

**PROCEEDINGS – MEN’S ISSUES  
SUMMITS 2005**

**ISSUES PAPER NO. 15**

**Edited by  
STUART BIRKS**



**CENTRE FOR PUBLIC POLICY EVALUATION  
2005**

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**Issues Paper No. 15**  
**ISSN. 1174 – 412X**  
**Price \$15**

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*Published by*  
**Centre for Public Policy Evaluation  
College of Business, Massey University  
Palmerston North  
NEW ZEALAND  
December 2005**



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## **FOREWORD**

Men have always had issues and conditions that have been deeply imbedded in both men's roles and genetics. Prisons, work, violent conflict, provider and protector disposability, high mortality and low longevity are examples of these. However, recently numerous other issues have been added, such as, males in education, fatherhood, parenting of boys, health, political devaluing, poor social services, negative media images, breakdown of male community, interpersonal isolation, objectification as a gender, poor gender advocacy and research, and the Family Court. Whether they have been around for millennia or just decades, they are still impairments to a full and happy lifestyle and the ideals of equality and respect. With the encroachment of a modern Western lifestyle they are now cross-cultural and intergenerational.

Perhaps the biggest change has been that we have decided to do something about it as a gender. We seek solutions to these problems by a call to action, not victimhood.

It is hoped that this volume adds to men's consciousness and adds to women's consciousness of men, and so builds a more equal, understanding and co-operative community.

**Warwick Pudney**  
**(Men's Issues Summit Convenor)**





## INTRODUCTION

*by Stuart Birks*

This collection of papers arose from two Men's Issues Summits held in Auckland on 6 May and Christchurch on 5 August. The original idea was conceived by Waitakere Mayor, Bob Harvey, and Warwick Pudney. The Christchurch Summit arose due to the support of Mayor Gary Moore, and the organization for both was by Warwick Pudney. The events were supported by:

AUT University  
NZ Father and Child Society  
NZ Family Research Trust  
Man Alive  
Waitakere City Council  
Christchurch City Council  
Marlborough District Health  
Home and Family Christchurch  
NZ Violence Prevention Society  
Centre for Public Policy Evaluation, Massey University

The motivation for the Summits was an increasing feeling that there are limited opportunities for men's issues to be aired. Former Labour MP John Tamihere was a keynote speaker at both Summits. He had earlier called for men to be more outspoken, and suggested that government policy was overly focused on feminist issues. At the Summits he suggested that men had legitimate issues, and that they should not be afraid to speak out. In Auckland he said:

“In Public Relation terms we have never turned up to debate, let alone have a conversation about men's issues and because [of this] there has never been a counter-weight debate. We have not featured in policy, programmes or in resources. It is conferences like this that are important [in order] to have our conversation, to harness, and to organise.”<sup>1</sup>

As John Tamihere suggested, a debate on society that considers the voices of only half the population is unlikely to give satisfactory solutions.

One area that received scant attention at the Summits was the media. There is a certain irony to this. The Christchurch Summit featured on the TV news as a result of a smudged faxed press release. I had said that women now comprise nearly 60 percent of tertiary students, but, in the TV reporter's fax this looked more like 80 percent. I was therefore prompted to make the claim that “women are taking over the world”. That might make a good news item, but it does not result in informed debate. The media play a large part in shaping opinions, and we should be concerned about the information presented and, perhaps even more importantly, the questions asked.

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<sup>1</sup> Scoop (2005) “John Tamihere – Men's Issues Summit”, 6 May  
<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/PA0505/S00153.htm>

Some of the papers in this collection are the personal views of the speakers based on their experiences in the field. Others are from researchers. It is important that we tap in to both these sources and blend them together to get a more detailed picture of the issues, their possible causes, and their significance in the wider policy debate. It is also important in a wider context that we have a record of current thinking and the influence of currently dominant ideas.

