. Or assume a childless couple is childless by choice, if it is your opinion such couples are selfish and then act accordingly scathing because you never know, you may be speaking to an infertile couple and who's going to admit that, people's minds being what they are.

Besides you get sick of explaining to people who don't really want to know, or who you feel just want to know your personal business! And all such inquiries are like rubbing salt into a raw wound! Any pregnant friends please try not to be smug!

Equally don't avoid your barren friend. Often your pregnancy and newborn are as close as the infertile couple ever get to their own. So please, if your infertile friends show interest and only if they do, share your thoughts, feelings and experiences with your pregnancy and new baby. Be generous, it won't hurt you!

JUST VICKI!

Hamilton.

More letters — Page 24

Fig. 12.3 "Vicki's Letter".
(Source : Waikato Times, 23.6.82, page 4).

formation of such support groups reinforces the idea of infertility being a 'problem'. It has been estimated that 10% of New Zealanders have great difficulty achieving a pregnancy, and that 5% will never be successful (Gordon, 1982: 6); doctors claim that 40-45% of couple infertility is due to the female and 35-40% to the male, the remainder being unaccounted for (ibid.). But medical statistics do not explain common concern for the 'fact' that some couples are, and might remain, without children.

People who want children and cannot have them commonly are considered deprived or handicapped. An Auckland Infertility Society member was quoted by Gordon as saying,

> The word infertility conjures up such awful things - people think it has such a final sound. (loc.cit.)

Similar feelings were expressed by a Stage I student, who wrote in an essay in family sociology,

> For people who cannot conceive their own children, their 'family' starts as soon as they adopt a child into their lives.
> It would be wrong of me to exclude these unfortunate people from the definition of a family unit, as they have two 'parents' and a child (and) even though the female did not bare (sic) the child herself, they consider it to be 'theirs'.
> (emph.added).

Discussions about adoption reiterated a 'genetic' theme. Mr Browning had said that he did things for his mother "because blood's thicker than water", he supposed. The idea of genetics is expressed by respondents as "blood". Respondents did not, usually, talk about 'genetics' or 'genetic likeness': these scientific concepts have relatively limited usage in everyday speech. But the idea conveyed by the notion of genetics is part of common thought and receives expression in the concept of inheritance (which reflects a social parallel of passing on from one generation to another) and in the concept of 'blood' (which reflects the known physical, biological, attribute of

inheritance). Having something "in your blood" is something organic, there from the beginning, and beyond individual control. Something in one's blood must have come from somewhere, however, and the rationalizing person can assume it came from what went before - ie, one's parents. Thus blood, representing genes, is inherited.

People do focus on physical likeness. Visitors to mothers of new babies, for instance, commonly speculate on "whose eyes" or "whose nose" the baby 'has'. Not being able to 'place' such physical attributes, particularly if they are obviously different from those of the parents, is problematic for people witnessing an adoptive relationship. Biological attributes are recognized by those who arrange adoptions. In New Zealand, Social Welfare officers attempt to 'match' physical features of birth and adoptive parents and, where a second child is being placed for adoption by a woman there are attempts to 'place' this child with its sibling[14].

Conversations with research subjects indicated that it is important to adults where children come from. Janet referred to these concerns:

> I had the experience of being on the beach with friends that I hadn't seen for a number of years, and discovering that they had two lovely dark little boys - the parents tended to be dark - and one beautiful blonde little fairy girl. And I said to her mother, 'Oh what a gorgeous little girl. I didn't realize you had a daughter. Where did you get such a blonde little fairy?'. And she said, 'Shh, I'll tell you later.' You know, it was very much an aside. And so later on when we were walking round the rocks she said, 'Oh, I'm sorry I shut you up, but the daughter is adopted, and I couldn't say that in front of her and the rest of the gathering, because she said to me, 'Mummy, why do you always have to say I'm adopted?' You know, she was sick of hearing her mother say 'she's our adopted daughter', and she just hated being the 'adopted daughter.'

Not only did Janet focus on physical likeness - or lack of it - but her reported conversation indicated the importance to

adults (but perhaps not to children) of locating where children come from, and where they 'fit' in a family. The mere existence and perception of an 'adoption status', which is 'different' suggest this importance. Despite the relatively small proportion of adoptions which are interracial[15], these are the ones which are noticed by people. Such examples provide a rather biased perspective on adoption, but examples such as that which Janet talked about are frequently the only ones people are aware of[16]:

Janet :I know of a couple who said, 'Right, there are too many children in the world, who are hungry, starving children, and we're not going to bring any children into the world of our own. We will pick from these children our own family: And they have adopted three of different nationalities, and while the children were young it was a delightful family. But now the children are growing up and there are all sorts of problems occurring now. Whether the parents have the wisdom to cope still remains to be seen.

Interviewer : ... were the problems related to the fact that they were three different nationalities?

Janet : Yes. Different colours, and a particularly distressing one was a little Maori boy who had been adopted in New Zealand as a wee baby and taken to Canada, where the American Indians are loved and respected, and have their sort of place in society, and there's absolutely no slur on the American Indian. And when they came back and the little boy went to school, children are so cruel, he was lumped with the Maori population of the school. And, you know, 'You're a Maori', and he took to this child who called him a Maori, because he in fact thought he was an Indian, even though his parents had told him he was a Maori, but he didn't know what a Maori was, because he'd never seen one. It's a very complicated psychological process that's obviously going on in the mind of the child, and he was just so confused. It was dreadful...

Notwithstanding the argument one might have with some of Janet's 'evidence', the particular relevance her examples have for the present discussion is in how atypical they were in the

sense of the procedures 'normally' (and 'usually') carried out in New Zealand. Janet's 'cases' were probably remembered because they were atypical. But she presented them to the group as 'sample' adoptions.

Bonding was also recognized as a 'problem' with adoption (see Table 12.2b, p 375), a consequence of the lack of birth experience by the adoptive mother. Psychologists have legitimated (invented ?) bonding as a problem, as exemplified by Sorosky et al:

> Many authors have demonstrated that adoptive family relationships are subject to strains not found in the typical biological family. ...The lack of a mutual biological tie leads to the insecurity felt by the adoptive parents; it is difficult for them.... In essence, the adoptive parents are placed in an uncomfortable double bind: 'Make the child your own but tell him he isn't.' (p76).

It is understandable that people who accept that adoptors 'take' a child which is not 'their own', trying to make it their own, and perhaps being expected to tell the child that it isn't, might see bonding as a problem with adoption. Bonding is not perceived as just a social expectation, however. Mrs. Milne explained that it has a physical basis, and being deprived of this the adoptive mother has a particular mental (psychological) barrier to overcome. Those that succeed she designated "true" (like biological?) adoptive parents:

Interviewer : Is there something - or what is the 'something' - that makes one's own children special?

Mrs. Milne : For us, just the fact that they are your children. I couldn't answer for the mother of an adopted child, a person who can't have a child for her own, (but) I think one must put adopted children into that same thing.

Interviewer : So you're saying it's not just a physical thing, is that right?

Mrs. Milne : Oh it must be a physical thing. But a mother who can't have a child physically herself must

> have some extra mental attitude where she can accept that child as if it were exactly her own. Because I really think that's what true adoptive parents do.

Ambivalence about adoption was also reflected in terminology. Respondents used such terms as "natural", "real" or "biological" for birth mothers[17], but with some degree of self-consciousness about not knowing what term is acceptable to both parties. Sorosky et al (p49-50) pointed out that such terms may indeed be offensive: an adoptive parent is hurt not to be considered the 'real' parent and for birth mothers to be labelled 'natural' suggests that adoptive parents are 'unnatural'; birth mothers, on the other hand, may consider the adjectives 'biological' or 'birth' as too mechanical or unfeeling. Some people prefer not to use the term 'mother' at all for the birth parent - giving the term a social, rather than biological, connotation. An idea of adult status to do with childrearing is also implied sometimes, with references to the birth mother as "this girl", etc.

Several of the biological issues related to fertility, bonding, race, and genetics were referred to in a discussion with the Sumners:

Mrs. Sumner : And we sort of fleetingly mentioned it (adoption) when we lost (miscarriage) number three, and sort of said, well we'd give ourselves another year and then we'd talk about it.

Interviewer : So it wasn't something that you wouldn't hear of?

Mrs. Sumner : No. But it would've taken a lot of talking through I think. I feel in retrospect it would have. But that's because I think the issue has changed with adoption. My sister had adopted one, who is part-Maori, and I personally would be hung up on this. It would have had to be a pure white and I think my pride would have hated me to have had to stipulate it, because I don't feel I should have that preference. But I would have.

...

Mr. Sumner : At the stage when we would have been considering adopting it would have been an emotional problem of the greatest magnitude. Now if someone came to talk about adoption and (with) the benefit of hindsight and four, five kids, we wouldn't be too concerned.

Interviewer : Is that because of your own experience or because adoption itself is something which is more talked about and people are more open about it?

Mr. Sumner : No, I think if you haven't had a child, and you're thinking of adopting, it's a whole new ball game right from the start. You don't really know what you're in for. But if you have a family you can more readily accept that there'll be differences in kids anyway. And if you adopt one you accept that there'll be a difference there.

Interviewer : So really, you're suggesting that it would be much easier to handle adopting a child into an already established family?

Mrs. Sumner : Yes....

Interviewer : If, for argument's sake, you wanted to have another child and you found that you couldn't, it would have been a much easier thing to have considered adopting that child than...(?)

Mrs. Sumner : Yes. Because there would be some negative feelings about the fact that you hadn't been able to have our own anyway. Definitely.

Interviewer : How do you think your parents would consider that? Do you think parents set a big store on ...

Mrs. Sumner : ...bloodlines...

Interviewer : ...seeing their...

Mr. Sumner : Yes, I'm sure that's the case, although obviously they'd accept it and realize it's better to have a family than...

Mrs. Sumner : I think both sets of our parents would, yes, and certainly my parents have been very accepting of the one my sister has adopted. I think her two sisters have had a harder hassle than the grandparents have ... but they adopted for a change of sex.

(emphasis added)

Three aspects of the biological argument have emerged from the Sumners' discussion. Firstly, they referred to physical, and perhaps psychological, genetic likeness. The issue of having a child like yourselves, they suggested, is important to people who don't have any other children. But once you have children, you realise "there'll be differences in kids anyway", and the genetic likeness diminishes in importance. Secondly, Mrs. Sumner referred to "negative feelings" about infertility, and that infertility means not being able to "have your own", you get someone else's child. And thirdly, the discussion about the grandparents indicated that it is not the adopted child who, in their opinion, might have a problem of feeling a sense of belonging, but rather the other kin - it was not the child who "had hassles", but the grandparents and the child's aunts. There was also a tangential suggestion that the reason for adopting is important (for a change of sex) in determining how the adoption is perceived by others. This couple was not trying to have a child who would be as their 'own', by blood; the emotional overtones of possible infertility were not present in this family formation decision, and it might therefore have been more easily 'handled' by other kin. Refugee adoptions, in other circumstances, might be similarly coped with.

Emphasis on such atypical cases has undoubtedly contributed to the general societal misunderstanding which persists about adoption. It is therefore not suprising that, like infertile couples and vasectomised men, adoptors and adoptees have their own support groups in New Zealand cities.

At the time of writing, adoption is a political issue in New Zealand. A bill to allow adoptees access to their birth records has been placed before parliament and arguments purporting to represent all 'sides' of the case prevail. As a consequence, adoption is 'high profile'. Opinions expressed about the adoptive parents reflect stances on infertility (the 'abnormality' of the parent), on maternal deprivation (depriving the 'natural mother' of her right to mother), and on 'selfishness' (either the adoptor is selfish for taking another person's child, or the childless are selfish for not wanting to help an otherwise disadvantaged child). Vicki's letter (p392) presented some of these arguments for adoption. Shawyer's violent attack in her book Death By Adoption[18] represents an extreme of the case against adoption:

> Most childless couples are pressured into adopting by a merciless society that demands that they drink the nasty medicine, because if they don't we can't swallow ours. Adopted children are used to trigger ovulation, to disguise failed relationships, to complete 'incomplete' family numbers...to provide a child of the 'other' sex, to replace dead children and generally to shore up one's self-esteem and not least to provide relief from a boring job which is going nowhere. Some women adopt when their youngest goes to school in order to resolve the problem of what will she do with herself from 9 am till 3 pm. But mostly children are adopted because the people who have already had the icing off the cake of opportunity feel entitled to steal the crumbs they inadvertantly leave over for the poor - their children. Instead of asking why they have so much already while others have so little, they blissfully join the adoption queues and put in their order for the child someone else will not be able to afford to feed. (1979: 25).

Shawyer went on to blame "botched abortions" and failed sexual relationships ("some couples do not conceive simply because they do not have sex") for couple infertility (p26), but the theme of her argument is already obvious - potential adoptors have only themselves to blame for not having the child/ren they want, and they have no right to 'take' children from single mothers who are pressured (by "society") into giving away their babies. Children, she wrote, are used to punish people: those

who remain childless are considered 'selfish', as are single mothers who give their children away; according to Shawyer, infertile couples who adopt children are also 'selfish'.

In the light of such arguments, for and against adoption, it is perhaps little wonder that many New Zealanders remain confused about adoption. Many New Zealanders do not know how an adoption is arranged nor to what degree adoptors 'know about' the 'background' of adoptees. Publicity given to the "Jigsaw" movement[19] has made people aware of the potential worries which might exist for both adoptors and adoptees with regard to the child's genetic origins.

Yet the very uncertainties expressed about the aims of "Jigsaw" reinforce the importance of the biological connotations attached to 'own' children, the ambivalence expressing the conflict between social and biological (genetic) parenthood. Notwithstanding the proportion in the survey who said it "didn't matter" how one got a baby, adoption is a 'second best' way of having children for most people when it comes to their own children. Biological notions are expressions of 'ownership', an ideal discussed already in Chapter 10.

12.4 Analysis of Perspectives.

Notions of economics and biology have provided, for respondents, a means of rationalizing fertility behaviour. The concepts have been employed somewhat differently however.

The 'reasons' researchers have categorized as 'economic' were rarely volunteered by respondents in the survey or during informal discussions. Anecdotal references cited were very much in the category of justification for action, that this is how it is (out there) in the world in which we live[20], that children are expensive or useful because we 'have to' (social,

not survival, expectation) spend money on them, or because we do 'use' them to open gates or cook food, etc.

That is not to say that everyday people do not undertake calculations of the kind practised by economists and accountants - the school teacher asked young children to do it with reference to their own 'worth'. In such arguments one can, logically (mathematically) agree with Dublin (p31) that "the addition of a child to a family makes the family poorer, just as if a certain amount of the family income were taken away". This was recognised by those subjects who equated poverty with parity (or parity with poverty, as in the adage "the rich get richer and the poor get children").

This mode of thought is part of everyday thinking. But such calculations represent a human being's 'value' in a limited context only, as was indicated in Fig 12.2. This is because,

> the total value of a human being defies measurement. Talents and skills and the spiritual, aesthetic and sentimental values with which each individual is endowed are not adapted to quantitative analysis.
> (Dublin: 29, emph.added).

The practice of accounting in this manner, employing 'costs' and 'benefits' for prices, is not to say that these costs and benefits are prices in monetary terms. The concepts relate to the general mode of thinking, not to the specifics of childrearing. People, in the world, act or aspire to act, "economically rationally"[21], to perceive choice and weigh up costs and benefits in a deliberate action of maximizing potential resources. In budgeting one's living expenses this action is, by convention, prior and specific. It may not be so with childbearing, where the action (having a child) might well come before any decision or budgeting for or about the child, and there may be no choice about the childbearing act itself.

Economic talk, in fertility research, is from several points of

view post facto ad hoc rationalization. It is real, in that it happens, and had meaning to respondents, but in New Zealand it had little to do with prior childbearing decisions.

By contrast, notions referring to biology were volunteered with reference to childbearing acts, and to childrearing. People not only thought that they do think within a biological framework (as compared with the economic framework, by which people sometimes thought they should act), but people, in their talk and actions, actually appear to conduct their lives according to this biological framework. The economic paradigm is extrinsic, ie, external to the individual, and imposed on him/her, whereas biology was considered by individuals as an intrinsic part of themselves. Biological notions have been used to explain not just having children, but also various aspects of individual existence itself - in particular 'maleness' and 'femaleness'. The biological paradigm was a part of the subject's common perspective of the whole world, of himself/herself, and of his/her place in the world[22].

In the biological framework the physical or physiological attributes of the human being are seen as overlapping with the social. The two may not be distinguishable by the subject. Hence, a person who says, "A boy isn't a man until he is a father" may not distinguish physiological paternity from social parenthood. There are various possible explanations of such statements, any of which might be invoked (by subject or researcher) to make sense of them, for example :

(a) Being a parent (social) implies responsibility for care of a dependent; this requires some mental or social maturity; such maturity marks the transition from child to adult.

(b) Being an adult implies sexual maturity; a person who has procreated (physiological) has provided visible results of his/her sexual maturity; he/she is therefore adult.

(c) Being an adult implies being sexually active (behavioural); procreation requires (at least for

> men) some deliberate sexual activity; hence one who is evidently being, or has been, sexually active is an adult.

There appears to be in New Zealand a common understanding, akin to a folk-culture, which derives from this idea of biology. The understanding incorporates notions of fertility, virility and sexuality (the terms are often confused in that any one might be used to mean either of the other two), notions of instinctive behaviour (the 'maternal instinct') and notions of genetics or inheritance. The latter illustrates the synthesis of social and physical in this perspective: the idea of inheritance has long had a social meaning but common people now apply to this their 'belief' in genetics and attribute this (scientific) meaning to the term. In addition, perhaps because ordinary people cannot, themselves, consciously experience 'genes', they also use a term which, to them, does have concrete meaning, viz "blood". 'Blood', like 'inheritance', has long-established meaning. The fact that people 'know better' that blood is not actually passed from parent to child, is assumed to be understood, and the term persists in common usage to mean 'genes'.

Not only do people have such beliefs (virility, instinct, genes, etc) and use them to explain childbearing behaviour, but they also believe in the legitimacy of using the biological paradigm itself as a mode of explanation. Like the economic paradigm, the biological one is 'scientific' and (believed to be) concretely rational - everyone 'knows' such things or states as sexuality or maternal instinct or genetics 'exist'. Furthermore, the biological framework presents an organic whole, as it is seen to explain the very basis of both individual and collective existence and survival. Whereas economic talk has little to do with childbearing, biological talk has everything to do with it. Biology is presented as a kind of fatalism; it may also be used to remove childbearing from any subjection to conscious decision-making.

Underlying these discussions of economics and biology as perspectives on childbearing there has been a theme of order in the world. Economic talk has been used (mostly by the researcher) to rationalize fertility decisions, since such accounting types of procedure are considered necessary in the world; to act in any laissez faire manner is seen to risk disorder. That is, economic 'reasons' or ways of acting are believed to ensure that the action happens 'in an orderly fashion'. For instance, having children in an orderly fashion might entail one of the following "plans"[23]:

either (a) whether to have children,
(b) how many to have, and
(c) when to have them
or (d) when to stop having them.