## Chapter One

### THE STATE OF MALE HEALTH

By Bruce Mackie

#### An Introduction

The appalling state of male well being has been known for many years. The higher mortality of males has been reported in the literature since 1938 and the data on male morbidity is now widely accepted. Population health data in Sweden suggests that excess male mortality across the life span existed as far back as the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Despite this the current medical and social debate around men's health is undermined and under informed by a failure to explore men's perceptions of health and maleness as a personal, cultural and social phenomenon. "What is striking is the absence of knowledge grounded in the everyday experiences of men themselves" (Watson 2000). The literature on gender differences in health largely fails to investigate why men behave as they do, presenting men as the "control group" against which to contrast women's attitudes, behaviours and beliefs (Lloyd 1996).

Despite a wealth of clinical, epidemiological and psychological research, health and social care professionals, researchers and policy makers still know very little about how the human male will personally experience health over his lifetime. In particular, how learning to be a man and changing experience of health interact (Watson 2000). Despite all this there is mounting awareness, worldwide, that men's health *is a problem* that needs to be tackled seriously.

Over recent years increasing efforts have been made to address men's health issues. In Australia in August 1995 a "Draft National Men's Health Policy" was developed. Dr Carmen Lawrence, the Australian woman Minister of Health, introduced the male obesity and prostate cancer education programme. In N.Z. in May 1996 a Forum was held at Massey University titled "Towards a Policy on Men's Health". As we know the interdisciplinary study of men's health and illness from a perspective that takes gender into account is a recent intellectual endeavor. Since the mid 1990's Alan Huggins, Research Fellow at the School of Public Health at Curtin University in Perth has promoted men's health studies and at Unitech Thomas Harding is teaching a programme on Men's Health. Last year the appointment of Alan White, as the first ever professor of men's health anywhere in the world was made at Leeds Metropolitan University. In Vienna this year there will be the fourth international Conference on men's health supported by the World Health Organization.

Efforts are also being made *Legislatively* - in the USA a bill before the Congress is currently attempting to establish an Office of Men's Health in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. In Australia the Democrats have been developing a Policy for men in their political strategy. In Britain an All Party Parliamentary Group on Men's Health has been meeting since 1991.

Journals such as the European Journal of Men's Health and Gender, numerous articles such as "Gendered Approaches to Health Policy" by New Zealand's Dr Felicity Goodyear-Smith, Web

pages such as Stuart Birks New Zealand resource and others in Britain, the USA and Australia have mushroomed over the past decade.

Perhaps most significant has been the growth of men's groups and services often staffed by volunteer men who are acting outside the established health system to challenge its policies and deliver health care for men.

In N.Z. successive Governments and health planners have failed to recognize the scope and seriousness of men's health. Efforts to pacify the ground swell of disquiet through a presentation on prostate cancer screening or various attempts to manage risk, illustrate well the limitations that exist in understanding male health.

Before a health system founded on need can evolve, the economic, personal and social implications of male health has to have a voice. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is the Government's primary provider of gender-specific advice and as such it does not and cannot speak for men. An accountable national body through which the issue of male health and its related issues can be channeled is long overdue. It is important because men's health cannot be seen in isolation from every area of national and local policy. The potential impact of political decisions needs to be evaluated to ensure that the needs of boys and men are not sidelined and that they are at the very center of policy making. Currently Government has no defined goals for men – this was also reflected in their absence from the strategic plans of most District health Boards. Whatever those goals for men become they must be developed by men from the ground up. Male health and well being requires that men move beyond having women define what is good for them – and take responsibility for themselves.

*{Those goals defined for women would provide a good starting point for men though specific issues will be different. They could include:*

1. *Equity: i.e. for men before the law, in domestic violence, in family matters (DNA testing), in police handling of complaints,*
2. *Opportunity and choice: i.e. for men the choice of full time parenting, hours of work;*
3. *Full and active participation: i.e. in their children's lives, in decisions about conception;*
4. *Adequate resources: i.e. health screening and education, clinics and treatment;*
5. *No discrimination: i.e. in media, in careers, in sentencing, in high risk heavy work.*
6. *A society that values the contribution of men.}*

Politicians – particularly male politicians appear fearful that giving attention to the context in which men are becoming unhealthy would be seen as detracting from women's health services and resourcing. They fear changes to the current gendered approach to health care policy and service delivery would have ruinous political consequences. Such thinking is a product of the advocacy driven health system where gender is used to articulate unequal power relations and then extrapolated to the consequence of this inequality on the lives and health of women. For the

politician there are theoretical and political pitfalls in discussing how men's health advocacy and scholarship might interface with women's health advocacy and research.