The 'orderly fashion' implies some reasoning and evaluation going into each decision - how much will it 'cost', can we 'afford' another, what will the 'benefits' be, etc. If such reasoning did not happen before the children were born, it is not difficult for subjects to provide the reasoning with hindsight - especially if assisted by a list of 'possible reasons' from the researcher.

This orderly fashion of acting has been referred to by subjects in various guises. For example, the 'need' for children to help on (maintain order on) the farm, or in the house; the 'order' of the family and household which is disrupted by the 'invasion of privacy' and demands of day-to-day care for a coresident elderly parent; the implication that children must have a 'value' because who would put so much time, money and effort into something of no value (if the 'value' cannot be costed in monetary terms it is called 'noneconomic value')? Economic talk imposes order on actions.

Biological talk suggests order of a different kind. Biology reflects order of being, how one is. The adult physical individual is a sexual being, not neutral. That is, he/she can

procreate; if not he/she is 'deficient' or incomplete - hence the problematic connotations of infertility and adoption for subjects. As a member of the species, the biological order of things means one must procreate (but not too much, or the species will be placed 'out of balance' with the environment). Order is also implied in talk of genetics, 'blood' or inheritance, that generations do beget generations, and that one expects to see, physically manifest in children, their likeness to their parents: 'like begets like'.

In reality, however, 'order' is qualified by ambivalence and conflict. Children do not necessarily resemble their parents or their siblings, so the 'order' of family likeness might contain dissimilarity. But, paradoxically, that is the order of things: "there'll be differences in kids anyway" (Mr. Sumner). Actual experience differs from expectation, and that is how adopted children can be accepted in the order of things (although the child which is of a different colour to its parents remains a problem because it obviously is not of the same 'blood' as its parents).

Conflict is also apparent with respect to childlessness. To most people adoption was a 'second best' way of getting children - but it was better than not having any at all. Infertility is an 'inferior' state to be in, to be scorned, joked about, or pitied. Hence the difficulty some subjects expressed in accepting that some people could elect to be childless (see Chapter 11). Such ambivalence about, for example, the advantages and disadvantages of adoption, and confusion about sexuality and fertility and, for men, virility, do not contradict the idea of biological order, but reflect it.

12.5 Summary

In an orderly world people make choices on the basis of

reasoned (logical) judgment. This is economic talk, a way of acting in the world. Ideas about having children and about economics are connected primarily in the mind of the researcher. The connection is evident in the survey questionnaire, which is the researcher's tool. Responses to those questions are defined and categorized by the researcher, not by the subject, and except in hindsight do not, as a rule, reflect the subject's actions. Thus economic reasoning is a researcher's paradigm.

Biological talk was not specifically provoked by the questionnaire, except in the open-ended questions about adoption. But biological talk, as defined in this chapter, permeated many of the discussions with respondents. In their world 'biology' was a real, integral part of childbearing. In an orderly world people have children as part of 'human nature'. Biology is action, as well as a mode of understanding. Folk beliefs in biology are legitimated by the prevailing 'scientific' ideology of our culture[24]. Although the 'biology' of men and women appeared to differ, the data suggest that for many New Zealanders biological 'reasons' might, on their own, be sufficient justification - whether before or after the events - for having children. Notions of biology - ie, biology as a means of making sense of the social world - cannot therefore be disregarded as a means of understanding fertility behaviour. The biological paradigm is an everyday paradigm. 'Biology', like 'parenthood' and 'family', is a social construction. The apparent concordance of these constructs both reflects and is reflected in the meanings given to children. 'Value' of children is a synthesis of these understandings. In the everyday world this 'value' has little to do with economics.

Notes to Chapter 12.

1. Eg, "What are the disadvantages of having only one child?" "What are the advantages?" - Such questions imply a structural dichotomy in that there can be only two 'types' of correct answer.

2. Although other 'reasons' for having children might override such 'reasons' for not having children in actual experience.

3. This statement was quite unsatisfactory and one cannot assume that responses do have any biological (gender) connotations. Some respondents said, for example, "fulfilled, yes, but I don't know about 'as a woman', I just felt fulfilled". Such responses were included by interviewers as positive responses.

4. Prince Charles, when asked how he felt about the birth of his son 2 hours previously, told reporters, "It's rather a grown-up thing I feel; it's quite a shock to my system."

5. The other 4% were "don't know" or "no response". (Q 70).

6. Only four respondents had adopted children and these were children of their spouses - adoption was thus a question of legal status rather than an issue of 'creating' a family.

7. Although the categorisation was subjective, it was based on chattels perceived in and around the home (furnishings, motor car, cycles, recreation facilities such as billiard table, stereo, boat), combined with housing status in terms of construction and locality, as well as employment status and income. Some of this information was obtained during the formal survey.

8. There is no reason to question Hoffman & Hoffman's suggestion that this is related to a specific philosophy among mothers who 'like their work' as compared to nonemployed mothers or those who don't enjoy their work (work because they 'have to').

9. Radio Waikato, 12/02/82.

10. See page 54.

11. That is to say, that even if respondents use these labels as expressions of their 'scientific' knowledge, the concepts which they are labelling represent an idea of the biologically natural character of human existence. It is therefore important to distinguish the labels used by respondents from the concepts represented by those labels.

12. Evidence which supports Janet's observation is apparent when social 'pressure' on the voluntarily childless was discussed in Chapter 11.

13. The issue of 'own' children is elaborated upon in Chapter 10. A third area of marginality was that of couples who choose not to have children - see Chapter 11.

14. It is possible that this may reflect a concern with incest laws as much as to place genetically similar children together.

15. The majority of Maori adoptees are adopted by Maori families; most 'inter-racial' adoptions referred to are of refugees.

16. If only because they are physically obvious; people may be quite unaware that 'white' children in 'white' families are adopted.

17. Women who gave birth to their children.

18. "Death" refers to the proxy-death of the child, as perceived by a single mother who has given her child for adoption. This is not dissimilar to the crisis faced by the infertile, viz, grief for the child they never had.

19. An organisation established to facilitate contact between adoptees and their biological parents.

20. There is a paradox in this argument, ie, that the world of our making remains external to us - which is why it "needs" to be rationalized in this manner.

21. Sophisticated or educated people in the world (in this case, New Zealand) are expected by their peers to 'manage their affairs' financially - ie, to exhibit some degree of mathematical logic and entrepreneurial skill in weighing up advantages and disadvantages of a particular line of action in order to achieve maximum productivity or advantage. People who do not do this (eg those who incur debts, or 'waste' valuable assests) are pitied, scorned or legally penalized. This practice of accounting is not only socially defined, but is socially required as a means of ordering life experience.

22. Evidenced by people's preoccupation with health (physical and mental), conservation, pollution, etc. Although such ideas might first have been imposed by professionals (scientists) they have common acceptance and are used by individuals to refer to their own bodies, their physical existence and their biological 'place' in the living world.

23. The 'plan' itself is part of the economic theme of sequential and reasoned action - as implied in the term 'family planning'.

24. This is expressed, for instance, on the New Zealand birth registration form, where parents are asked (Q 17, 18), "Degree of Maori blood (if any) and tribe; Pacific Island blood (if any), state which island."

Chapter 13

EPILOGUE TO PART TWO

Part Two of the thesis represents an exploration of some of the qualities attributed to children which, in the context of previous Value-of-Children research, might be termed 'values'. However, the label of 'value', as applied by other VOC researchers, denotes a thing or characteristic, which children have. The qualities discussed in Chapters 8-12 reflect processes, not things. As processes or interactions, these 'values' include, intrinsically, other people. A child on its own does not 'have' value, but is given meaning, both symbolically and in interaction, by others in the world.

Children do have 'uses', and they do 'cost' time and money, for example. However, ascribing 'value' status to these processes attributes to them a facticity which is qualitatively different from the meanings which children represent. In the course of refocussing this research from 'value' to 'meaning', the epistemological question has also changed, from "Why have children?" to "Why have children?".

A comment on the substantive findings and a proposal for a new methodological schema form Part Three of this thesis. My purpose in the present chapter is to review the format of Part Two, thereby situating it in the context of the overall thesis task.

The substantive content of Chapters 8-12 reflects two perspectives on children. One of these was that preconceived by me, as researcher. The ideas it incorporated were part of my own background "expectancies", notions of family,

motherhood, immortality and, inherited from those researchers who had gone before me, economic ideas. The other perspective is that of the subjects - not a global Perspective (sic) which is a generality for all people, but a composite, derived from the subjects I talked with. Their talk raised issues which I conceptualised as biology, childlessness, parenthood and grandparenthood.

The six subject couples who provided most of the conversational material were not randomly selected; they were deliberately chosen because they were articulate, communicative, and had expressed an interest in talking about the survey research which they had previously participated in. Other subjects from the survey were self-selected into discussion groups. No claim is made that their responses, their talk, represents any larger statistical universe, nor that they are together part of the same universe. My concern in these chapters has been to explore how substantive issues might be revealed, and what the meaning of children might 'mean' - to some people. Only by beginning one's exploration with individuals, recognising their uniqueness, can one then with any validity proceed to research of more general application.

Arguments presented in this section, however, are written as if they were derived from a larger universe. This is a deliberate methodological strategy. The subjects whose discussions were studied quite intensively are not isolated in the world. Survey data included in the chapters represent a "macro" perspective of a particular kind - an overview of the form that actions or opinions related to having children might take and how this meaning emerges. Survey data reflect my perspective and those of my demographer colleagues, as researchers. Speaking metaphorically, they are the line drawing of a picture. My own perspective as subject, living in the world, represents an overview of a different kind, shading in parts of the picture, how I think it is from my (subject) perspective. Part of the perspective is grounded in non-demographic

expectancies derived from an anthropological endeavour, but part of it is also grounded in my social existence as a fellow human being. To complete the analogy, the subjects whose talk forms the body of the research material have provided the colour for various parts of the picture. In some places their colour brought a change of form, but where superimposing pictures do not coincide, the conclusion reflects variability, rather than lack of consensus: people agree to differ. In acknowledging, indeed emphasizing, such variability I concur with Vivien Johnson's belief that,

> Idiosyncracies of person and circumstance are at the heart not the periphery of the scientific enterprise.
> (1975: 2)[1]

It would have been possible to develop further the case study approach to these data, using survey responses and informal interviews to build a more detailed picture of the respondents' lives, while at the same time using one source of data (interviews) to evaluate the other (survey). But such an approach is considered inappropriate. It would be too particularistic, too idiosyncratic, to have utility as an analytic instrument. We would perhaps have understood better the details of the individual cases, but we would have insufficient grounds on which to draw out the specific perspectives relevant to the epistemological concerns of the research. Few generalisations could be made, or conclusions drawn.

A conclusion is the expected end-point of an argument. Therefore these chapters include statements of 'how it is', as conclusive statements. In reality, they are both conclusions

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1. Footnotes to Chapter 13 are placed at the end of the chapter, p 414.

and hypotheses, the beginning as well as the end. As a practical methodological enterprize, this research had to have its end-point: methodology, incorporating theory, has its aims, method and conclusions. The over-riding brief of the research was to explore how a qualitative methodology for 'value of children' studies might be operationalized. To this end, Part Three is presented as a synthesis of substantive findings, an exploration of analytic frameworks, and a proposal for a new perspective in this area of demographic research.

Note to Chapter 13.

1. Quoted from Johnson's M.A. thesis Violence in Marriage, University of Sydney, Australia, in Bell and Newby 1977: 9 .

PART THREE

> The rather grand term 'meaning' more than hints at the symbolic nature of social life and, in its way, points to the fact that human action is not as predictable, as determined in its course, as the inanimate subject matter of natural science. Whereas positivism might attribute this fact to the paucity of good measurement and the infancy of the social sciences, or to the greater complexity of the social world compared to the natural, what is being claimed here is more fundamental, namely, that human life is essentially different, and this difference requires another methodology to that presupposed by a positivist conception.
>
> (Hughes 1980: 86).

Chapter 14

CONCLUSION: METHOD AND MEANING IN VALUE-OF-CHILDREN RESEARCH.

14.1 Introduction

The 'value' of children to parents has been a focus of attention for researchers from several academic disciplines, each bringing to their study different intellectual traditions and sets of assumptions about the nature of the social world. These are their own specific research paradigms. However, the literature on the 'value' of children, or 'reasons' for having children, indicates a confusion of the perspectives of researcher and researched. The research reports cited in Chapters 1 to 4 illustrate a tendency for historical analyses to be phrased in the idiom of twentieth century capitalist thought, psychological analyses in the idiom of motivation and attitudes, and economic analyses in costs and benefits. To some extent those analyses categorized as 'sociological' incorporate all of these perspectives, but in addition sociologists have applied notions of structural-functionalism in their explanations of fertility behaviour. In each of these instances the actions of ~~everyday~~ men and women are reported as if they concurred with the procedures, or modes of thinking, of the researchers.

The present research has attempted to ascertain the perception that people themselves hold about attributes of their lives which might be considered, by researchers, as relevant to an understanding of fertility behaviour. That is, I have attempted to do credit to subjects' own realities, rather than merely to interpret them through some 'scientific' metaphor

which obscures rather than clarifies their understandings about having children. The focus of this research has been on interaction in the everyday world. In particular, the analysis has emphasized ordinary speech, or 'natural language', as the medium of everyday expression and as the means of access to commonsense understanding.

The practical application of this kind of analysis necessitates an acknowledgment of multiple realities (see Chapter 6) and an acknowledgment that we all change our perspectives of an interaction in accordance with our understandings of what might be termed 'contextual' reality. That is, one asks oneself first "what is the context of this interaction?" (indexicality) and secondly, "therefore how do I interact?" (reflexivity)[1]. Thus, in the course of one interview I might 'be' a detached researcher, an empathetic conversationalist, an enquiring female busy-body, an understanding co-parent, etc. Subjects with whom I talk might see me both as a person with my own realities (which they might or might not consider they share) and as a person who is also attempting to discern their realities. Each 'definition of the situation', each reality perceived, will affect how the interaction will proceed. Failing to acknowledge these differences hinders any attempt to distinguish our subjects' sense-making procedures from our own. If these are not distinguished, any representation of the subjects' meaning remains undifferentiated from the researcher's construct. This concluding chapter offers some proposals for how these respondents' meanings might be identified, in order to understand the social meaning of children.

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1. Footnotes to Chapter 14 are placed at the end of the chapter, p447.

14.2 The Nature of 'Value' and the Expression of Social Meaning.

The research from which this study was derived was concerned with 'value'. Various typologies and scales of 'values' have been referred to and a distinction has been made between 'value' (noun), 'values', to 'value' (verb) and 'evaluate'. Each word has a particular subtlety of meaning. However, it has been argued that the idea of 'value' most commonly employed in value of children research has an economic connotation. This connotation dates back to King's calculations made in 1695, was implicit in the work of Malthus, has been expressed by transition theorists, and has been made explicit on the one hand in such major demographic investigations as the World Fertility Survey and on the other hand in the cost-benefit analyses of modern microeconomists whose work derives from Gary Becker. 'Value', like the psychologists' notions of 'attitude' and 'motive', has become reified[2]; it has then been quantified and formulated into equations which relate 'value' to fertility. By such a process, economic determinism translocates the research exercise into the everyday praxis of people in the world. Similarly, the psychologists' notion of 'value' as a symbolic or instrumental utility is construed as an abstraction which is an appendage to children, rather than an intrinsic characteristic of children.

This argument is not to suggest that people in the everyday world cannot think about children in these terms - they might, on occasion, even add up what a child 'costs'. But it has been argued that this is not of itself what the value of a child is to them in terms of social meaning. Indeed, many people actually resent the implication that they consider their children in terms of, for example, old age security, or as a 'consumer durable', as if children were contained within the same context of meaning as, *eg*, social welfare benefits,

television sets, motor cars or holidays overseas.

Several sociologists, aware of the inappropriateness of such metaphors, have attempted to redefine or operationalize 'value' within the context of social structure or institutions. The concept of inter-generational wealth flows represents an attempt to locate having children within a sequence of social actions. In this tradition the ESCAP questionnaire represented an attempt to define 'family' by means of interactions between and obligations towards individual members. But removed from the social context in which they occurred, these interactions were devoid of their social meaning: we could not understand what they 'meant' to subjects in terms of _their_ perception and understanding of family. The survey responses did not reveal the subjects' own (everyday) grounds of knowledge which they imputed into the notion of 'family' as an object of their commonsense experience.

So it is also with the 'value' of children. It is pertinent to add that respondents themselves volunteered that the questionnaire did not "get at" what family or children meant to them. Such meanings are not readily articulated in common language and the constraints imposed by the survey questions often had little relevance to the subjects' 'real' life experiences. Because the aim of this research was to attempt to study children (_ie_, having children) in terms of their social meaning, rather than in terms of the value of children construed as what they are 'worth', the practical problem became one of method, rather than of substantive findings: how might one discover the 'meaning' of children?

Meanings are not things which exist in isolation. Meanings are meanings _to_ someone, and they depend on understanding. As Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 184) noted somewhat pithily, "A sentence can't mean anything to you unless you understand it". Such understanding presupposes, at least as a first step, talking as equals between observer and observed. This

conversation enables each to 'index' the talk so that a common perception of the situation is shared and the sense-making procedures each employs are understood. This reflects commonsense meaning.

But research of this kind also involves a rather difficult hermeneutic problem, viz. not only how do we understand the subject's meaning but in addition, how do we communicate these understandings to a sociological audience? In this thesis it has been suggested that notions of order, ambivalence, tension, marginality and deviance might be used as heuristic devices whereby a sociologist might understand and communicate the commonsense meaning of having children. However these metaphors are constructs of the researcher, and must be differentiated from the everyday understandings which they represent.

Introduction of the idea of 'metaphor', that is "seeing something from the viewpoint of something else" (Richard Brown 1976: 170), enables one to begin the formulation of a means of going beyond talk to meaning. Like scientific talk, everyday talk is metaphorical. The term "family tree" is obviously metaphorical, a perception of family 'as if' it were a tree, but perhaps less obviously metaphorical is the term 'family' itself. The word 'family' stands for a set of ideas which have been identified in this thesis as ~~being~~ having to do with caring for one another, understanding and being understood, of a continuity in time and also a place in the world, of a sense of belonging. Such understandings were not apparent from questionnaire responses, although these did provide information of certain actions that people 'in' families might do with or for each other. That is, the survey analysis indicated what family members ('parts' of a family) do, but it did not tell us what 'family' means.

The difference between these two research 'findings' reflects a dichotomy of objective (survey responses about actions which

are or might be empirically observable) and subjective (interpretive) understandings which might be quite artificial. This is because the notions of obligations and responsibility employed in the questionnaire are themselves metaphors for the meanings which people (researchers and subjects) impute to these actions (ie subjective) and because, on the other hand, people's understanding of 'family' is also objective in that 'family' is seen as a meaningful object of their experience, which they can identify, albeit metaphorically.