It doesn't take rocket science to know that on the ground men's health is not simply about men. The strong evidence is that too many women suffer as a consequence of men's poor health. In the big picture the quality of male health is directly related to the endless cycle of male abuse, the growth in prisons, premature deaths, an overloaded justice system, a widening gap between men and women, and so much more. In the end it is an escalating cost to the nation which we all pay and is arguably the most important issue facing the country today.

An holistic perspective on health has been part of Maori understanding for decades yet there is little evidence of its application to male health.

“Of the many factors that influence health and wellbeing, none has the capacity to promote health in isolation from the others. Healthy eating and regular exercise, for example, will not fully compensate for inadequate housing or loss of employment, even though they might reduce some of the consequences. Nor will the benefits of medication or wise counseling be fully realized if, beyond the clinic, home and work environments are unsafe, or within the clinic, there are barriers to effective communication. And any health gains attributable to family stability and guidance, or to whanau support and acceptance, will be undermined by a rejecting community or wider policies that do not allow ready access to society, education and the economy” (Durie 2001, p.ix).

The break down in male health is evident all around us – at a physical, mental and spiritual level. Every level is reflected in the data.

### **A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE STATISTICS: MALE HEALTH DATA**

1. Within the first 28 days after birth about 25% more males than females die. The higher ratio of male to female deaths continues throughout life. Though 51% more males are born (Statistics N.Z.).
2. Over 900 more males than females die every year (NZHIS).
3. Boys are more likely to have a disability than girls (13.4 percent compared with 9.2 percent) (Statistics N.Z. 2005).
4. In 1998 the infant mortality rate was 6.4 male and 4.3 female per 1,000 live births or 62% male (MOH Information Service 2002). 56% of infant hospitalizations were male in 1995 (MOH 1998).
5. Male life expectancy in 2002 was 76.3 years or 4.8 years less than women (Statistics N.Z.).

6. Each year some 9,000 people on average are admitted to hospital with brain injuries. Most of them following motor accidents, assaults and sporting injuries. The majority are males (Brain Injury Assoc of N.Z).
7. 25.5% of men have a potentially hazardous alcohol drinking pattern (MOH Taking the Pulse – 1999).
8. Estimated that alcohol related conditions account for 3.1% of all male deaths – i.e. heart and liver damage, high blood pressure, some types of cancers and digestive disorders (MOH).
9. Prostate cancer accounts for 4.3% of all male deaths in N.Z. About 2/3rds are men 75+ (NZHIS).
10. There were 594 deaths from prostate cancer in 2000 – 14.4% of male cancer deaths (MOH).
11. In 2000 7,620 New Zealanders died from cancer 54% of whom were males (NZHIS).
12. 70% of road deaths in 2000 were males.
13. 71% of deaths from heart disease were males – that is 23.9% of male deaths (2000 NZHIS).
14. 96% of prison population is male (2001 avg cost per inmate \$56,343 excl GST.). (N.Z. Justice Dept.)
15. 80% Community probation offenders are male.
16. Over last 5 years prison inmates increased 5.2% per year – Community Probation Offenders declined 2.9% per year.
17. About 19,000 non custodial sentences and about 6,000 prison inmates are male. (A prison muster of 6,956 – Minister of Corrections – 22/04/06.)
18. Approximately 89% of all prison inmates have some form of mental disorder.
19. Major antisocial personality disorders affect over 50% of all inmates (cf 3% in general population).
20. 20.6 % of all remand and 22.6% of sentenced inmates has suffered a major depressive disorder. Twice as high as a community sample (National Study of Psychiatric Morbidity in NZ Prisons 1999).
21. On average 130 people drown in N.Z. every year 80% males (Drownbase).