In an argument which synthesizes research and everyday understandings, Lakoff and Johnson claimed that because human conceptual systems are largely metaphorical, there can never be any "fully objective, unconditional truth" (1980: 185). Objectivity and subjectivity, they argued, are simply different ways of understanding experience. As an alternative mode of understanding experience they offered an "experientialist synthesis", an "imaginative rationality", which bridges the gap between objectivity and subjectivity, uniting "reason and imagination" (p 192-193). By using this imaginative rationality one can acknowledge that we understand the world through our interactions with it, that truth is relative to our conceptual system, and that subjective understanding is relative to our social environment (p194). Accepting these arguments , one must question the subjective/objective dichotomy referred to in Part One of this thesis. Rather, as Feyerabend would propose, one should consider instead alternative sets of ideas as being expressions of experience. Such an approach would be appropriate for a study of the 'value' of children.

To explore this further, we might consider the idea of 'biology' discussed in Chapter 12. Of all the 'explanations' for having children which were offered by subjects, those which I have labelled 'biological' were the most comprehensive and consistent. Indeed, the expression of a whole set of biological notions was sufficently detailed and sufficiently

recurrent in the talk of my subjects for me to identify them as a 'paradigm'. Such ideas have additional interest because biological 'values' had previously received little attention from the value of children researchers. This neglect is perplexing[3] but appears to be a result of different perceptions of 'biology': the research perception being grounded in scientific 'knowledge' of reproductive capacity as a physiological attribute which is assumed to be culturally invariant, and the everyday perception being a social construction of what is 'natural'.

The "experientialist synthesis" to which Lakoff and Johnson referred is exemplified by the interaction between 'subjective' and 'objective' aspects of biological understandings of having children. For example, some respondents placed considerable emphasis on having children of one's "own blood" in order for them to inherit from and belong to 'their' family. This metaphor synthesizes several related ideas: notions of genetics which might be 'known' objectively (believed); notions of 'blood' which are understood as a symbol of genetic endowment (subjective) but might also be 'known' to (believed to) pass physically from mother to foetus; and the social understanding of inheritance as something 'passed on', which is a subjective understanding. 'Blood' is a metaphor for these experiences and understandings. The 'truth' in an idea that one must have, or does have, children of one's "own blood" is dependent on a conceptual system whereby 'blood' is understood to mean 'genetic inheritance' and whereby symbolic inheritance (of traditions, heirlooms, names _etc._) is understood in terms of 'making social' one's genetic endowment.

Similarly, physical resemblance also symbolizes genetic inheritance. The importance placed on who a child looks like is metaphorical, expressed in such phrases as "the baby has its father's eyes" (_ie_, it is "as if" the baby has its father's eyes). When the child is adopted, the metaphor does not "make sense". Adoption needs another set of metaphors, a different

conceptual system, for it to be understood. Again, biological metaphors were employed by respondents: an infertile woman was pitied, as organically incomplete ("barren"), adoptive mothers needed "something extra" to make up for this incompleteness (a lack of "maternal instinct"), and women who chose to have no children were labelled as "sick" or "selfish" (abnormal). However, the notion of inheritance might be particularly important in the case of adopted children. Symbolic inheritance, especially of names, makes social 'having a child' as if it was physiologically reproduced, with genetic inheritance.

Other metaphors referring to reproduction invoked ideas of sexuality, maturity (physical and emotional) and virility. But the overriding understanding was that it is 'natural' to have children. Again, this notion synthesizes the objective and the subjective - that most 'normal' people do have children, that it is what any biological organism does. But the idea is a social construction reinforced continually by interaction between members in their social environments. (Adults who do not choose to have children are not reported as saying that it is 'natural' to have children. They do not construct their reality in this way and so are unlikely to use these particular metaphors.)

Biological explanations were offered as 'reasons' for having children not just as metaphorical expressions of meanings which might otherwise be difficult to articulate but as legitimate explanations of social action. That fertility is conceived of as social action is indicated by everyday expressions for reproduction: people are not said to "have reproduced themselves" or to "have procreated" but are said to "have had a baby" or to "have become a mother, or father" etc. As explained in Chapter 10, parenthood is a social construction with its own particular set of meanings. These are understood and sensible to everyday people. People not only hold very clear ideas of what a 'parent' is, but they continually

negotiate these ideas in terms of parents/nonparents as clearly-defined social categories and in terms of "good" parents, "adoptive" parents, "biological" parents, "natural" parents, etc. That is, parenthood is also an "experiential synthesis" of objective and subjective attributes.

The kind of conversational analysis proposed in this section is one way of understanding the meaning of children. Everyday conversation should not be taken at face value. It should, however, be taken seriously. Talk conveys more than words; it conveys a set of assumptions which the researcher needs to make explicit. These assumptions reflect the grounds of knowledge which give meaning to such everyday action as having children. The meaning, or 'value', of children is only symbolized in everyday talk of 'blood', 'costs', 'family', 'immortality' and so on. These are not what children mean themselves.

In this thesis the researcher has proposed that the implicit concern of subjects might be represented (by the researcher) by the concept of order. People live their lives in an orderly fashion. This is necessary if they are to make sense of their place in the world and of their interactions with each other. A research construct of 'order' should therefore be appropriate to study actions to do with children. It is considered that talk, as a form of action, does reflect a social construct of order.

Notions of order have been implied by subjects in several different contexts. The idea of 'family', for instance, might be understood as an expression of order. Not only do people belong 'in' families, but "society" is seen to be 'made up' of families. Frequently the consequence of 'family breakdown' is perceived as the breakdown of "society". There is an expectation that adults will become parents, and that they should do so in pairs. By their act of physiological reproduction, the adults concerned are obligated to act 'as' parents. Social order is reinforced by the bearing and rearing

of children, but social order also 'requires' parents to act in certain ways towards their children. That is, the order of "society" both ensures and is ensured by the birth of children.

Temporal order has also been implied in the idea of 'family'. This has been expressed in ideas about generations, and about symbolic inheritance which have been expressed both in terms of biological metaphors such as 'blood', etc, and in terms of cultural symbols such as heirlooms, names, etc. Though socially constructed, this idea of temporal order is seen to have a personal, biographical meaning. Not only do "society" and our 'family' persist before us and, we believe, after us in time, but we ourselves locate ourselves in time. Our parents connected us physically to a past we did not know and, by the endowment of heirlooms, sharing of traditions and reporting of anecdotes of our own childhood they also connect our children to our own past. So also are our children seen to connect us to a future we will not experience. Children objectify our place 'in' time.

Biological concepts were also used by subjects to express notions which might be labelled, by researchers, as an order of being. Children were discussed in the context of an holistic, organic view of the biological individual. Children are regarded as necessary components of physiological completeness: it is part of perceived biological order that mature human beings procreate. It is 'natural'.

Another aspect of order discussed in the thesis is contradiction. People persistently talked about their children in positive and negative terms, almost in the same breath. It made sense to them to do so: they were aware that the world consists of multiple realities, that life experience is a sequence of antitheses. Having children, being a parent, is in action a synthesis of such contradictions, thereby reflecting and embodying the dialectical nature of the 'meaning' of children.

The social meaning of 'order' is reflected by a collective expression of what is 'natural' and what is 'good' (the 'good' mother). It is emphasized by the exceptions to that order, the marginal or deviant behaviours: voluntary childlessness, infertility, adoption, as well as that contradiction of 'good' mothering, the career woman. For 'order' to be sustained these instances of marginality or deviance must be resolved[4], whether by socially making whole (legitimation of adoption, for instance, symbolized by the child's new name) or by labelling as apart, as unnatural or abnormal, not part of the order of the world. To understand the meaning of children, therefore, is to try to understand one of the oldest sociological problems, the problem of order.

14.3 A Phenomenological Perspective of the 'Value' of Children.

It has been argued that 'order' is reflected in ideas about parenting and family (the order of "society"), about continuity (temporal order) and about the 'naturalness' of having children (biological or physiological order). To synthesize the different kinds of understandings referred to in this chapter the researcher needs some analytic scheme by which he/she can take account of subjective meanings but which at the same time allows that everyday people also believe they have objective understandings about the world ("that is how it is"). Such a scheme might be some development of Lakoff and Johnson's "experiential synthesis". Alternatively, one might be concerned only with subjective experience. This would be to approach social phenomena 'as if' from the point of view of the subjects, to find out what children are 'in mind', in consciousness, to them. This is the project of phenomenology, which Phillipson defined as,

> the description of the phenomenal precisely as it appears to us in our consciousness. (1972: 123).

The emphasis of the approach is on meaning, that is, how actors go about constructing and interpreting the social world so that it is meaningful to them and so that it gives the appearance of always having been there, independent of human activity (seen to exist objectively).

The proposal offered in this section is not the outcome of any a priori theoretical preference, but is the outcome of an exploration for a mode of analysis which might reveal 'value' as social meaning[5]. The phenomenological proposal is based on the work of Schutz, who asked the seemingly paradoxical question, how might one form objective constructs (descriptions) and an objectively verifiable theory, of subjective meaning structures (Schutz 1973, Vol I: 35). The answer, he stated, lay in a sociology of everyday life, the common sense world of what Husserl had termed the "natural attitude". For as Vogelin wrote, "man does not wait for science to have his life explained to him" (Hughes: 105)[6]. He knows that he knows, and his life makes sense to him.

The starting point of social inquiry is, therefore, at the level of meaning of everyday people and the researcher (as a common member), not with abstract theories which have no necessary relevance to the actor (such as, that value of children is the balance of costs and satisfactions). What become problematic to the phenomenologist are the very things that are taken for granted - that people 'have' children, that this is 'right' and 'good' behaviour, that we all 'have' families, etc. Silverman (1972: 165) summarized thus: "Phenomenology is committed to an exploration of the obvious". When colleagues and respondents alike told me that "it is a fact of life" that people have children, or that there are no such things as 'choices' about whether to have children, they provoked a phenomenological explanation. What is needed, said Silverman, is a sociology of commonsense.

But if commonsense is taken for granted, how does one study it? Schutz adopted Husserl's attitude of "radical doubt", the eidetic reduction aimed at revealing "the ultimate or absolute grounds of being" (Phillipson: 128-9). The researcher's objective is to "doubt" by suspending belief, or "bracketing" the taken-for-granted:

> The phenomenologist does not deny the existence of the outer world, but for his analytic purpose he makes up his mind to suspend belief in its existence - that is, to refrain intentionally and systematically from all judgments related directly or indirectly to the existence of the outer world.
>
> (Schutz, Vol I: 104).

We should not only "bracket" the 'things' in the outer world, but we should also "suspend belief" in the validity of statements about the world, and our practical ways of dealing with the world (science, logic, etc.) (p 105). The aim of "phenomenological reduction" is to go beyond belief to pure consciousness (p 104).

It should be noted that the phenomenologist does not, himself, 'not believe in' the world. Rather, like Durkheim's application of the methods of physical science to an exploration of the social, Schutz is proposing what Durkheim called an "attitude of mind" (see p 32) which is adopted for analytic purposes. As analytic procedures, the two perspectives can be seen as opposites, one which treats the world of beliefs (etc) as thing-like, the other which treats the world of 'things' as mere belief. How then might a phenomenological perspective be applied to 'value' of children? It is relevant that to many of my subjects and to some of my colleagues my original research question, "why have children?" was an expression of "radical doubt". Having children is "taken for granted". Simply asking the question, however, does not of itself provide the answers. Schutz offered two methodological principles whereby substantive issues (such as the 'value' of children) might be investigated phenomenologically. These have been summarized by Phillipson as,

(1) Clarification of concepts used as in the everyday world is essential: what do they mean? The meaning of concepts is indicated in their use. (Lakoff and Johnson's idea of the metaphor might be useful in achieving this clarification.)

(2) Generation of concepts, how they are built up, should be considered. This requires one to examine the activities and meanings out of which the concept emerged[7]. This meaning is common sense rather than, necessarily, research sense. (Phillipson: 135-139).

Commonsense knowledge, according to Schutz (Vol I: 7-8) is a system of constructs of typicality, which are intersubjective and socially derived. Typification is necessary if we are to know how to act. Thus the typification of 'adult' to my respondents included the particular of 'parent': in acting towards an adult parenthood was assumed, part of expectation. No-one (usually) asks why a person <u>has</u> children, but people commonly ask, why not?

To understand this commonsense world, Schutz elaborated upon Weber's <u>verstehen</u>, as a method of coming to terms with the actor's subjective reality. After W.I. Thomas, he held that understanding the social world meant understanding and then reconstructing the way in which the people define their situations (Natanson 1973: xxxvi, xlvi). Definition of the situation is intersubjective. In the context of this research, what children 'mean' to people in the everyday world is defined in social interaction and is identifiable in talk. I do not just 'have' children, existing asocially. Others react towards me and I to them with regard to children. In the context of 'value', for instance, children will not give me 'fun and companionship' as a positive attribute if I do not 'know' that fun and companionship are desirable and are associated with

children. I get this knowledge from others, through talk, and from my own previous experience. Similarly, I define the interaction I have with my children as 'fun and companionship' because it is part of my taken for granted stock of knowledge that (for example) playing a ball game that I want to play is 'fun' for me, whereas worrying about a sick child when I would rather be at a party is not 'fun'. The two levels of meaning are thus apparent: I 'know' what 'fun and companionship' of children means, but that is not the same as saying that 'fun and companionship' are what children mean to me.

Similarly, in their talk subjects showed how the idea that it is 'natural' to have children is constructed and reinforced in everyday life, in a complex interplay of references to instincts, genetics, sexuality, etc. Yet the same people could also, themselves, 'suspend belief' and acknowledge that there were other (scientific, not 'common' sense) possible explanations of childbearing - economic ones for instance, which were 'rational' rather than 'natural'. But the practice of living, as evidenced in talk rather than questionnaire responses, was according to common sense understandings and meanings.

In addition to the two objectives outlined by Phillipson, the researcher also needs to consider his own grounds for making sense of the discovered meanings which form his data. This is because research itself is a social construction (see Chapter 1) with data given meaning (made sense of) according to the particular paradigm adopted.

A second component of Schutz's methodology was that concerned with his quest for objectivity. He distinguished 'ideal-typical' constructs of meanings, which he called "second-order constructs", from the typicalities of the everyday world, intersubjective experience of members, which he called 'first-order constructs' (Vol I: 6). First-order constructs are

constructs of typical action which the actor needs to employ in order to live in a (perceived) orderly world; they are commonsense practical constructs. Second-order constructs are researcher's understandings, which are deduced in accordance with some logic of scientific or intellectual understanding; they are theoretical.

The constructs of the researcher, therefore, are not of the same kind as the constructs of the actor. This might be exemplified by comparing ideas (constructs) of 'rational' fertility behaviour. To the economic demographer rational behaviour involves not having (any more) children when costs of children exceed benefits. That might mean one child is the maximum. But to an everyday person having an "only" child is not rational: it will be spoilt, selfish, lonely, etc. At least two children might be considered necessary. The distinction refers to constructs of rationality which 'mean', in Schutz's terms (1973, Vol II: 74-78) on the one hand logical action, and on the other hand reasonable action. Both forms of action are 'appropriate' but the meaning of that term differs in the two different contexts.

In addition to having different meanings, however, the constructs of the researcher and the actor reflect different levels of meaning. For instance, in this research subjects talked about having children to continue the family "line" or name, and to inherit family traditions. They made sense of these notions by reference to personal and family continuity or immortality, having a child so they or their family would live on. This explanation might be categorised as a first-order construct. However, in analysing these meanings as a researcher, I brought to my understandings (as part of my background expectancies) other forms of 'knowledge' (which my subjects, if they also 'knew' it, would probably not consider relevant). Instead of taking for granted, as they had done, that children are given a "family name", or that heirlooms are given to 'family' members, I asked why this was so. Suspending

belief, I asked myself what would happen if a child was not given a 'family' name. I reflected on how birth announcements are phrased, for instance, and on the practice of women on marriage also assuming their husband's 'family' name. The importance in adoption procedures of the child's birth name being removed from the records and it assuming the adoptive parents' name also seemed relevant. The answer to my question of what would happen if these actions did not take place was that no-one would know where the child (or married woman) 'belonged'. My (research) explanation of the link between child and "family name" was not that the child was a 'vehicle' for continuing that name (as Mr Browning stated for instance - see p 252), but that the name was a means of identifying the child, as indicating where, or to whom, it 'belonged'. In other words, the subjects' first-order construct of the typical action of giving a child its "family" name was explained (understood) as family continuity, whereas my second-order construct of the practice was explained as identity or belonging. The essential aspect of this approach is to distinguish for the reader these two orders of meaning, and to which party (subject or researcher) each is attributable. In this context the construction of second-order meanings, what Schutz believed Weber meant by "subjective interpretion" (Vol I: 62), has been elaborated upon as a 'method' in section 4.2.

To test the validity, or objectivity, of phenomenological interpretation, Schutz proposed three postulates (see Vol I: 43-44; Vol II: 84-85):

1. The postulate of logical consistency: constructs must be quite clear and compatible with the principles of formal logic. This postulate thus distinguishes scientists' constructs from those of everyday people, whose constructs may be unclear, only partially coherent, and not compatible with any formal logical principles.

2. The postulate of subjective interpretation: the researcher must have some model of the human mind which explains the data, or understandings. That is, the actor's subjective meaning needs a context (biographical, social) for it to 'make sense'.

3. The postulate of adequacy: each model of action must be constructed in such a way that it would have commonsense understanding to the actor himself, in order to ensure consistency of the researcher's ('scientific') constructs with those of everyday commonsense experience.

As Phillipson pointed out, there is a particular tension between the postulates of adequacy and logical consistency. But it would not appear that first and second order constructs have to be consistent in a logical sense, but rather in a 'common' sense manner. My explanation of naming children by a 'family' name is not of the same order as that offered by the actors who do this, but I believe that my explanation would 'make sense' to them. The ultimate test of validity for Schutz was that the researcher's second order constructs must be taken back into the life world for confirmation (Vol I: 44), to be tested against common sense. As discussed in Chapter 3 of this thesis, how much 'sense' do economists' equations of 'value' of children make to everyday people in the life world? Such constructs, though satisfying Schutz's first postulate, would fail miserably on his third postulate. By comparison, explanations of 'value' of children derived from the qualitative research in Part Two of the thesis do, I believe, meet the common sense criterion. It has been argued (Chapter 13) that this can be achieved by making oneself, as researcher, also a subject who is aware of the background expectancies, the stock of socially derived knowledge, which we all, as members, have. The challenge to the researcher-as-subject is to "suspend belief" and make this knowledge explicit.

In his essay The Stranger (Vol II: 91-105) Schutz indicated one way in which the taken-for-granted might be exposed. The stranger recognizes the taken-for-granted knowledge of an alien culture, club or group because his own taken-for-granted knowledge is inappropriate. The stranger, like the researcher, is faced with the task of reconstructing how the group 'defines its situation', what its private codes are and what are its experiences in common. There are implicit 'rules' of behaviour which refer to the typicalities which the stranger does not share. Yet what is taken-for-granted, common sense, may not be clear to the members, and may include contradictions. The stranger, on the other hand, does not see the overall scheme of things and may focus on individual traits rather than typical ones. This is what our childless couple did when talking about the parenting behaviour of neighbours, what Mrs Browning did talking about 'career' mothers, and what Janet did talking about adoption.

Members typically are not interested in why certain behaviour 'works', only that it does work. For example, a farmer meeting an unknown driver on a country road will wave to him, and the driver will return the gesture. When the same farmer comes to the city and waves to an unknown driver the gesture is not returned; the unknown driver may be as perplexed as the farmer. There is a very simple 'reason' for this, which might not be apparent to any of the actors concerned, viz, that if people in cities waved to every unknown driver they met they would be waving all day. The stranger (in this case the farmer) does not, however, interpret the cultural patterns of the member's group (city folk) as an authoritative "system of tested recipes" (Vol II: 96), and does not understand that these patterns are authoritative because they 'work' until he, the stranger, tries to do something which does not work.

Schutz's "stranger" in the present research was the nonparent. In a world of parents, nonparents negotiate their behaviour, testing the ground rules. Like strangers in a new land they 'explain' why they do not have children (parents do not explain to nonparents why they have children - it is taken for granted). Parents might also 'explain' various atypical (to them) behaviour of nonparents as being because they do not have children, are strangers. It is thus that nonparents may be "used" in 'value of children' research (as indicated in Chapter 11) to reveal the taken for grantedness of parents and parenting. Nonparents 'see' the contradictions involved in having children, and by their own perceptions as outsiders, who are called upon to explain their 'deviance', they clarify the common understanding that 'normal' adults have, and want to have, children. In their transgressions they might also become aware of some of the (implicit) "systems of recipes" parents have regarding children. One of these, for example, is that it is the order of a woman's life experiences that when she "grows up" she leaves school, gets married and has children. A person who leaves out any one of these stages, or has them in a different order, "transgresses", and is estranged.

Similarly, adoptive parents and their children are also strangers among (biological) parents. Consideration of adoptors and adoptees reveal the common understandings that member (biological) parents have about biological notions of parenting, and the 'meaning' of children as expressions of what they conceive as 'biology'. Discussions about women who do not rear the child they bear also reveal common understandings of the social nature of parenting, and about the concept of "own" children. In the context of this interaction, the stranger does not have to be physically present, but may only be discussed: members have their own view of strangers, because of their "strangeness". All of the adults mentioned above were strangers in an everyday world where most adults are biological

and social parents to their "own" children. Their perceptions of the world, and members' perceptions of them in the world, help make explicit the taken for granted knowledge about why people have children, not just any children, but their "own" children.

14.4 A Methodological Proposal For 'Value'-Of-Children Research

It has been argued in this thesis that conventional ideas of 'value' of children might be useful research concepts, but they do not convey the social meaning which children have to parents.

To discover this meaning it is not sufficient to elaborate the techniques of data-gathering and analysis employed by researchers of the questionnaire-survey tradition, or even those of structural-functionalists who have employed observation and informal interview techniques for case studies. Such observations do not readily reveal hidden meanings, although astute observers might well become aware of these through other aspects of their research, as Caldwell has done. Rather, it is argued, a different perspective must be adopted, one which acknowledges that to everyday people meaning is not just theoretical, but rises out of the everyday practical experience of living in the world.

The research described in the second half of this thesis was an exploration of methods grounded in such a perspective. The research proceeded somewhat intuitively but for heuristic purposes it might now be summarized as comprising five premises:

1. Meaning arises out of and is reflected in the interaction that people have with each other. The 'meaning' of children is defined by interaction with children, and with others with respect to children.

2. Talk is a form of interaction in which meanings are communicated. To discover everyday as distinct from academic meaning, everyday talk rather than questionnaire survey or interview talk must be examined.

3. Talk is itself considered to be a sense-making device. Everyday talk is metaphorical. Therefore it should not be taken at 'face value', but should be examined for the common sense which underlies it. It is thus regarded as "containing" expressions of sense-making. During this study talk was examined for the following techniques which people might use for understanding why they have children:

   (a) expressions of order in the world,
   (b) expressions of ambivalence or tension, and how these are resolved, as reciprocal expressions of social order,
   (c) expressions of marginality or deviance, and how instances of these are negotiated, as reflections of social order.

4. Interpretations of these expressions must clearly distinguish those which are the researcher's theoretical constructs from practical interpretations which are the everyday sense-making procedures which the subjects and researchers have in common.

5. Adequacy of the interpretation must be tested by taking the interpretation back to the subjects. This need not be done in a physical sense, but the researcher must ask if his interpretation would make sense to people in the everyday world. That is, the

> test of adequacy is a test of being reasonable, and making sense.

As a consequence of a process which examines order and contradictions of that order, the 'meaning' of children so derived is a synthesis of the taken-for-granted and the deliberately negotiated. 'Meaning' of children is thus interpreted as a social construction which is grounded in the everyday action and interaction of people in a world which to them is real and understood.

In this research the notion of a paradigm has been employed in order to explain how people make sense of their world. Just as researchers have paradigms, or sets of assumptions and appropriate ways of acting, in order to make sense of their observations, so also ordinary people have paradigms in order to make sense of, in this case, their fertility. Furthermore, different paradigms might be adopted in (appropriate to) different situations. For example, an 'economic' paradigm might be useful when referring to household budgeting, or a 'social' paradigm when discussing why women working is "just a trend" or why unmarried women should not have children. To elaborate, people perceive two categories (typifications) of adults in the world: parents and nonparents. To understand this categorization as an expression of social order one needs to ask "how did this come about?" Why, of all the categories that might be used to classify adult human beings, are 'parent' and 'nonparent' considered so important? People do not say, in effect, "we have children in order to become parents because parents are people who have children". Yet, it has been argued, people do have children in order to become parents. To everyday people, perceptions (understandings) of what children meant to them returned to discussions of being a parent. It is not just that only parents have children: parents must also have their "own" children, implying that there are other kinds of children which perhaps any adult, including a non-parent, could have.

We need to ask, "Why is it important that people become parents?". To provide the linkages which might transform such questions into theory, the place of parents as a typified group with common experiences in New Zealand needs to be examined. How much of our law, our policy, our social customs, or daily interactions focus on people-as-parents? Our media writers tell us that "mothers" use a certain brand of soap, and "fathers" bring home the tea; we hear "parents" express concern about the timing or content of television programmes; it is considered interesting and important that a top sportswoman is a "wife and mother", and it is relevant that the man acquitted of assault is a "good father". And the list goes on. The "evidence" is undisputable: 'parents' are recognized categories of people, to which adults (are expected to) want to 'belong'.

If we want to know why people have children, we need to know why people want to become parents. Not only do they become parents individually, but they are expected to become parents in pairs. Women who are unmarried are not asked why they have no children, and if they do have children they are classified as "parent" with certain qualifications ("solo parent" or "unmarried mother"): focus is on the particular, rather than on the typical. Why then, do marriage and children go together; why are parents (plural) a man and a woman; why, indeed, in the adult world are men and women expected to "go together"?

The answers to these questions ~~are~~ have to do with social typifications - Douglas and Isherwood's "categories of culture". They define how we are to interact with each other, how we define our situations. To find the answers, however, one needs to suspend belief: parents and nonparents need not be the only way of classifying adults with respect to children; what happens if I do not know a person has no children and I try to interact with her as if she were a parent?; what sort

of negotiating, indexing, of my actions do we each need to do in order for them to 'make sense' to each other? What would be the effect on our laws or policies if people did not 'belong' in families - would they still 'work'? And so on. These suggestions are not to indicate how the questions can be answered, but to indicate how they might be asked. The asking arises out of the conclusions of this research, and the theoretical premises of its methodology.

Even more commonly expressed than the 'social order' paradigm, however, was a biological one, based on assumptions of sexuality, physiology, genetics, etc. But this paradigm was not necessarily explained in such terms, except in an attempt to be 'scientific'. Rather, subjects said, "it is natural" to have children. To ask why it is "natural" to have, or want to have, children is again to refer to categories. That is, it is 'unnatural' not to want to have children. The taken-for-grantedness of this belief is indicated by people's inability to say why it is 'natural', other than that "it just is". As researchers we might understand this belief by looking for the background expectancies, the grounding of this knowledge, which may have formed this social meaning. Again, notions of social order might be invoked, or there may be theological understandings involved. Yet everyday people appear to employ this paradigm, make sense of their fertility, in biological meaning. This paradigm is not to be confused with a biological paradigm employed by a scientific researcher. Both use concepts, constructs or metaphors in order to explain or make sense of fertility in the light of particular background assumptions. But the 'sense' which is made have different kinds of meaning: explanation and understanding are not synonymous.

Conventional demographic research has been characterised (Chapter 2) as being quantitative, deterministic and policy-oriented. The analytic procedures suggested in this chapter satisfy none of these criteria. However, replications of the

procedure, though time-consuming, are possible. Rather than interviewing couples, a more fruitful enquiry might be to discuss in a group situation children and having children. In this manner conversation is less likely to be directed at the observer and is more likely to involve 'natural language' (rather than scientific research language) and to exhibit the processes of negotiation, indexicality and reflexivity which go into everyday conversation. What might be lost, however, is access to the private negotiations between husband and wife which might not be revealed in a larger group.

But replication is not the same as quantification, as quantification is understood by demographers. Because meaning is situationally defined, inferences from the subjects to any larger aggregate are incompatible with the notion of social meaning. To adopt a phenomenological perspective might involve a bracketing not only of attributes to do with the phenomenon being studied but also the demographic research paradigm itself. Phenomenological investigation does not provide quantifiable data in the sense in which understandings are reduced to numerical representations of an aggregate. Estimates of sampling errors, calculation of correlation coefficients and analysis of variance are inappropriate in the context of this procedure. The focus of the perspectives outlined in this chapter is on common sense understandings, not abstract research constructs.

The issue has to do with orders of explanation. If correlations between demographic and social 'factors' 'explain', then it can be argued that subjective understandings are the means of imputing meanings to these 'explanations'. It was in such a manner that Rainwater 'explained' what demographers already knew, ie, that the poor "get children" (see Chapter 2). Neither is the issue one of cause and effect, or some chain of independent-intervening-dependent 'variables'. Rather, the issue is one of commonsense meanings imputed to the actions or phenomena associated with those attributes of

processes which researchers define as means, ends or variables. Researchers can make causal deductions between one action and the next, but these would be research abstractions, not necessarily common sense understandings.

What, then, are the implications of this approach for policy-formulation? Firstly, as Darroch et al suggested (see p122), the perspective implies a challenge to policy-makers themselves. That is, they must suspend belief in their own prior judgements; the 'problem' must be defined by common sense definition. Not to do so risks creating a problem, which is an artefact of the researcher's perspective.

Secondly, a subjective perspective enables a researcher to discover what aspects of the phenomenon are recognized and relevant to the subjects. Subjects of the present study appeared to consider their childbearing more in terms of being a parent than in terms of having children. If this is the case, any policy perspective must incorporate a whole range of phenomena to do with parenting and belonging to that category called "parent", and ask not why people have children, but why people become parents. In this context an idea of social order is relevant. Also relevant and related to the idea of order is Schutz's concept of "stranger".

Other 'discoveries' in this study, which were facilitated by the informal mode of investigation, were the relevance of ideas of immortality and family continuity, and the pervasiveness of 'biological' rationalizations in understanding fertility. In a secular, western culture such as New Zealand, neither form of explanation was expected to be important. Certainly questionnaire responses to categories preconceived by the researcher, did not make such understandings clear. Indeed, the ability of subjects to adopt different intellectual paradigms in different situations was responsible for some quite misleading survey 'results' related to these topics.

While this study was concerned primarily with why people have any children (rather than none), there are implications in the study for explanations of why people have different numbers of children. Some of these explanations ~~are~~ have to do with the conceptualization of 'family': family is man, woman and children (plural). Other ideas which might be explored ~~were~~ had to do with gender differences in perceptions of fertility as a biological phenomenon. Not only did the men and women spoken with appear to 'see' childbearing differently, but they both saw childbearing as meaning different things to men and women. Given that children are expected to be born to a man and a woman, as a couple, it is possible that the negotiations which go on between partners might result in different "family size desires"; if the resolution of the differences varies between couples, this might result in different "actual family sizes" also. Similar understandings might be useful as explanations of childbearing timing patterns: the conceptualization of parent/nonparent dichotomy is probably important in this regard.

Finally, the perspectives proposed in this chapter facilitate an understanding of how meanings are derived. People are perceived in interaction with each other, constructing their life worlds. This interaction and construction are alluded to in talk, but more importantly, talk reveals the meanings imputed to these interactions and construction. In talk we discovered that it is not fulfilling a certain obligation which makes someone a 'family' member. Rather, it is what that act of obligation means, what underlying assumptions it represents, which is significant to understanding 'family'.

These analytic procedures provide a kind of explanation which differs from those conventionally offered by demographers. If researchers are to understand fertility as a phenomenon of the everyday world, then they must understand how everyday people themselves make common sense of it. They are the people who have (or do not have) children and this is sensible to them. Not to

acknowledge these understandings is to treat fertility as an object, people as things, and human consciousness as a myth. It is suggested that rather than rejecting such procedures as being impractical for aggregate-level analysis, demographers might incorporate them as part of the mode of understanding the phenomena they are interested in.

The task then is not to establish regularities, not to offer correlations as explanation, but to understand what these mean. It is to understand common sense and thereby acknowledge the social attribute of meaning.

14.5 Conclusion

In the Introduction to this thesis three questions were asked:

1. What is meant by 'value' of children, to researchers and to their subjects?

2. Are these meanings of the same order?

3. How might the ideas implied by the researcher's notion of 'child value' be studied sociologically, so that subjects' everyday meaning is discovered?

The conclusions reached from this investigation refer to these three questions.

The 'value' of children is understood by researchers in terms of economic cost, forgone occupational opportunities, potential immortality, ascription of adult status, old age security, fun and pleasure, and so on. Everyday people understand such concepts, and can accommodate them in explaining their fertility.

'Value' as conceived of in the idiom of economic, cost-benefit analysis, is considered an inappropriate metaphor for the way in which the pakeha New Zealanders studied during this research understand their children and what it means to have children. Certainly these people can, as for the purpose of a questionnaire survey, adopt the 'economic paradigm' in expressing their ideas about children; they can talk about them in terms of costs, benefits, investments and assets. But it is concluded that they do not understand their lives by such a paradigm. The meaning they impute to 'value' is of a different kind to that imputed by researchers of the demographic tradition.

In order to understand people's fertility behaviour, researchers need to identify the understandings everyday people themselves impute to, or derive from it. Why does it "make sense" for most people to have children, for some to have none, and for a few to have just one? The answer for everyday people is not some notion of 'economic rationality' as Caldwell proposed. That is a useful research sense-making idea, but it is yet to be shown that ordinary people commonly adopt such a method of making sense of their fertility, in their everyday lives.

As previous researchers have recognised, people do not have children in isolation from the rest of their social life. But whereas most researchers have understood this to mean that they must therefore construct a 'social context' in which to locate fertility behaviour, as a matter of contextual action, few have acknowledged that the social location of fertility behaviour means that it must make sense socially, or have social (as well as biological, in the scientific sense) meaning. Fertility must not only have meaning which makes sense which is in harmony with the rest of social life, but that meaning is also defined and constructed socially, in interaction in the world.

The 'value' of children to everyday people is now understood to

be the meaning that children have. It is argued that this meaning is constructed as, and reflects, a much more pervasive understanding of order in the world. To understand why people have children the researcher must understand their perception of social order, where children are seen to be in that order, and how that perception of order gives social meaning to children. We might then begin to understand the social meaning of the 'value' of children.

"And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time."

- T. S. Eliot.

Notes to Chapter 14.

1. See note 5 , Chapter 6 (p 177)

2. These resemble the biological notions of 'drives' and 'instincts' but are less firm in their meaning and have a specifically social attribute.

3. Researchers in feminist sociology, for instance, are quite aware of the implications of social constructions of biology. See, for example, Janet Sayers Biological Politics, 1982.

4. See Berger and Luckman (1966: 38): "The reality of everyday life seeks to integrate the problematic sector into what is already unproblematic." However, "consciousness always returns to the paramount reality" (p 39). In the present context, the "paramount reality" is that adults 'are' parents, to children who are their 'own'.

5. Phenomenological philosophy per se is not the issue of inquiry in this thesis. The present account is a proposal representing only one of several sociological perspectives which might be considered as alternative modes of analysis of demographic phenomena.

6. Quoted in Hughes from E. Vogelin The New Science of Politics University of Chicago Press, 1952: 27 .

7. For example, in the context of the present thesis the concept of 'fertility' might be seen to have rather different meanings according to whether the person employing the concept understands it in terms of the study of physiological reproduction, in terms of statistical enumeration of births, or in terms of families living in the everyday world.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Publications of the East-West Population Institute Value of Children Project.

Fawcett, James T. (ed)	1972	The Satisfactions and Costs of Children: Theories, Concepts, Methods. Summary Report and Proceedings of the Workshop on Assessment of the Satisfactions and Costs of Children. East-West Population Institute, Hawaii, April 27-29, 1972.
		The Value of Children, A Cross-national Study
Arnold, Fred et.al	1975	Volume 1. Introduction and Comparative Analysis.
Bulatao, Rodolfo	1975	Volume 2. Philippines.
Arnold, Fred & Fawcett, James T.	1975	Volume 3. Hawaii.
Buripakdi, Chalio & Khanthajai, Nathabhol	1977	Volume 4. Thailand.
Wu, Tsong Shien & Ward, Sandra	1977	Volume 5. Taiwan.
Iritani, Toshio	1979	Volume 6. Japan.
Lee, Sung Jin & Kim, Jung-Oh	1979	Volume 7. Korea.

Current Studies on the Value of Children, Papers of the East-West Population Institute.

Bulatao, Rodolfo 1979 On the nature of the Transition in the Value of Children. 104pp. No. 60-A.

Bulatao, Rodolfo 1979 Further Evidence of the Transition in the Value of Children. 83pp. No. 60-B.

Callan, Victor 1980 The Value of Children to Australian, Greek and Italian Parents in Sydney. 60pp. No. 60-C.

Darroch, Russell, Meyer, Paul & Singarimbun, Masri 1981 Two Are Not Enough: The Value of Children to Javanese and Sundanese Parents. 86pp. No. 60-D.

Kagitcibasi, Cigdem 1982 The Changing Value of Children in Turkey. 100pp. No. 60-E.

Bulatao, Rodolfo & Fawcett, James T. 1983 Influences on Childbearing Intentions Across the Fertility Career: Demographic and Socioeconomic Factors and the Value of Children. 152pp. No. 60-F.

Papers of the East-West Population Insitute.

Fawcett, James et al. 1974 The Value of Children in Asia and the United States: Comparative Perspectives. 69pp. Paper No. 32.