22. On average 650 people are hospitalised every year as a result of water related injuries. 72% are males (Drownbase).
23. In 2003/4 water related sport and recreational ACC entitlement claims cost 17.1 million dollars (ACC Injury Statistics to 20 June 2004).
24. 79% of HIV infections in N.Z. are males (Otago Univ. AIDS Epidemiology Group 2004).
25. In 2002 25% of New Zealand males were cigarette smokers. Since 1998 there has been little change.
26. 75.9% of the admissions to public hospital from assault are males (2001/02 NZHIS).
27. 75% of all work related injuries in 2003 were to males (Statistics N.Z.).
28. Of 87 claims for fatal workplace injury in 2003 – 83 were males. 95%.
29. In 2001/02 there were 4,350 hospital admissions for assault of which 75.9% were males.
30. Statistics on rates of child sexual abuse are controversial – studies of male students (USA) have found prevalence rates from 4.8% to 28% (Hopper 2005).
31. Best community study finds 16% of males were sexually abused as children (Finkelhor 1994).
32. Male suicides 16.6 per 100,000 (cf 5.2 for females).
33. In 2002 350 males and 110 females completed suicide. 76% or 3.2 males to every female suicide.
34. Hospitalization for intentional self harm was 128 per 100,000 – 1.95 female to every male. Males under report attempting behaviour.
35. 51.3% of the 83,841 mental health clients seen by DHBs in 2001 were males.
36. Almost 70% of deaths 0–74 are deferrable through prevention, early detection or treatment. Including heart disease, lung cancer, suicide and mva (MOH 2001).
37. Males between 15–74 are less willing to seek professional help (N.Z. Health Survey MOH).
38. Typically, autism spectrum disorders appear during the first three years of life. It is estimated that it occurs in approximately 2 to 6 in 1,000 individuals, and is 4 times more prevalent in males than females (Autism Research Institute - USA).

39. ADHD is 3 to 4 times more likely to occur in males than females (ADHD Assoc. N.Z.).

### **Physically**

Male health problems are seen in every body system – the cardiovascular system, the reproductive system, the digestive system, the immune system, even the skeletal – muscular system.

A commonly accepted proposition is that the impoverished state of men's health is their own fault. It is suggested by health policy makers that nearly 70% of male premature deaths would be forestalled by changes to some simple basic behaviours. Some 70% of claims to the Accident Compensation Commission result from injuries to males and the point is frequently made that all injuries are preventable.

Many injuries are preventable and many are not. And while it is true that men don't look after themselves well and that aspects of men's behaviour do pose serious health risks – (high levels of smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, preference for high fat foods and a reluctance to ask for or use help) the pressures that lead men to behave like this are generally not known or ignored. Consequently an unhelpful climate of blame and accusation exists toward male health that emanates from the epidemiological data and its related literature on risk (Lloyd 1996).

Men suffer injury and death in the workplace not because of their attitude to risk taking but because of factors leading to the selection of men in the most hazardous work (Emmett E. 1996). Normal life developments, changes we decide to make and surprises like getting fired, having an accident or being asked for a divorce all trigger the stress response that lowers resistance to disease and self destructive activities and seems to intensify their impact. The physical cost to men of repetitive activation of the stress response is well documented. However again the literature is largely devoid of any consideration of the reasons for the contextual vulnerability of males to that process.

In the field of suicidology little attention has been paid to possible gender differences in response to treatment for people at risk of suicidal acts – where male suicides are usually three to four times that of females. International conferences and even major texts on suicide focus heavily on risk and seldom examine the topic from a gender perspective. They universally explain the appalling rates as a result of men choosing more lethal means which is at best a superficial response. Many of the risk factors for suicide are known from research – being male heads the list, unemployment, living alone, alcohol or drug abuse and mental illness – all of which are serious health concerns for males and require better answers as to why. Despite the all age suicide strategy and the millions being promised to fight suicide there is no sign that serious thought will be given to addressing the gender factors in suicide. To address male health we must ask men how they internalize messages about health.