Ware, Helen 1978 The Economic Value of Children in Asia and Africa: Comparative Perspectives. 36 pp. Paper No. 50.

Reprints of the East-West Population Institute.

Fawcett, James	1973	The Value of Children: Theory and Method. Reprint No. 35.
Fawcett, James	1978	The Value and Cost of the First Child. Reprint No. 96.
Bulatao, Rodolfo	1978	The Value of a Filipino Child: Pleasure and Profit against Cost and Concern. Reprint No. 113.
Bulatao, Rodolfo	1982	The Transition In The Value of Children and the Fertility Transition. Reprint No. 152.
Bulatao, Rodolfo	1981	Values and Disvalues of Children in Successive Childbearing Decisions. Reprint No. 129.

(SOURCE: Dialog Search from Population Index Database, 23 November 1983; Publications of the East-West Population Institute, September 1983.)

APPENDIX II

Major Code Categories and Specific Code Categories Used in the Content Analysis of Responses: Advantages and Disadvantages of Having Children

East-West Centre Crossnational Project.

ADVANTAGES

Happiness, love, companionship

Companionship, avoidance of loneliness
Love, affection
Play, fun with children; avoidance of boredom
Relief from strain, distraction from problems
Happiness for individual parent (general)
Happiness for family
Uniqueness, specialness in parent-child relationship

Personal development of parent

Character development, responsibility, maturity, morality
Incentives to succeed, striving to provide for children
Fulfilment of self, completeness as person
Extension of self
Learning from experience of childrearing
Motherhood, fatherhood; adulthood
Proof of fertility, masculinity, femininity

Childrearing satisfactions

Pride in children's accomplishments
Pleasure from growth, development of children
Children to carry out parent's hopes, aspirations
Opportunity to teach, guide, instill values
Satisfaction in one's childrearing ability, accomplishment
Satisfaction in providing for children

Economic benefits, security

Economic help in old age
Companionship, comfort, care in old age
Unspecified help in old age
Economic help (old age not mentioned)
Comfort, care (old age not mentioned)
Help in housework, famiy chores; practical help
Sharing financial responsibility; insurance, security
Help in family business, farm
Help in taking care of other children
Unspecified help (old age not mentioned)

Benefits to family unit

Children as bond between spouses
Children as reason for, fulfilment of marriage
Children as family life, complete or close-knit family

Kin group benefits

Continuity of family name
Continuity of family traditions
Enhancement of reputation of family
Having future grandchildren
Children as heirs, someone to inherit family wealth
Religious rituals, ancestor worship
To increase strength, power of kin group
To satisfy desires of spouse
To satisfy desires of other kin

Social, religious influences

Conformity to social norms
Conformity to religious norms
Children as benefits to society

General, intrinsic value of children

Children as treasure, wealth, assets
Instinctive, natural to have children
General wanting, liking children

Other advantages.

DISADVANTAGES

Financial costs

Educational costs
General financial costs

Emotional Costs

Responsibility of parenthood
Discipline, moral behaviour
Health problems of children
Concern over children's future success, happiness
Concern about satisfying children's present wants
Noise, disorder, nuisance
General rearing problems
General emotional strain

Physical demands on parents

Health hazard of pregnancy; maternal health
Physical work, tiredness caused by children

Restrictions on alternative activities

Restrictions on time
Restrictions on travel
Restrictions on social life, recreation
Restrictions on job, career
Restrictions on personal wants
Restrictions on privacy
General lack of flexibility, freedom

Marital problems

Less time, interaction between spouses
Disagreements over children
General marital problems

Kin group costs, problems of inheritance

Disadvantages relating to, affecting kin group

Societal costs, overpopulation

Disadvantages relating to, affecting society; concern about overpopulation

Other disadvantages

(Source : Arnold et al 1975 : 46-48).

APPENDIX III : NEW ZEALAND POPULATION STATISTICS

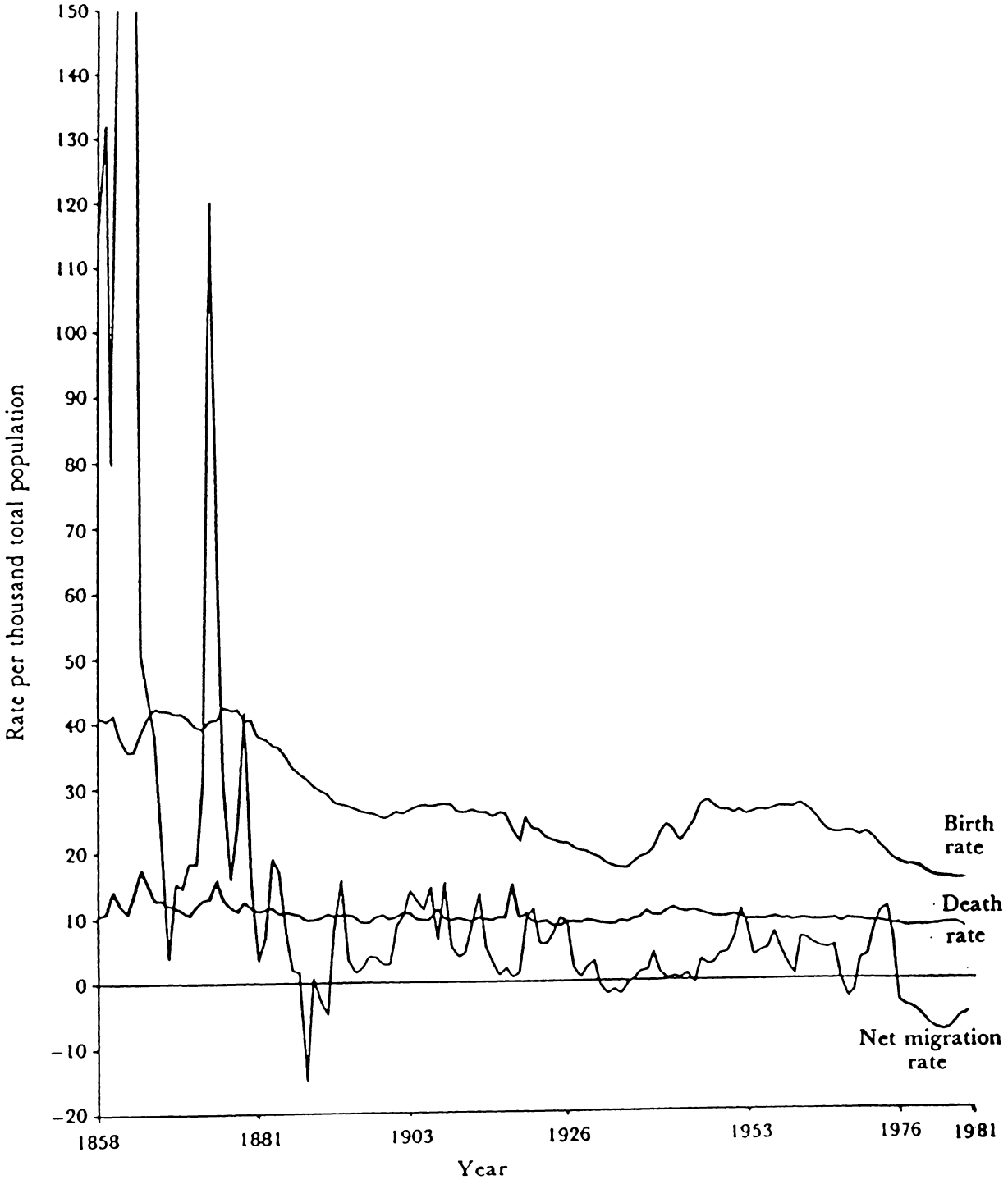

Fig. iii(a) Birth, Death and Migration Rates, 1858-1981.

(Source : Based on Neville and O'Neill 1979 : 6, 1981 data added.)

APPENDIX iii(b)

New Zealand Non-Maori Fertility and Infant Mortality

1891 - 1981

Year	Marriage Cohort	Completed Family Size	Infant Mortality 0-1 yrs, ‰ live births
1900	1880	6.9	75.2
	1882	6.5	
	1885	6.1	
	1887	5.7	
1920			50.6
	1891	5.2	
1936			31.05
1941			29.82
	1913	3.73	
	1919	3.34	
1950			22.7
1961			19.16
1965	1935	3.16	16.1
1971			15.04
1981		3.38	11.08

Notes: (1) 1880-1935 data assume family size was complete after 30 years marriage; for 1981 family size is calculated for ever married women aged 45-49 years.

(2) Completed family sizes are only for women who have had at least one child. Figures therefore exaggerate overall fertility.

SOURCES: Cohort data and 1920, 1950 and 1965 mortality data from Gilson, 1970: 51, 57, 58. Other data calculated from Vital Statistics 1981: 12-13, and NZ Census 1981 Vol 2, Table 19.

Appendix iii (c)

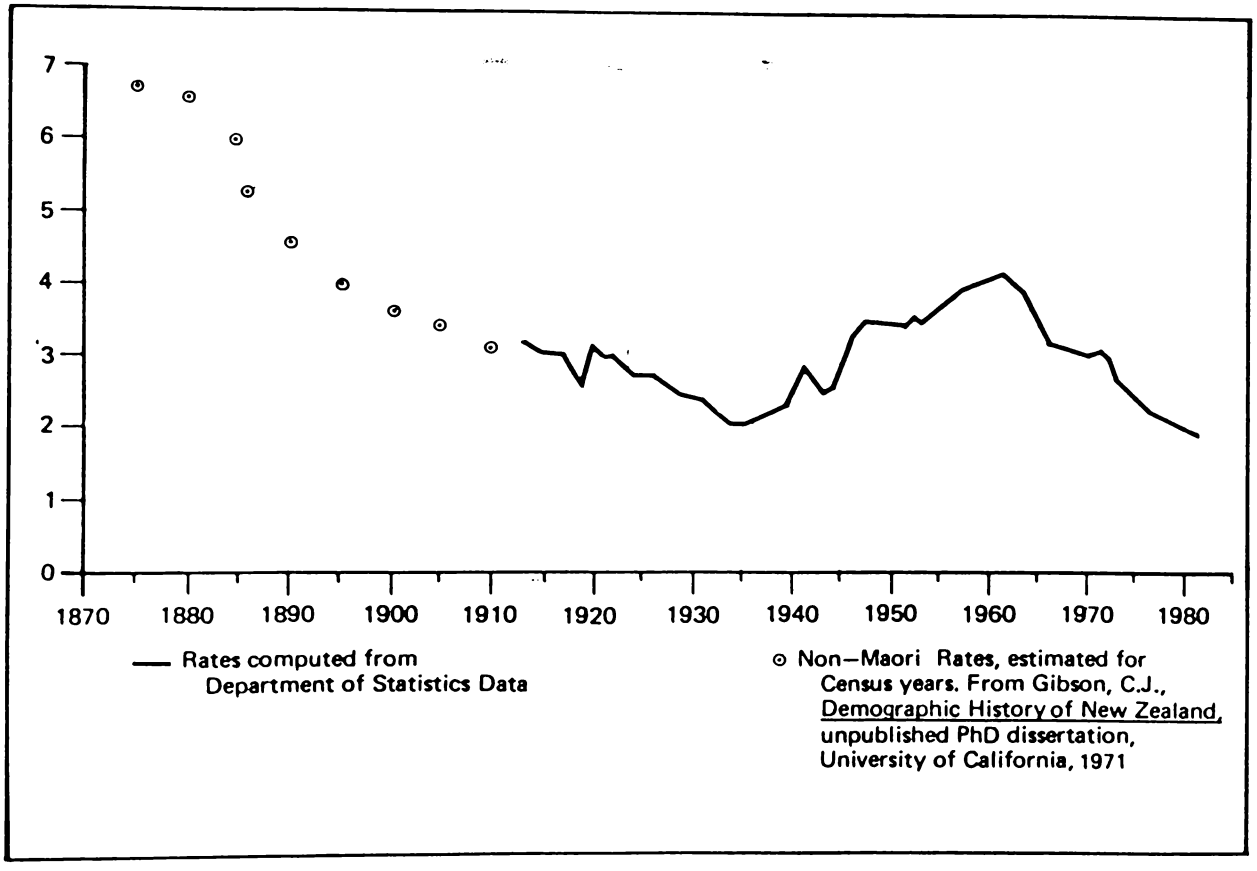

Fig. iii(b). Non-Maori Total Fertility Rates (Per Woman), 1878-1981.

(Source : Population Monitoring Group 1984 : 9)

APPENDIX iii(d)

Distribution of all Persons Sterilized For Contraceptive Reasons, by Number of Children, 1978-82.

Number of Children	% of all persons sterilized in given year who had stated number of children. 1978	1979	1980	1981	1982
0	1.6	1.4	1.8	2.1	2.6
1	3.5	3.7	4.0	4.2	4.0
2	40.4	38.8	41.7	41.7	40.4
3	32.3	33.1	31.6	32.6	31.8
4	13.7	14.1	13.2	12.5	13.6
5	4.7	5.0	4.5	4.1	4.7
6+	3.6	3.8	3.1	2.8	3.1
n/s (est)	0.2	0.1	0.1	13.7	16.3
N	10300	10445	8637	8813	7649
n = (N-n/s)	10094	10340	8550	7606	6402
n as % of all sterilized	85.1	90.7	93.1	92.0	91.3

Note : Because of the large proportion of persons sterilized in 1981 and 1982 who did not state number of children, distributions for those years have been recalculated with estimated "not stated" category excluded.

(Source : Calculated from Sterilization Notifications 1978-82, Department of Health.)

The various inadequacies of notification data are documented in Pool and Sceats 1981 : 52-53.

APPENDIX iii(e)

Distribution of Sterilizations for Persons With No Children by Stated Reason for Sterilization, 1973-1982.

Reason Given For Sterilization		Year 1978	1979	1980	1981*	1982
Contraception (Want No Children)	M	89	73	75	75	69
	F	81	78	82	82	97
	T	170	151	157	158	167
% of total		77.6	82.5	83.5	79.4	84.3
Health	M	11	12	5	6	8
	F	24	8	12	11	11
	T	35	20	17	17	19
% of total		16.0	10.9	9.0	8.5	9.6
Genetic	M	2	3	4	5	3
	F	3	3	5	4	4
	T	5	6	9	9	7
% of total		2.3	3.3	4.8	4.5	3.5
Other Reasons (incl. n/s)	M	1	2	-	7	4
	F	8	4	5	8	1
	T	9	6	5	15	1
% of total		4.1	3.3	2.7	7.5	2.5
TOTAL	M	103	90	84	93	84
	F	116	93	104	105	113
	T	219	183	188	199	198
Total, % of all Sterilizations, all parities.	M	0.3	2	2	2	2
	F	1.0	1	2	2	2
	T	1.8	2	2	2	2

* 1981 total includes one report where sex of client was not stated.

Note : In 1982 23% of women and 6% of men sterilized did not report number of children. Other inadequacies of notification data are discussed in Pool and Sceats 1981 : 52-53.

(Source : Sterilization Notifications 1978-82, Department of Health).

APPENDIX IV

UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

A five-point Declaration of the Rights of the Child was stated in 1923 by the International Union for Child Welfare, with 1948 revisions in a seven-point document. The League of Nations adopted the IUCW Declaration in 1924. The following Declaration of the Rights of the Child was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1959.

Declaration of the Rights of the Child - Preamble

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Whereas the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Whereas, the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth.

Whereas, the need for such special safeguards has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of Human Rights and in the statutes of specialised agencies and international organisations concerned with the welfare of children.

Whereas mankind owes to the child the best it has to give.

Now therefore, the General Assembly proclaims this Declaration of the Rights of the Child to the end that he may have a happy childhood and enjoy for his own good and for the good of society the rights and freedoms herein set forth, and calls upon parents, upon men and women as individuals and upon voluntary organisations, local authorities and national governments to recognise these rights and strive for their observance by legislative and other measures progressively taken in accordance with the following principles:

Principle 1

Th child shall enjoy all the rights set forth in this Declaration. All children, without any exception whatsoever, shall be entitled to these rights, without distinction or discrimination on account of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, whether of himself or of his family.

Principle 2

The child shall enjoy special protection, and shall be given opportunities and facilities, by law and by other means, to enable him to develop physically, mentally, morally, spiritually and socially in a healthy and normal manner and in conditions of freedom and dignity. In the enactment of laws for this purpose the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.

Principle 3

The child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality.

Principle 4

The child shall enjoy the benefits of social security. He shall be entitled to grow and develop in health; to this end special care and protection shall be provided both to him and to his mother, including adequate pre-natal and post-natal care. The child shall have the right to adequate nutrition, housing, recreation and medical services.

Principle 5

The child who is physically, mentally or socially handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition.

Principle 6

The child, for the full and harmonious development of his personality, needs love and understanding of his parents, and in any case in an atmosphere of affection and of moral and material security, a child of tender years shall not, save in exceptional circumstances, be separated from his mother. Society and the public authorities shall have the duty to extend particular care to children without a family and to

those without adequate means of support. Payment of state and other assistance toward the maintenance of children of large families is desirable.

Principle 7

The child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages. He shall be given an education which will promote his general culture, and enable him on a basis of equal opportunity to develop his abilities, his individual judgement, and his sense of moral and social responsibility, and to become a useful member of society.

The best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents.

The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation, which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavour to promote the enjoyment of this right.

Principle 8

The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.

Principle 9

The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.

(SOURCE: Wilkerson (ed), 1973: 3-5).

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The child shall in all circumstances be among the first to receive protection and relief.

Principle 9

The child shall be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty and exploitation. He shall not be the subject of traffic, in any form.

(SOURCE: Wilkerson (ed), 1973: 3-5).

APPENDIX V: THE ESCAP PAKEHA SURVEY

APPENDIX v(a)

Hamilton Family Formation Study Protocols

The ESCAP Project is an innovative study in fertility research. There were few models available for the study. The Hamilton Family Formation Study was thus implemented as a pilot investigation for the overall project, which has to date (March 1984) been conducted in Nepal, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan and Sri Lanka (Third Study Directors' Meeting, February 1984).

The following objectives for the Hamilton study were outlined in the Appendices for the Preparatory Consultation Meeting (November-December 1978):

Overall Objectives

> The proposed research has implications of a policy-type. Rapid fertility declines, both those emanating directly from family planning programmes and those more generally related to social and economic development, are occurring, or are about to occur, in many ESCAP countries. Elsewhere in the region policy-makers look forward to implementing declines, which have yet to commence. While there is a large body of research of the KAP (knowledge, attitudes and practice of family planning) and fertility survey type, this has concentrated on the individual (usually the woman) and on family limitation.
>
> There is, by contrast, a lack of data on the fertility behaviour of couples as they interact with the broader family .... (App. II, p 1.)

The overall objectives for the study were to determine the microlevel (couple or family) consequences of fertility decline, and whether these declines required external intervention, such as by family welfare authorities, and to determine whether the achievement of lower fertility is beneficial for families and, if not, how policies might make this beneficial (p 2-3).

Specific Objectives.

(a) The identification of factors conducive to the acceptance of family planning, and leading to declines and differentials in fertility;

(b) the study of the effect of family planning on family size and on the family life cycle;

(c) the analysis of the consequence of changes in these demographic characteristics on the structure and functions of families.

This proposal accepts the position that the central problem is fertility behaviour rather than family limitation. (App. II, p 3).

The model proposed for the study (Fig va) incorporated the couple who, in interacting with their family are influenced by "norms, incorporating socio-economic factors and including consumption and production", in attempting to achieve certain fertility outcomes. (p 5). Analytically, the family-couple component might be studied as being along two continua, one as to whether the couple act alone or are tied closely to a family of obligation, and the other as to whether there is close control over fertility or no control. The model "recognises that social change usually modifies family structures and functions", that family and couple behaviour is "translated into fertility behaviour through the mediating action" of intervening variables, and that there may be differentials as "a function of social class, ethnicity, religion, etc"(App II, p 6-7).

Hypotheses.

(i) That those who adopt family size limitation are more "westernized", or have been exposed to a greater degree of social transformation than those who do not, and

(ii) that their circumstances are such that they envisage economic and social benefits to themselves (that is, the couple) from the family size limitation. On the other hand , the complexity of social life is such that it may be difficult to demonstrate that starting from the same position, those who limit family size are "better off" than those who do not. (App II, p 8).

Maori Study Aims.

(a) to develop a methodology of enquiry, tested against the Maori situation, which can be used to,

(i) explain and predict the factors which are conducive to the acceptance of fertility control in other high fertility populations in Asia and the Pacific, and to

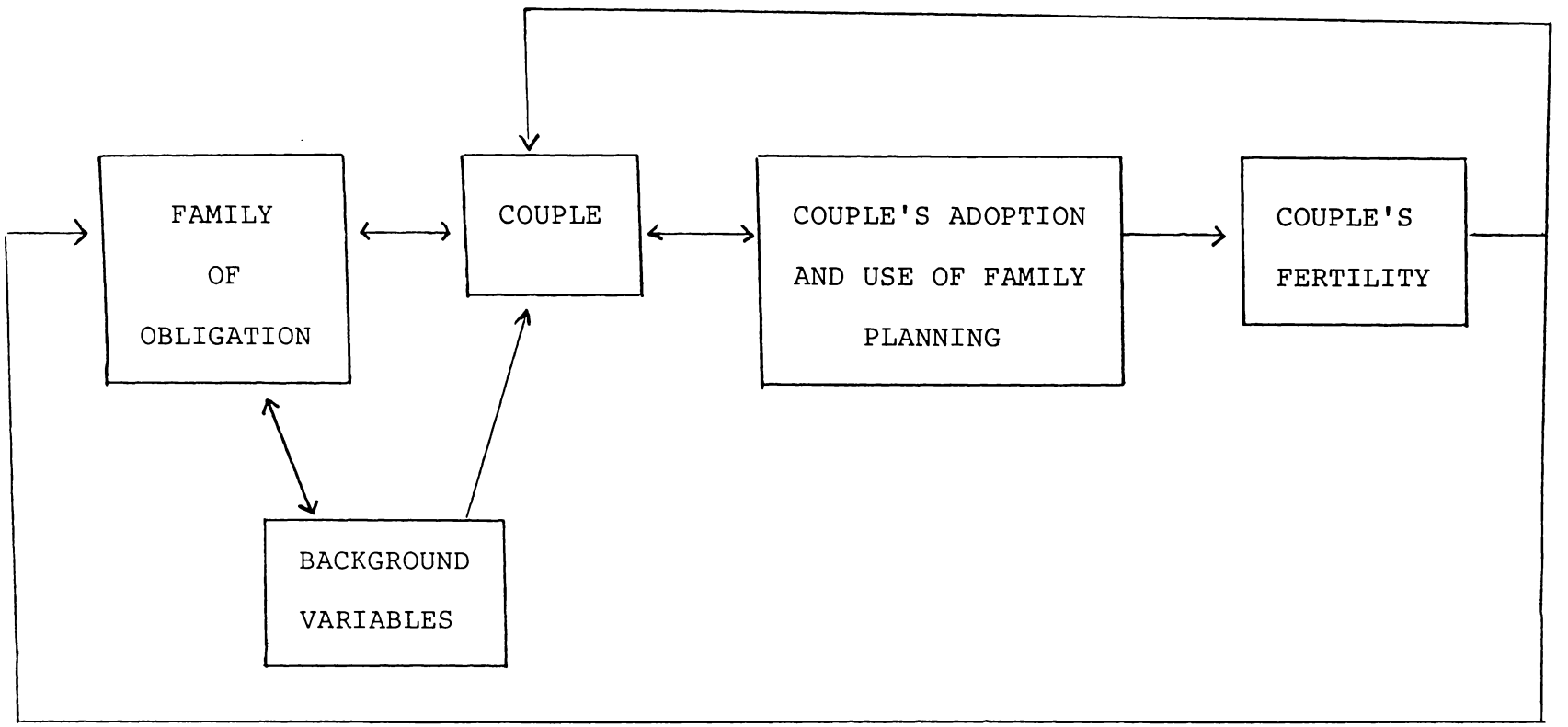

Fig. V(a) Generalised Study Design, ESCAP Survey.
(Source : Pool 1981 : 3).

(ii) study the interrelationships between fertility control and family size, function and family life-cycle.

(b) to test instruments which will seek to explain the social, cultural and economic factors which cause this fertility decline, particularly in the context of the structure and function of family of obligation and the interaction of individual couples to these obligations. (App III, p 3).

Pakeha (Portability) Study Aims.

The study aims to test the robustness and portability of the methodology of enquiry tested firstly against Maoris. (see above) (App IV, p 2).

APPENDIX v(b)

Sampling

Sampling was undertaken on a two-tier system, using random numbers tables to draw first 30 street names (out of 1011 streets) and then, from these, 150 allotment numbers as listed in City Council subdivision maps. The eligibility yield was low and two further samples were necessary, each drawn in similar mannner. The yield process was exacerbated by clustering of housing types - housing constructed by Dept. of Maori Affairs, flats with young people, old residential areas with elderly people, etc. - and by inclusion of small business or industrial areas in the sampling frame. Eventually 479 addresses were drawn, resulting in residents in 89 households being interviewed (See table of response rates, p470).

All addresses were sent an explanatory letter and a reply-paid card to be returned if the residents were ineligible. In practice, many people did not return the card if they were ineligible, and it became apparent to interviewers that most of these people were elderly, Maori, or people to whom the organisational concepts of the survey were quite foreign - ie, they did not fully understand the letter they had received or the significance of the reply card. On the other hand, at least one instance is known of where a person replied that he was ineligible erroneously, and the reply card was thus 'used' as a form of refusal, while other respondents saw, as one said, "If we did nothing we could expect an interviewer to turn up."

Of the 479 households approached, 60 resulted in refusals. This proportion is of interest because, despite particular care to make the sample a 'true' random sample, the refusals undermined the effort. Refusals were made on the grounds of survey saturation, accusations of racial separatism, occasional suspicion of United Nations involvement, and in some cases what one interviewer termed the "Sales person syndrome", where the householder refused even to listen to why the interviewer was calling. However, several interviewers felt that most of the refusals came from people they categorised as "working class". One interviewer commented,

> They (working class people) were more likely to refuse and seemed more suspicious of the whole thing. This

> must have affected the composition of the sample somewhat and made it somewhat unbalanced ... better educated people have more confidence and interest in doing surveys. They are also more familiar with survey jargon.

That the sample did end up biased towards better educated, 'white collar' people was confirmed by the statistical comparison with census data for Hamilton city.

University of Waikato
PRIVATE BAG : HAMILTON : NEW ZEALAND : TELEPHONE 62-889
ext 4969

28 October 1980.

Dear Householder,

My colleagues and I are carrying out a research study on New Zealand Pakeha families. We are interested in people's ideas about big and small families, their thoughts about children, about the sorts of things different relatives do for families, and so on. We are doing this survey on behalf of ESCAP for the United Nations, as part of New Zealand's external aid contribution.

Your address has been selected at random from all the households in Hamilton. We hope you are eligible to take part in the survey. The people we are looking for will be:-

a) New Zealand Pakehas (Europeans)

b) Married or living with a partner as if married or will have been so at some time in the past.

c) Aged 25 - 54, except that for a couple only the wife needs to be 25 - 54.

One of our interviewers will call on you during the next few weeks to see if you are eligible and, if you are, to invite you to take part in the research. If you do not fulfill the above criteria, will you please fill in the enclosed form and post it back to me within the next week.

When our interviewer calls he or she will arrange a time with you to carry out the interview. For people who are currently married or living together we would like to talk to both partners together. The interview will take approximately 1½ hours. All information gained from the interview will be added to information given by other participants so that what you tell us will remain entirely confidential to the researcher.

I hope that you will take part in this study if you are eligible. The information gained will be important in giving us a picture of what New Zealand families really are like.

When the study is complete we will be holding some meetings in Hamilton at which people who take part in the survey can discuss the results. We believe it is important that people who take part in surveys like this can share in the findings.

I am sure you will find our interview very interesting.

Yours sincerely

Jan Cameron

Jan Cameron
Principal Investigator
ESCAP PORTABILITY STUDY.

ESCAP SURVEY, RESPONSE RATES

A. Total Sample	Households n	%
Completed Interviews		
Male = 71	89	18.6
Females = 84		
Refusals	60	12.5
Ineligible	208	43.4
ethnicity = 29		
marital status = 4		
age = 174		
homosexual = 1		
Cancelled appointments	5	1.0
Address nonexistent	77	16.1
Address nonresidential	22	4.6
No respondent available	18	3.8
TOTAL SAMPLE	479	100.0

B. Addresses Held By Interviewers	Households n	%
Completed Interviews	89	29.3
Refusals	46	15.1
Ineligible	105	34.5
Cancelled appointments	5	1.6
Address nonexistent	25	8.2
Address nonresidential	17	5.6
No respondent available	17	5.6
Total Addresses Held	304	99.9
TOTAL Replies Returned	175	
Proportion of Ineligibles (etc) Returned		44.8

APPENDIX v(c)

Interviewers And Interviewing

Potential interviewers were approached by personal contact with 'mature' sociology students, social workers, marriage guidance counsellors and school teachers. The suitability of these people was assessed during several discussion group sessions which they attended in order to gain detailed information about the survey and what it would require of them in terms of training and time commitment. Fifteen hours training were spread over 3 weeks. As with interviewer recruitment, all training was conducted by me although interviewers did have the opportunity to attend one session with interviewers on the maori component of the survey. During training interviewers discussd the scope and purpose of the survey, practised interviewing technique using recorded interviews, and conducted practice interviews (including interviews in which they took the 'role' of respondent). The World Fertility Survey Manual for Interviewers and the WFS Training Manual were used as resources.

As part of their training, the interviewers also conducted a pretest of the questionnaire. In addition to promoting a number of stylistic changes in the questionnaire, the experience of the pretest familiarised interviewers with the field situation. My assessment of the interviewers at the end of the training period was that they understood the stated purpose of the survey, the intent of the questions, the rationale behind eligibility screening and sampling, they understood the theory of interviewing and had had the practical experience of several 'trial' interviews. Opinions from the interviewers themselves, given when debriefing, varied, although most were satisfied that they had been adequately prepared:

> Training for interviewers was excellent. I don't think I could have been better prepared.
>
> Training was adequate - maybe more than adequate.
>
> By involving interviewers in questionnaire design <u>etc.</u> (the pretest) we might have become <u>over</u> critical. It is

> possible that people who joined the team after the format of the questionnaire had been finalised were in a better position to simply 'accept and administer' the instrument as per instructions.
>
> Perhaps there could have been a little more emphasis on actual interviewing techniques - but that may be too individual a thing.

This latter comment supports my own view that, given a theoretical basis, interviewing is a skill that is learned by doing it. However, the general experience of recruiting and training interviewers, and the resultant field practice, led me to concur with Busfield's and Paddons' observation, that for open-ended questions,

> Interviewers, however well trained and briefed they might be, who are not directly involved in the planning of the research and the specification of the problem the survey is designed to elucidate, inevitably have far less idea of the sort of information that the interview as a whole and specific questions are designed to collect. They are in no position to decide whether and when to probe further into the answers the respondents give. (1977: 106).

This inability to decide whether or how to probe was evident with some of the interviewers who joined the team after the questionnaire had been finalised. For instance, in answer to a question as to why the respondent would have x number of children, an interviewer had written,

> heritage, mistake, family bondage with children.

Similar ambiguous, irrelevant or incomplete 'answers' appeared in response to other open-ended questions. While interviewers 'handled' precoded questions with ease, difficulty was experienced by some interviewers with the open-ended questions. Although these were designed as such specifically to enable respondents to "say in their own words" what they thought, the transcription process by the interviewers required considerable understanding and judgment of (a) what the respondent meant and (b) what the researcher wanted to know. Stated answers to such questions must be accepted with some degree of hesitancy.

On the other hand, most of the interviewers adopted an "if in doubt write it down" policy, recording verbatim responses, in some cases of considerable length. Debriefing of interviewers involved them in an assessment of the data from their

perspective, shedding considerable light on recorded responses in several particular instances. In a large survey, where it is physically impossible for the researcher to do all the interviews himself, the role of the interviewers as an integral part of the research interaction must be acknowledged and their perspectives of the interview taken account of. Not only were some of the interviewers in this survey involved in the design of a number of the questions, but they were involved in the 'translation' process of coding the data, they met formally and informally to discuss the overall survey, they provided me with a written report at the end of the interviewing phase, and some of them participated in follow-up discussions with respondents. In my view, they were much more than 'tools' to get the research done; they were as much part of the dynamics of the whole process as were the subjects, on the one hand, and myself on the other. Although most research manuals refer to the 'suitability' of interviewers - their manner, dress, interest, etc - little reference is made to their effect on the interview, as a social situation itself. It is quite possible to argue, for instance that references by interviewers to, eg, "working-class" respondents, represented interviewer bias which is otherwise unaccounted for.

During the survey the interviewers worked in male/female pairs. When the decision had been taken to interview men as well as women (most fertility studies have referred only to women respondents) it was also decided that ideally men and women should be interviewed at the same time by interviewers of the same sex. Notwithstanding the logistics problems of arranging a suitable time for all four parties to be present, this ideal was achieved in all but two of the interviews, such that any contamination arising from either discussion of the survey between the interview with one spouse and with the next, or from interaction between spouses (spoken, or facial gestures, etc) if they were both interviewed together, were minimised. The cost of the dual interviewing was, however, quite high. The timing difficulty was the main reason why fieldwork was extended over a much longer time period than originally planned, and it is also possible that some interviews were lost because one spouse wished to refuse, or because one spouse found it difficult to make a time period available. Although many more of the maori interviews were conducted at different times for men and women, no valid comparison can be made between responses on this factor alone, since other aspects of the maori interviewing situation also differed. For instance, many of the maori interviewers were known to the respondents (this was a rare occurrence for pakeha interviewers), the content and the aims of the survey were discussed widely in the maori community, and it is likely that respondents knew in

advance at least the general focus of the questions in the survey. As far as interviewers could ascertain, no pakeha respondents knew any detail about the survey other than that which they had been given in prior notification from the researchers (see page 469).

Including men in the sample meant that most interviews had to be conducted in the evenings or weekends. This contributed substantially to the time cost of the male interviews. It also contributed the cost of male interviewers. The students who were recruited to interview appeared to have less success in obtaining interviews and in completing them to their satisfaction than did older employed men. Whether this was because of the relative age differences or due to different skills in relating to men of various ages and interests is not obvious, but the difference was not apparent with female interviewers and did make recruitment of male interviewers more problematic (since these 'older' men were all otherwise employed fulltime).

Once they had obtained permission to interview, interviewers had little difficulty in encouraging respondents to answer the questions they asked. Most respondents gave their answers openly and these were well articulated.

QUESTIONNAIRE

PAKEHA COMPONENT

Interviewer: *Enter details below from introduction already completed. Disregard all coding numbers. Enter a tick or number in the appropriate boxes.*

Male Female

Respondent's Serial No. [ ][ ][ ] (Card 1, Cols 1-3) [ ] 1 [ ] 2

Respondent's Marital Status [ ] 1 Currently married

[ ] 2 Not currently married (1:14)

Respondent's Ethnic Group: _____ (1:15)

Locality of Interview: _____
(Name of Town, City or Country Area)

Name of Interviewer: _____ (1:4-5)

Time taken for interview: [ ] Start [ ] Finish [ ] Time, Minutes (1:6-7)

———————— // ————————

Interviewer: *Introduce yourself and the project again. Remind respondent of confidentiality.*

First of all I would like to ask you some general questions about yourself and your background.

Q.1 When were you born? [ ] Month , 19 [ ][ ] Year (1:9-12)

Q.2 Where were your parents living when you were born?

Place: Nearest Town

Was this a farm, town or city?

Code (1:8)

City	*1*
Town	*2*
Rural farm	*3*
Rural non-farm	*4*
Overseas	*5*

Q.3 When you were a child, up to when you were about 15, did you live most of the time in a city, a town or the country?

City [1]
Town [2]
Country [3]
(11:16)

Q.4 Is this your normal place of residence?

Yes [ ] → *Enter locality of interview* → *Go to Q.5*

No [ ] → Where do you normally live?

Place _____ (1:13) Nearest Town _____

Q.5 What is your religion? _____ (1:16)

What religion were you brought up in (as a child)?

Same [ ]

Other _____ (1:17)
(Specify)

Q.6 What was the highest level of education you attained?

No schooling [1] Primary [2] Forms 3 & 4 [3]
Form 5 [4] Forms 6 & 7 [5] Tech. or Teachers' Coll. [6]
University [7]
(1:18)

Q.7 Did you work for any form of income, wage, salary or commission in the last week?

Yes ☐

What was your occupation?

_____
(Specify) (1:19-20)

Is this your normal occupation?

Yes ☐ → *Go to Q.9*

No ☐

No ☐ Housewife ☐ 95

Were you seeking work?

Yes ☐ 88 (1:19-20) No ☐ 89

Are you normally employed?

Yes ☐ → ↓

No ☐ → *Go to Q.9*

What is your normal occupation? _____
(Specify) (1:21-22)

Q.8 *If respondent has reported farming*

Do you own the land you work?

Yes ☐ 1 (1:23) → *Go to Q.10*

No ☐ 2 → *Go to Q.10*

Q.9 *If not farmer, etc*

Do you have land you work or farm?

Yes ☐ → ↓

No ☐ (1:24) → *Go to Q.10*

Is it possible to go there and back easily in one day?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Who owns it?

Respondent or respondent's family ☐

Spouse/Spouse's family ☐

Other _____
(Specify) (1:24)

Q.10 Is this house rented or owned by you or do you have some other arrangement?

Rented ☐ 1 Owned ☐ 2 Other _____

(Specify) (1:25)

Q.11 How many bedrooms are there? _____ (Number) | *Code No. to 5+* (1:26)

Q.12 Do you or your present partner own any livestock (including poultry)?