### **Mentally**

Problems in relationships, in disordered anger and in addiction are some common examples of the state of male mental health. So also is depression, anxiety, post traumatic stress, obsessive compulsivity, autism, ADHD, and learning difficulties.



“Non treated male mental ill health leads to individual suffering and death as well as family violence, aggression, war and disaster, to social degradation and isolation affecting familiar and social cohesion, economic resources and well being for both females and males.” WHO Europe.

Males are less equipped to cope with emotional pain and distress because of the pervasive undervaluing of their emotions and vulnerabilities. In relationship break ups where men lose daily contact with their children they pass through a grieving process similar to that of a parent whose child has died – 61% of men in a British Columbian study described mental health difficulties they had not experienced prior to the divorce, including suicidal tendencies. Again we all know of the pain and anguish surrounding this theme.

Evidence is now emerging that men are not as indifferent to their health as is often supposed. In a Scottish study it was found that in early and late mid life women are no more likely to consult a doctor than men *except in the case of mental health problems* (Watson, 2000). In the right environment men are surprisingly willing to talk about their physical health concerns, request information and ask for help. Visits to men’s health web sites are an indicator of their willingness to seek help and retain personal control.

With mental health however some indications from treatment studies show that fewer male than female patients benefit from treatments that they are offered (Hawton 1997). While this may reflect differences in overall attitudes to help it could also result from the style of therapy that is usually available. Gender differences in verbal abilities and attitudes to emotional problems make some of the usual talk therapies less attractive to males.

Psycho-neurology may offer another therapeutic perspective on male health. Since all thinking, feeling and behaviour is located in the brain, understanding the male brain may lead to a better appreciation and a more appropriate and effective response to male ill health. In brain development it is not the hormones that make the difference it is genes (Nature Journal Mar 2005). Instead of blaming hormones for male health we need to respect the structure *and* function of his brain. Alcohol and violence provide good examples.

Alcohol abuse is often connected to self medication. Many alcoholics, and some other addicts, are deficient in *alpha* and *theta* frequencies and are commonly cortically hyper-aroused. They find it hard to relax and imagine. Replicated studies using neurotherapy with alcoholics moved relapse rates over a three year period from around 80% to 20% (Penniston).

In a study of U.S. male death row inmates all subjects were found to have long term right frontal lobe brain damage. The evidence leads to new questions about causes of violence and how to address this costly social problem. In one study – 2,776 violent criminal prisoners in Ontario prisons were given neurotherapy – reducing their recidivism rate from around 70% previously to 15% (D.A.Quirk). With our inclination to build more prisons and establish anger management and stop violence campaigns for men – it is surely time for a rethink.

### **Spiritually**

A large body of research now underpins the significance of spiritual health – including the noted work of neuropsychologist Michael Persinger and neurologist Ramachandran at California State

University. Spiritual health relates to fundamental issues about having a direction in life, about living values, about service, about learning, artistry, brotherhood, and servant-leadership.

“Recent research shows that social psychological and existential stress leading to mental ill health related morbidity and mortality, triggering, exaggerating or revealing a biological and often genetic individual vulnerability is *mainly related to lack of meaning*, lack of social significance and connectedness, loss of status and loss of the feeling of being in charge of ones life” (Rutz, Wolfgang, Regional Adviser for Mental Health in the W.H.O. Europe).

The material and spiritual world are two sides of the same coin. We are body and spirit at the same time. What we measure is material – it represents quantity – what we feel is spirit – it is about quality. Without spirit the body lacks life and without body the spirit has no form. Today we live in a largely spiritless existence where everything can be measured, bought sold, possessed and where monopolies are established in the name of competition. In politics the world is viewed as a battlefield – for power, control, and influence over minds, markets and materials. Politics is devoid of spirit. Rivalry, strife, conflict – where is there political compassion, reverence and respect for diversity.

It should not surprise us therefore that the more we examine the state of men’s health the more we expose problems of hopelessness, helplessness, meaninglessness, and despair. Men’s health and wellbeing is a reflection of the sickness of the age. This is a crisis of the spirit. (Note this is not about religion.)