Yes ☐ No ☐ 00

→ *Go to Q.13*

	Number
Cattle	_____
Sheep	_____ (1:27-28)
Poultry	_____

Q.13 Do you or your present partner own a business?

Yes ☐ No ☐ 0

→ *Go to Q.14*

Do you employ other people?

Yes ☐ No ☐ (1:29)

How many? _____ (Number)

What is the nature of this business? _____

(Specify)

Q.14 What was your father's job during most of the time while you were still at school?

Codes - for Office Use

1.	Farmer
2.	Farm-related.
3.	Prof. Tech, Manag., Admin.
4.	Clerical, sales.
5.	Service, Trans. Trade.
6.	Labourer (other than farm).
7.	Other.
8.	Unemployed.
9.	Father dead.

(11:22)

(b) (If father was dead)

Did you ever live on a farm for any length of time while you were still at school?

Yes [2]

No [9]

Q.15 While you were still at school, did your mother have any paid job in addition to housekeeping and childcare?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

What was her job?

Codes - for Office Use

1.	Farmwork
3.	Prof. Tech, Mang. Admin.
4.	Clerical, Sales,
5.	Trade, Service.
6.	Unskilled.
7.	Other, not spec.
8.	Unemployed.
9.	Mother dead.

(11:23)

Q.16 When you were a child, up to about 15 years, were there any of your relatives that you felt particularly close to, for instance relatives whom you stayed with or visited a lot or who looked after you?

Yes [ ] No [9]

(If yes), who were they?

1.	Grandparents (Maternal)
2.	Grandparents (Paternal)
3.	Aunt(s)
4.	Uncle(s)
5.	Cousin(s)
6.	Other relatives

(11:25)

Q.17 Are your mother and father still alive?

Both — 1 — *Go to Q.19*

Mother only — 2

Father only — 3

Neither — 4

(1:30)

Q.18 *If one or both deceased*

Was your mother (your father) (were they) alive when you married?

Mother alive [1] Father alive [2] Both alive [3] (1:31)

Q.19 *PLEASE TAKE THIS CARD*

Give respondent blue card List A. Ask (a) only if father still alive

(a) Since you were married, has your father helped you in any of the ways noted there?

And which of those things did you do for your father?

Note responses on the table below

Ask (b) only if mother still alive

(b) And your mother, in what ways has she helped you?

And which of those things did you do for your mother?

Note responses on the table below

	Father		Mother	
	From him	For him	From her	For her
Living with them for more than 6 months	(1:32)	(1:33)	(1:34)	(1:35)
Food given on a regular basis	(1:36)	(1:37)	(1:38)	(1:39)
Money, more than $50	(1:40)	(1:41)	(1:42)	(1:43)
Helping with getting a job	(1:44)	(1:45)	(1:46)	(1:47)
None	(1:48)	(1:49)	(1:50)	(1:51)

CODER: In this table and for Q's. 20-25 record a 1 for yes, a tick or a cross; 2 for a no or nothing marked at all. Exceptions are Q's. 22 and 23, where you code the number recorded.

page

Members of family of obligation	Parents-in-law	Maternal grandparents	Paternal grandparents	Older Sister	Younger Sister	Older Brother	Younger Brother	Uncles	Aunts	Cousins	Others (specify)	Code: Put 1 in 1:80 From 1:1-3 copy 2:1-3	Friends	Children	Workmate	Neighbour
Q.20 Whom do you consider to be other people in your family for whom you have done similar sorts of things and from whom have you received things?	1:61	:62	:63	:64	:65	:66	:67	:68	:69	:70	:71		2:4	:5	:6	:7
Q.21 Are there people we have missed from this list such as:	:8	:9	:10	:11	:12	:13	:14	:15	:16	:17	:18		:19	:20	:21	:22
Q.22 (For each person noted in turn) (a) Where do they live?																
Co-reside (same house) 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Nearby 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1
Distant 3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	2	2
Deceased 0 (Go to Q.24)	3 :23	3 :24	3 :25	3 :26	3 :27	3 :28	3 :29	3 :30	3 :31	3 :32	3 :33		3 :34	3 :35	3 :36	3 :37
Q.23 (b) How often do you see them?																
Daily 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0
Weekly 2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1
Less often 3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2		2	2	2	2
Never 0	3 :38	3 :39	3 :40	3 :41	3 :42	3 :43	3 :44	3 :45	3 :46	3 :47	3 :48		3 :49	3 :50	3 :51	3 :52
Q.24 Have you ever been able to help these various relations or friends in terms of the following -												80 :5				
(a) Have them (or their children) lived with you (for 6 months or more)?	:53	:54	:55	:56	:57	:58	:59	:60	:61	:62	:63	in 2: 1:1-3	:64	:65	:66	:67
(b) have them (or their children) lived with you (for less than 6 months)?	:68	:69	:70	:71	:72	:73	:74	:75	:76	:77	:78	Code 2 Copy 1:1-3 3:1-3	3:4	:5	:6	:7
(c) provide food for them on a regular basis?	:8	:9	:10	:11	:12	:13	:14	:15	:16	:17	:18		:19	:20	:21	:22
(d) provide food for them at any time?	:23	:24	:25	:26	:27	:28	:29	:30	:31	:32	:33		:34	:35	:36	:37
(e) help them in getting a job?	:38	:39	:40	:41	:42	:43	:44	:45	:46	:47	:48	20 in 3: 1:1-3	:49	:50	:51	:52
(f) provide them with money as a gift or loan (amounts of $50 or more)?	:53	:54	:55	:56	:57	:58	:59	:60	:61	:62	:63		:64	:65	:66	:67
(g) help in dealing with police, lawyers or the courts?	:68	:69	:70	:71	:72	:73	:74	:75	:76	:77	:78	Code 3 Copy 4:1-3	4:4	:5	:6	:7
(h) help with education, schooling, or education grants?	:8	:9	:10	:11	:12	:13	:14	:15	:16	:17	:18		:19	:20	:21	:22
(i) have you ever gone to a funeral expressly at their request, or for their sake?	:23	:24	:25	:26	:27	:28	:29	:30	:31	:32	:33		:34	:35	:36	:37
Q.25 How about in reverse? Have you (or your children) been recipients of help from them in terms of the following:-																
(a) have gone to live with them (for 6 months or more)?	:38	:39	:40	:41	:42	:43	:44	:45	:46	:47	:48	4:80 in 3	:49	:50	:51	:52
(b) have gone to live with them (for 6 months or less)?	:53	:54	:55	:56	:57	:58	:59	:60	:61	:62	:63	4 in 1:1-3	:64	:65	:66	:67
(c) given food to you on a regular basis?	:68	:69	:70	:71	:72	:73	:74	:75	:76	:77	:78	Code 5 Copy 5:1-3	5:4	:5	:6	:7
(d) provided food for you at any time?	:8	:9	:10	:11	:12	:13	:14	:15	:16	:17	:18		:19	:20	:21	:22
(e) helped you or your children to get a job?	:23	:24	:25	:26	:27	:28	:29	:30	:31	:32	:33		:34	:35	:36	:37
(f) provided you with money as a gift or loan (amounts of $50 or more)?	:38	:39	:40	:41	:42	:43	:44	:45	:46	:47	:48		:49	:50	:51	:52
(g) helped you or your children in dealing with police, lawyers or the Courts?	:53	:54	:55	:56	:57	:58	:59	:60	:61	:62	:63	5:80 in 1-3	:64	:65	:66	:67
(h) helped you or your children with education, schooling, or grants?	:68	:69	:70	:71	:72	:73	:74	:75	:76	:77	:78	Code 5 in Copy 6:1-3	6:4	:5	:6	:7
(i) have come to a funeral for your sake?	:8	:9	:10	:11	:12	:13	:14	:15	:16	:17	:18		:19	:20	:21	:22

Q.26 Older people such as grandparents often teach children the things they consider to be important in life. Did your grandparents or some older people do this for you?

Yes [1] No [2]

(6 : 23)

Q.27 Is this being done for your children?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

(If yes) who is doing it?

_____

(Specify) (6:24)

(If no) how are your children learning these things?

_____

(Specify) (6:24)

Q.28 If your children become parents how will this be done for their children, your grandchildren?

Respondent [1] The parents themselves [2] The School [3]

Won't be done [4] Other _____ Don't know [9]

(Specify) (6:25)

Q.29 How many brothers and sisters did you have, and how many are still alive?

	Brothers	Sisters
Total	(6:26-27)	(6:28-29)
Still alive	(6:30-31)	(6:32-33)

Q.30 Among your brothers and sisters where did you come?

Oldest, youngest, middle or where?

Oldest	1	Younger group 4+	4
Youngest	2	Older group 4+	5
Middle	3	Only child	6

(6:34)

Q.31 Are there any of your cousins or other people whom you consider almost to be like a brother or sister to you?

Yes 1 No 2

(6:35)

Q.32 Do your children have cousins or other children who are almost like brothers and sisters to them?

Yes 1 No 2

(6:36)

Q.33 We have just been talking about the sorts of relationships you have and your children have. Do you think your children's children will have the same relationship or different?

Same 1 Different 2 Don't know 9

(6:37)

Q.34 Now I'd like to ask you about yourself, as at the here and now. I have a list of some of the things which people consider to be important in their lives.

Interviewer: Show green card with list B

Are there any things that are particularly important to you in your life that I have missed out?

Interviewer: If yes, add these to list opposite and read to respondent with other items

I am interested in knowing just how important these various things are to you. I mean to you yourself as an individual. Can you tell me if these things are very important to you, somewhat important, or not important at all?

Interviewer: Remind respondent of any extra items added and note these also

Q.35 *For people who have children*

Going back to the card now, can you tell me whether as a result of having children these things are more important to you now than they were before you had children, or less important, or about the same?

ITEM	Ranking now *Code: 1 = V.Import* *2 = Somewhat Important* *3 = Not Import.*	Importance compared to before you had children *Code: 1 = Higher* *2 = Lower* *3 = Same* *9 = No children*
A. Being involved in the community (Being a member of organisations, on committees, etc).	(14:6)	(14:7)
B. Having a good social life.	(14:8)	(14:9)
C. Feeling wanted by people, having people need you	(14:10)	(14:11)
D. Playing sport or having hobbies (etc)	(14:12)	(14:13)
E. Getting a sense of achievement from a career or from study.	(14:14)	(14:15)
F. Being a good wife/ husband.	(14:16)	(14:17)
G. Doing God's will.	(11:40)	(11:41)
H. Having a steady job and income.	(14:29)	(14:30)
I. Being a mother/father.	(14:31)	(14:32)
J. Pleasing your parents.	(12:14)	(12:15)
K. Feeling close to nature.	(11:46)	(11:47)
L.	(14:18)	(14:19)
M.	(14:20)	(14:21)

Q.36 Would you say that religion and religious teachings are important in your life, very important or not important?

Very Important	1
Somewhat Important	2
Not Important	3

(11:42)

Q.37 *CURRENTLY MARRIED PEOPLE ONLY*

From time to time we all have to make important decisions in our lives. These might be important because they bring about a change in the way we live or where we live, or sometimes because they involve expenditure of a large amount of money. Can you tell me who in your family has the most influence in making the following decisions, you or your wife/husband?

If Relevant

	Husband (Code 1	Wife 2	Both Equal 3)	Office Use
A. What type of work you should have.				(14:51)
B. Whether or not to shift house				(14:52)
C. What type of work your wife/ husband should have.				(14:53)
D. When to take a holiday or where to go.				(14:54)
E. Whether to buy some expensive household items like a washing machine or a vacuum cleaner.				(14:55)
F. Which school to send the children to (supposing you have a choice).				(14:56)
G. Whether to call the doctor if a child is ill.				(14:57)

Q.38 Having children is another thing which some people like to discuss with other people, but which others don't think needs discussing.

Have you ever discussed with your partner whether or not to have children? How about when to have children? And how many to have?

Enter on table opposite.

Q.39 For you, which of these things has been or will be the most important decision to make?

Enter on table opposite.

Q.40 Which is or will be the hardest decision to make?

Enter on table below.

Why is this so? _____

_____ (14:63)

		Whether to have children *Code 1*	When to have children *2*	How many to have *3*	No Decision *0*
Q.38	Ever discussed with spouse	(14:58)	(14:59)	(14:60)	
Q.39	Most important decision to make (14:61)				
Q.40	Most difficult decision to make (14:62)				

Q.41 (Before you had any) did either of your parents ever ask you whether you were/are going to have children? (If yes) which parents asked you?

Yes, both sets of parents [1]

Yes, wife's parents only [2]

Yes, husband's parents only [3]

No. [9]

(12:8)

Q.42 Which parent(s) put(s) the most pressure on you to have children?

Wife's mother [1]

Wife's father [2]

Husband's mother [3]

Husband's father [4]

Pressure equal [5]

No pressure [9] → *(Go to Q.44)*

(12:9)

Q.43 Is the pressure you feel was put on you (is being put on you) to have children very great, a lot, or slight?

Very great [1] A lot [2] Slight [3] (12:10)

Q.44 Do most of your friends have children or not have children? (If yes), how many children, on average, do they have?

[0] No children

[ ] Have children, average number _____ *(Code no. 1-8 9=9+ more children)* (11:44)

Q.45 Thinking back to when you were first married/began living together, did you want to have children straight away, to wait a while, not at all, didn't you mind, was it up to God, or were you pregnant (your wife pregnant) when you were married?

Straight away	1
Wait a while	2
Not at all	3
Didn't mind	4
Up to God	5
Pregnant when married	6

(11:60)

Q.46 And now, how many children would you (have) like(d) to have altogether?

_____ (Number) *(Code number, 0-8 Code 9 = 9 or more)* (11:61)

Q.47 Can you tell me some of the reasons why you would like to have (had) _____ children? _____

_____

_____

_____ (11:62-63)

Q.48 *Couples with no children:*

You have told me that you do not have any children. Is that just the way things happened or did you deliberately choose not to have any children?

The way things happened [1]

Deliberate choice [2]

(11:64)

Q.49 Now I am going to ask your opinion about different aspects of having children. Please take this card *(hand white card, List F)* and have a look at these statements.

For each statement I want you to tell me if you agree strongly, agree slightly, disagree slightly, or disagree strongly. Here is the first statement, tell me which answer comes closest to your general feeling about it.

LIST F.	AGREE Strong *(Code 1*	AGREE Slight *2*	DISAGREE Slight *3*	DISAGREE Strong *4)*
A. Mothers get more companionship from their children than from their husbands	(14:34)			
B. Having children gives a person a special incentive to succeed in life	(14:23)			
C. Couples ought to think seriously about the inconveniences caused by children before they have any	(14:35)			
D. Most couples would be happier if they did not have children	(14:36)			
E. A girl becomes a woman only after she is a mother	(14:37)			
F. For most people it is inevitable that they will have children	(14:38)			
G. Couples who don't have children are selfish	(14:24)			
H. One's circle of friends changes when one has children	(14:25)			
I. Life without children in the home is pretty dull	(14:39)			
J. Having children is the most important function of marriage	(14:40)			
K. A boy becomes a man only after he is a father	(14:41)			
L. One of our highest purposes in life is to have children	(14:26)			
M. A person can feel that part of him/her lives on after death if he/she has children	(14:27)			
N. Children are precious gifts from God	(11:43)			

Q.50 I am also interested in knowing what you think about contraception (birth control). Here is a list of general statements about contraception (*hand yellow card, List C*). First of all, have a look through these statements. Now would you please tell me which of these statements you personally agree with.

Interviewer: Tick boxes next to statements respondent agrees with

LIST C

(14:64) 1	A. The woman alone should accept full responsibility for contraception, since it is she who gets pregnant.
(14:65) 2	B. Contraception is something which should be discussed by the partners and a joint decision about it made.
(11:44) 3	C. Contraception is morally wrong because it interferes with nature/God's will.
(15:6) 4	D. Contraception should be used to avoid <u>any</u> birth which is not wanted.
(15:7) 5	E. Contraception should be used <u>only</u> when the mother's health is threatened by pregnancy.
(15:8) 6	F. Contraception should be used <u>only</u> after a couple have had several children.

(*Code: 1 for tick, 2 for no or nothing.*)

Q.51 Have you ever discussed contraception for you or your partner with any of the following people:

Yes	No	
1	2	Your partner
1	2	Mother
1	2	Father
1	2	Mother-in-law
1	2	Father-in-law
1	2	Sisters, brothers or other relations
1	2	Friends, workmates or neighbours
1	2	Doctor, nurse or family planning clinic
1	2	Priest or Minister of Religion
1	2	Other people _____ (*Specify*)

(15:9-18)

Q.52 In the last month, have you or your partner done anything to avoid a pregnancy or birth?

Yes ☐ What did you do? _____

_____

_____

(If sterilization mentioned, fill in Q.53 and go to Q.55).

No ☐ Is there a reason why you haven't?

(If yes) what is that?

(Tick appropriate box)

1	*Partner not present, temporary abstinence or illness*
2	*Not able to get pregnant*
3	*Trying to get pregnant*
4	*Disapprove of contraception*
9	*No reason*
5-8	*Other reason (specify)* _____ _____ _____

(Code: 15 :20-22)

Q.53 Some people decide that when they have had the number of children that they want they will have an operation so that they cannot have any more children. Have you ever considered having such an operation?

1	Yes, have considered for spouse *(Go to Q.54b)*
2	Yes, have considered *(Go to Q.54b)*
3	Yes, have had sterilization operation *(Go to Q.55)*
4	Yes, spouse has had operation *(Go to Q.55)*
5	No, have not considered operation *(Go to Q.54a)*

(15:23)

Q.54 (a) Would you ever consider having such an operation? *(If yes, go to Q.54b).*

(b) After how many children would you have an operation?

[ ] Would consider, after _ _ children *(Code No.)*

[99] Wouldn't consider

(15:24-25)

Why wouldn't you consider it? _____

_____

Q.55 (a) *People with children*

Speaking generally, did you like (your wife) being pregnant?

Yes [1] No [2]

(14:43)

Q.55 (b) *People without children*

Speaking generally, do you think you would like (your wife) being pregnant?

Yes [3] No [4]

(14:43)

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF CHILDREN

I have a list of some of the things which people mention as being advantages and disadvantages of children.

Q.56 Please look at this list *(hand red card, List D)* and tell me which of these things for you are reasons why you had (would have) a first child.

Q.57 And which things for you are reasons why you had (would have) more than one child?

Interviewer: Read all items on List D in turn. Fill in table opposite).

Q.58 Now here is another list *(hand pink card, List E)*. Please tell me which of these things for you are or would be reasons why you would not have any children.

Q.59 And which things are reasons why you did or would limit the number of children you had?

*Interviewer: Note, * refers to unpleasantness for either husband or wife; and*
*** refers to wife's career potential only.*

Interviewer: Read all items on List E in turn. Fill in table opposite.