When 9 and 10 year old boys and girls were taught the reason for war is the innately violent nature of men, the boys sat crumpled, apologizing for their existence, thinking this was going to be the pattern of their lives (Guardian 14 Aug. 2001).

The denigration of men begins early in the lives of boys. When they hear their fathers abused and maligned, or acting that way, when they undertake schooling without the presence of men, when they view men caricatured, when they read the cynicism and distortions about men – then the spirit of our boys is being corrosively and dangerously abused.

Our young men are particularly vulnerable because on one level there are no role models of home/work balance, at another they are denigrated by a superficial and cynical media stereotypically portraying males as an irresponsible herd of buffoons. On another level they experience the disintegration of family and then are battered for their unwillingness to be committed. The health of men is not simply about physical or emotional behaviours– at heart it is a spiritual issue. Matters of identity – meaning – and purpose. The lessons from Maori and indigenous people around the world proclaim that health is inextricably entwined with the spirit of men. A competitive, status and dollar driven society, breeds individualism, inequality, lack of trust, pessimism and an erosion of the human spirit (Layard 2005). And its males who are trapped by the economic system that makes health impossible.

All over the planet men are finding that their beliefs of what it means to be a man is changing. Warren Farrell puts it well when he writes “We teach men to value themselves by dying – we give promotions when he risks death, we tell him he’s a hero, he’s a real man – are we not

teaching him to value himself less". The constructs by which men defined themselves are being dismantled. Men are facing their own redundancy and the broad social transformation taking place simply aggravates the long established male disadvantage in health.

The spirit of men is progressively more battered and worn – we have need of healthy inspiration. Without an intense awareness of our wisdom, a strong vision of role, a deep sense of calling – a lofty and noble dream of the new world – men will continue to be sick and die. As men we need hold to a world where men are courageous for truth, champions for beauty, loving for community, fearless for justice. Where to be a man is a noble and honourable privilege with immense responsibility.

This is a long way from viewing men as deficient and defective. *Health – wellbeing, and happiness are a reflection of the human spirit.*

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## **WHAT CAN WE DO POSSIBLE ACTIONS TOWARD HEALTH FOR MEN**

There is little sense that we have yet got to grips with what actually to do – Health is a wholistic concept and the following suggestions are offered simply to continue the brain storming men must do.

- 1 Generate the movement toward a male friendly economic system.
- 2 Press for gender to be integrated into all health policy.
- 3 Create a dialogue between men's and women's health organizations.
- 4 Develop a positive approach to the advertisement and promotion of men's health – taking account of how men embody the message.
- 5 Develop a new way of visiting the doctor – in the work place, in the evening – i.e. with the doctor. Taking the initiative by reminding the man his WOF is due.
- 6 Provide work place blood pressure checks – with a one to one intervention.
- 7 Provide workplace cancer screening.
- 8 Educate men on male health matters.
- 9 Ensure information on men's health is widely available in the male idiom and male domain.
- 10 Provide anonymous and confidential health services for men by men
- 11 Recognize the male characteristics of depression and address them (i.e. abusive, anti social behaviours).
- 12 Help men address their use of alcohol and understand the causes of its misuse.
- 13 Campaign for DNA testing before a male can be deemed a liable parent.
- 14 Introduce a national men's health week in conjunction with international programmes.
- 15 Remove the blame / accusation rationale from male health services.
- 16 Address the causes of stress and crises in men's lives – i.e. family court, hours of work.
- 17 Confront the incrementally abusive or derisive messages about males (i.e. dead beat dads) in all media.
- 18 Confront the devaluing of men in advertising that is currently prevalent.
- 19 Objectively evaluate the research that gives unbalanced and prejudicial information about men – i.e. levels of violence, levels of sexual abuse.
- 20 Encourage new role models for men – with flexibility in home / work balance.
- 21 Increase the options for men to engage in nurturing activities such as childcare and parenting.
- 22 Teach coping skills as part of a boy's education – for handling emotions (depression), trauma, relationships and role redundancy.
- 23 Organize men to talk to each other rather than ignore their wellbeing or depend on women.
- 24 Research
  - a. Establish a chair of men's health and centers of research and scholarly activity in the area of men's health – thereby recognizing men's health as an academic discipline.
  - b. Determine the systemic causes of ill health and how they could be addressed.
  - c. Promote research on men informed by what men themselves have to say – to men.
  - d. Examine how does the roles of men interact with occupational health and safety.