ITEMS	Reason for having first child			Reason for having more than 1 child		
	Yes	No	DK	Yes	No	DK
	Code 1	2	3	1	2	3
A. To gain companionship and fun from children (15:33-34)						
B. To gain status in the community (15:35-36)						
C. To have help in running the house or business/farm (15:37-38)						
D. To provide security in old age (15:39-40)						
E. To see God's blessing on your marriage (15:41-42)						
F. To make you feel fulfilled as a man/woman (15:43-44)						
G. To keep (your wife) occupied (15:45-46)						
H. To help make N.Z. strong (15:47-48)						
I. To have the enjoyment of looking after a baby (15:49-50)						
J. To have the experience of being pregant (your wife being pregnant) (15:51-52)						
K. To make a strong marriage bond (15:53-54)						
L. To make sure your family traditions and name live on (15:55-56)						

Q.58 & 59

	Reason for having no children			Reason for limiting number of children		
M. The amount of energy children need (15:58-59)						
N. Your ability to have time for yourself (& your husband/wife) (15:60-61)						
O. The chore of looking after children (15:62-63)						
P. The amount of money available for you as a couple. (15:64-65)						
Q. The stress & strain placed on your marriage (15:66-67)						
R. Crowding in your home (15:68-69)						
*S. The unpleasantness of (your wife) being pregnant. (15:70-71)						
T. The importance of your freedom to do the things you want to do (15:72-73)						
U. The responsibility of looking after a family (15:74-75)						
**V. Your ability (your wife's ability) to have a career (15:76-77)						

Q.60 Which do you think brings the biggest change in a person's life, getting married or having children?

Marriage [ ] 1

Children [ ] 2

(14:44)

Q.61 Some people say that a marriage isn't a proper marriage until there are children. Do you agree with this?

Agree [ ] 1

Disagree [ ] 2

Don't know [ ] 3

(14:45)

Q.62 Did your parents treat you differently (Do you think your parents will treat you differently) after you had/have children?

Yes [ ] How would/did they treat you differently?

_____

_____

No [ ] 9

Don't know [ ] 8

(12:11)

Q.63 Speaking generally, do you think that having children improves most marriages, or do they have some other effect?

Worsens [ ] 1

Improve [ ] 2

No difference [ ] 9

Other effect *(Specify)* _____

(code 3-8)

(14:66)

Q.64 We often talk about small and large families, but people have different ideas about what that means.

When you think of a small family, how many children would be in it?

_____ children (range or exact number).

(11:34)

Q.65 When you think of a large family, how many children would be in it?

_____ children (range or exact number).
(11:35)

Q.66 New Zealand parents today tend to have smaller families than their parents did. Why do you think this is so?

_____

_____

_____

_____

(11:36-37)

Q.67 Some people think there are too many people in the world. Do you agree with this?

Agree	1
Disagree	2
Don't know	3

(11:38)

Q.68 Only-children are sometimes thought to be different from children who have brothers and sisters. Can you tell me some of the advantages of being an only-child?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(11:56-57)

Q.69 What about some of the disadvantages? _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(11:58-59)

Q.70 You will probably know that some couples are not able to have a baby as easily as others. Do you think this is because of the woman, the man, or can it be either?

Woman	1	Either	3
Man	2	Don't know	9

(11:48)

Q.71 If a woman knows she cannot have children, do you think that should stop her from getting married?

Yes [1] No [2] Don't know [9] (14:46)

Q.72 What about a man, if he knows he can't have children?

Yes [1] No [2] Don't know [9] (14:47)

Q.73 When they find they cannot have children, some people adopt children. Do you think it is better to adopt children or to remain childless?

Adopt [1] Childless [2] Don't know [9] (11:49)

Q.74 Some people choose to adopt children even when they are able to have their own. Do you think this is a good idea, a bad idea, or doesn't it matter how a person has children?

Good idea [1]
Bad idea [2]
Doesn't matter [3]
Don't know [9]
(11:50)

Q.75 What do you think some of the advantages of adopting children, rather than having your own, are?

(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____

(11:51-52)

Q.76 What do you think are some of the disadvantages of adopting children, rather than having your own?

(1) _____
(2) _____
(3) _____
(4) _____

(11:53-54)

MALE RESPONDENTS ONLY

Q.77 How many children of your present marriage are you the father of? _____

(6:12-13)

	Until 1st Marriage	Marriage →	1st Birth →	2nd Birth →	3rd Birth →	4th Birth →	5th Birth →	6th Birth →	7th Birth →	8th Birth →	9th Birth →	Since last birth (if 10+) →
Q.78 Prior to marriage. Before your first child; (between marriage and your 1st child; between your ____ child and your ____; since your last child) did anybody, a member of your family or a friend, talk to you about getting married and/or having children (having children)? (Yes or No)	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
(a) If yes, who? F(Father); PIL (Parents in-law); MG(Mat. Grandparents); OS(Older sisters); YS(Younger sisters); OB(Older brothers); YB(Younger brothers); U(uncles); A(Aunts); C(Cousins); O(Other relatives); F(Friends); C(Children); W(Workmates); N(Neighbours).	6:14-15	:16-17	:18-19	:20-21	:22-23	:24-25	:26-27	:28-29	:30-31	:32-33	:34-35	:36-37
(b) What did they say? E(Encourage); D(Discourage); M(Male preference); F(Female preference).	:38	:39	:40	:41	:42	:43	:44	:45	:46	:47	:48	:49

Go to Q.79

Male page

Q77-84 WOMEN ONLY

Q.77 Finally, I would like to ask you some questions about your present marriage and about your own children.

(a) First of all, how many children have you given birth to in your present marriage? _____ (6:38-39)

(b) Have you had any miscarriages or stillbirths? (If yes), how many? _____ (6:40-41)

(c) Have you adopted any children?

Yes ☐ → No ☐ (6:42)

How many children have you adopted? _____ (6:42)

How old were you when you adopted
- your first child? _____ (6:43-44)
- your last child? _____ (6:45-46)

If never pregnant go to Q.78
If have been pregnant go to Q.81

Q.78 Since you were married, have you or your partner ever done anything to try to avoid getting pregnant or having a birth?

No ☐ Yes ☐ (9:38-39) What did you do? _____

_____

Q. 79 Before you were married, did anyone talk to you about getting married?

No ☐ (6:47)

Yes ☐ → who? what did they say?

Before you were married, did anyone talk to you about having children?

No ☐ (6:49)

Yes ☐ → who? what did they say?

Who	What did they say
(6:47)	1=E 2=D (6:48)
(6:49)	1=E 2=D 3=MP 4=FP (6:50)

If has adopted children, ask Q.80
If has no adopted children, go to Q.81

Q.80 (a) Before you adopted your first child did anyone talk to you about having children?

No ☐ (6:51)

Yes ☐ —— who?
what did they say?

(b) and since your last adoption has anyone talked to you about having children?

No ☐ (6:53)

Yes ☐ —— who?
what did they say?

Who	What did they say
(6:51)	1=E 2=D 3=MP 4=FP (6:52)
(6:53)	1=E 2=D 3=MP 4=FP (6:54)

* E=Encourage
D=Discourage
M=Male preference
F=Female preference

Go to Q.81

Interviewer Note: For women who have never been pregnant ask Q.81 and 82 only, then go to Q.87.

For women who have never been pregnant ask Q.81 and 82 then go to Q.87.

	Until first marriage	Marriage →	Pregnancy 1 →	Pregnancy 2 →	Pregnancy 3 →	Pregnancy 4 →	Pregnancy 5 →	Pregnancy 6 →	Pregnancy 7 →	Pregnancy 8 →	Pregnancy 9 →	Most recent Pregnancy (If 10 +) * →	Since last pregnancy →
Q.81 When did you get married? (Current union) Where were you living? ____ Place:Nearest Town		mo: yr: (6:68-71)											
Q.82 Have you been married more than once? Yes ☐ No ☐ Go to Q.83 ↓ When did you marry for the first time?		mo: yr: (6:72-75)											
Q.83 Could you please tell me about your ____ pregnancy. Was the child born alive? (Yes or no: If no ask year pregnant, then go to next pregnancy)	Code 6 in 6:80 and copy 1:1-3 in 7:1-3		Yes/No 7:4	Yes/No :5	Yes/No :6	Yes/No :7	Yes/No :8	Yes/No :9	Yes/No :10	Yes/No :11	Yes/No :12	Yes/No :13	
			Yr :14-15	Yr :16-17	Yr :18-19	Yr :20-21	Yr :22-23	Yr :24-25	Yr :26-27	Yr :28-29	Yr :30-31	Yr :32-33	
When was it born? (Date of birth) Was it a boy(B) or girl(G)?			mo: yr: :34-37 8:4	mo: yr: :38-41 :5	mo: yr: :42-45 :6	mo: yr: :46-49 :7	mo: yr: :50-53 :8	mo: yr: :54-57 :9	mo: yr: :58-61 :10	mo: yr: :62-65 :11	mo: yr: :66-69 :12	mo: yr: :70-73 :13	Code 7 in 7:80 and copy 1:1-3 in 8:1-3
Are they still alive (Yes or No)? (If Yes go to Q.37)			Yes/No :16	Yes/No :15	Yes/No :14	Yes/No :17	Yes/No :18	Yes/No :19	Yes/No :20	Yes/No :21	Yes/No :22	Yes/No :23	
If No, when did they die?			mo: yr: :24-27	mo: yr: :28-31	mo: yr: :32-35	mo: yr: :36-39	mo: yr: :40-43	mo: yr: :44-47	mo: yr: :48-51	mo: yr: :52-55	mo: yr: :56-59	mo: yr: :60-63	
Q.84 Between marriage and your first pregnancy (Before your first pregnancy) (Between pregnancy ___ and pregnancy ___) (Since your last pregnancy) did you do anything to stop becoming pregnant or to avoid a birth? (Yes or No)? If Yes What did you do (Specify)? Code 8 in 8:80 copy 1:1-3 in 9:1-3	Yes/No :65 9:6	Yes/No :66 :5	Yes/No :67 :4	Yes/No :68 :7	Yes/No :69 :8	Yes/No :70 :9	Yes/No :71 :10	Yes/No :72 :11	Yes/No :73 :12	Yes/No :74 :13	Yes/No :75 :14		Yes/No :76 :15
Q.85 At the time you became pregnant were you working for money? Yes/No And what about the father? Yes/No			Yes/No :16 Yes/No :26	Yes/No :17 Yes/No :29	Yes/No :18 Yes/No :28	Yes/No :19 Yes/No :27	Yes/No :20 Yes/No :30	Yes/No :21 Yes/No :31	Yes/No :22 Yes/No :32	Yes/No :23 Yes/No :33	Yes/No :24 Yes/No :34	Yes/No :25 Yes/No :35	
Q.86 Prior to marriage (Between marriage and 1st pregnancy; between pregnancy___ and pregnancy ___; after your last pregnancy) did anybody, a member of your family or a friend, talk to you about getting married &/or having children (having children)? (Yes or No)	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No		Yes/No
(a) If yes Who? F(Father); M(Mother); PIL (Parents in-law); MG(Mat.Grandparents); PG(Pat. Grandparents); OS(Older sisters); YS(Younger sisters); OB(Older brothers); YB(Younger brothers); U(Uncles); A(Aunts); C(Cousins); O(Other relatives); F(Friends); C(Children); W(Workmates); N(Neighbours).	9:36-39 :60	:38-39 :61	:40-41 :62	:42-43 :63	:44-45 :64	:46-47 :65	:48-49 :66	:50-51 :67	:52-53 :68	:54-55 :69	:56-57 :70		:58-59 :71
(b) What did they say? E(Encourage); D(Discourage); M(Male preference); F(Female preference).													

* For pregnancies 10, 11, etc but not the most recent write details on page 25.

Q.87 *FEMALE*

Q.79 *MALE*

ASK MEN AND WOMEN

Well we've just about come to the end of the questions I want to ask you about your family and your thoughts about children. Just to finish off now, I wonder if you can tell me how your feelings about children have changed over the years since you were married (began living together). Thinking back to the time just before you were married (began living together), would you say you feel differently about children now than you did then?

No — 8

Don't know — 9

Yes — 1-7

(11:78)

In what ways have they changed?

_____

_____

_____

Thank you very much for all the information you have given me. This will be used to give us a picture of New Zealand families and how New Zealanders think and feel about children. What you have told me will be added to other information given to us by other couples like yourselves. We would like to share and discuss some of the findings with you and sometime early next year (about March or April) we will be having some meetings about this work. We would like you to come to one of them if you are interested. I have a letter here which you can fill in and give to us if you would like to be invited to a meeting. A member of our team will call in a few week's time to talk to you about this.

Interviewer: give letter to respondent

Thank you for your help. I have enjoyed talking to you.

INTERVIEWER: After leaving, complete page 29 and attach eligibility record to front of questionnaire. Ensure that serial numbers are identical.

INTERVIEWER NOTES

1. Apart from the respondent and yourself, was there anyone else present during the interview?

☐ YES ☐ NO (Go to 3)

2. Who? (Give number of each).

_____ Spouse		_____ Sons	_____ Years old
_____ Parents		_____ Daughters	_____ Years old
_____ Parents-in-law		_____ Friends	
_____ Relatives		_____ Neighbours	

_____ Others (specify): _____

_____

_____

3. How often was the respondent distracted?

1 ☐ Continually distracted
2 ☐ Several times during the interview
3 ☐ A few times during the interview
4 ☐ Not at all

4. What was the degree of rapport between yourself and the respondent?

1 ☐ Poor
2 ☐ Fair
3 ☐ Good
4 ☐ Excellent

5. What was the degree of co-operation of the respondent?

1 ☐ Very uncooperative
2 ☐ Uncooperative
3 ☐ Cooperative
4 ☐ Very cooperative

6. What was the respondent's degree of interest in the content of the interview?

1 ☐ Very interested
2 ☐ Somewhat interested
3 ☐ Not interested

7. Was the respondent offended by any questions in the interview?

1 ☐ Yes 2 ☐ No

Which questions?

APPENDIX v(e)

Characteristics of Survey Respondents.

I. Sociodemographic Characteristics

Characteristic	Males		Females	
	n	%	n	%
Age				
Under 30	11	15	25	29
30-34	19	26	14	16
35-39	8	11	14	16
40-44	7	9	9	10
45-49	13	18	15	17
50-54	8	11	7	8
Over 54	8	11	2	2
	--	--	--	--
	74	101	86	98
Education				
None	0	0	0	0
Primary	5	7	2	2
Form 3 & 4	16	22	19	23
Form 5	24	34	22	26
Form 6 &7	5	7	13	15
Tech., Teachers College	3	4	14	17
University	16	22	14	17
	--	--	--	--
	71	99	84	100
Religion				
Catholic	8	10	12	14
Anglican	21	27	31	37
Presbyterian	19	25	21	25
Other	16	21	13	16
None	13	17	6	7
	--	--	--	--
	77	100	83	99
Present Occupation (by Elley & Irving scale)				
Level 1	12	18	10	13
Level 2	12	18	2	3
Level 3	7	11	20	26
Level 4	23	35	5	7
Level 5-6	8	12	7	9
Unempl./H'wife	3	5	32	42
	--	--	--	--
	65	99	76	100

NOTE: In some cases information was not stated, in others information was gained from the spouse. Therefore Ns are not equal for all characteristics.

For Elley & Irving Scale (Elley & Irving 1972), students were included in Level 1, Professional, Managerial and Administrative.

II Family Characteristics

	Households n	%
Age of Children		
No children	5	6
All aged 0-5	19	23
Aged 0-12	6	7
All aged 6-12	15	18
Aged 6-over 12	7	8
All aged 12-20	3	4
Aged 12-over 20	23	28
All over 20	5	6
N	83	100
Have grandchildren	9	11
Number of children		
0	5	6
1	11	13
2	26	29
3	20	23
4	17	20
5	4	3
6	2	2
7	2	2
8	1	1
N	88	99
Year of Marriage		
1976-80	10	11
1971-75	17	19
1966-70	12	14
1961-65	8	9
1956-60	12	14
1951-55	11	12
Before 1951	3	3
not specified	15	17
N	88	99

NOTE: As ages of children were not stated in all cases, N is less than 88 for Table I.

III. Current Contraception Use.

	n	One Partner Sterilised	Pill Inj IUD	Cond-om	Rhythm	None	N/A*
AGE OF MOTHER							
50+	6	3	-	-	-	-	3
46-50	12	5	-	2	1	-	4
41-45	10	8	-	1	1	-	-
36-40	13	10	-	-	1	-	2
31-35	16	6	5	-	1	1	3
Under 30	27	4	11	1	1	1	9
n	84	36	16	4	5	2	21
%	100	43	19	5	6	2	25
(excluding N/A)*		57	25	6	8	3	-
AGE OF YOUNGEST CHILD							
No Children	5	-	3	1	-	-	1
Under 5	23	6	11	-	1	-	5
5-12	19	9	2	-	2	1	5
13-20	24	14	1	3	1	-	5
Over 20	4	2	-	-	-	-	2
n	75	31	17	4	4	1	18
NUMBER OF CHILDREN							
0	5	-	3	1	-	-	1
1	9	-	5	-	-	-	4
2	22	10	4	-	2	-	6
3	18	10	3	2	-	-	3
4	16	9	2	1	1	1	2
5	4	2	-	-	-	-	2
6-8	4	1	-	-	1	-	2
n	78	32	17	4	4	1	20

All data exclude "no response" categories.

* N/A includes people who recently gave birth, are trying to get pregnant, are infertile or who had no current partner.

IV. CHARACTERISTICS OF CONTRACEPTION USERS

	Sterilized* Vasec.	Tubal	n.s.	Pill Inj IUD	Condom Rhythm	None	N
Av. Children	3.06	2.86	4.00	1.64	3.25	3.00	2.67
Av. Age Mother	41.42 (n=14)	38.20 (n=15)	40.00 (n=2)	29.17 (n=17)	39.75 (n=8)	31.50 (n=2)	36.33 (n=58)
EDUCATION OF MOTHER							
Primary		2					2
F3 + 4	5	3		3	3	1	15
F5	2	4	1	6	1	1	15
F6 + 7	1	2	1	3	1	-	8
Tertiary	7	4	1	5	3	-	20
n	15	15	3	17	8	2	60
RELIGION OF MOTHER							
Catholic	1		1	4	2		8
Anglican	8	7	2	4	1	1	23
Presbyterian	5	3		3	2	-	13
Other	1	-	-	4	2	-	7
None	1	4	-	2	1	-	8
n	16	14	3	17	8	1	59
OCCUPATION OF FATHER							
Level 1	1	-	-	2	1	-	4
Level 2	6	3	-	-	1	-	10
Level 3	1	-	-	2	1	-	4
Level 4	5	4	1	5	3	-	18
Level 5 + 6	-	1	2	2	-	-	5
Unemployed	1	1	-	-	-	-	2
n	14	9	3	11	6	0	43

All data exclude "no response" categories. "n" varies because of missing cases.

* For couples with one partner sterilized, average number of children = 3.50 and average age of mother 39.77 years.

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