- e. Examine how biological, social, psychological and behavioural variables relate to produce male health problems.
- f. Examine why men do not respond to health messages.
- g. Examine why reported depression levels for men do not equate with other health indices.
- h. Progress the male depression indices.
- i. Examine what it is in the health system that influences male ill health.
- j. Determine the health evoking models of masculinity.
- k. Be better informed as to why men have a higher incidence of nearly all the cancers and a greater chance of premature death from nearly all the major diseases.
- l. Ask men how they understand their health and illness.
- m. Examine how and why men do use health services and the obstacles to their use.
- n. What are male models of therapy and how can we move from a feminised mode of delivery.
- o. How do we understand the differences in men as they age.
- p. Examine whether lifestyle modification really improve men's health.
- q. Examine men's sexual health and the internet.

## Chapter Two

### TRENDS IN BOYS' EDUCATION IN NEW ZEALAND

By Joseph Driessen

#### New Zealand Trends Regarding Boys' Educational Achievement

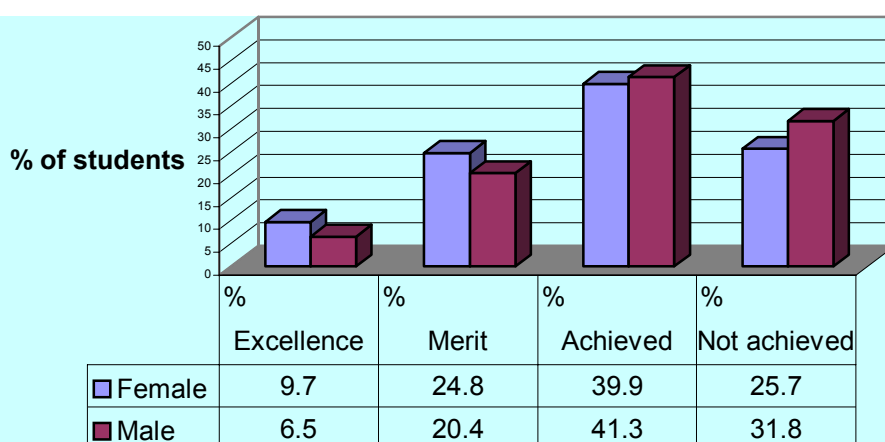
In New Zealand, a persistent disparity between boys' and girls' educational achievement has emerged over the last 20 years. This trend was examined by the Education Review Office, which highlighted the disparity between boys and girls in the ERO report of 1999. The report noted that, at primary school, boys were more likely than girls to have difficulties with written and oral language, handwriting and spelling, and overall school progress. It found that 65% of reading recovery students were boys. The report also noted that, in 1996, 59% of boys were successful in gaining Sixth Form Certificate compared to 67 % of girls. More girls than boys were likely to gain A or B Bursaries, and on average there was a 5.8 % difference in the School Certificate Pass rates between boys and girls. The report showed that at School Certificate Level, boys under achieved in all socio-economic strata of society, as measured by school deciles, with a range of 2.6–13.12%. Boys underachieved in all schools, whether co-ed or single sex (Education Review Office, 1999).

Independently, a longitudinal study of 1,000 children conducted in Christchurch in 1997 by Fergusson and Harwood found that boys performed less well than girls throughout their school career, as measured by standardised tests, teachers ratings and school learning outcomes. The study concluded that:

*The traditional educational disadvantage shown by females has largely disappeared and has been replaced by an emerging male disadvantage.*

(Fergusson & Harwood, 1997)

Since these reports were published, these trends have continued. The NCEA results of 2002 shows a distribution curve of grades, whereby more girls obtain higher grades and more boys obtain the lower grades.

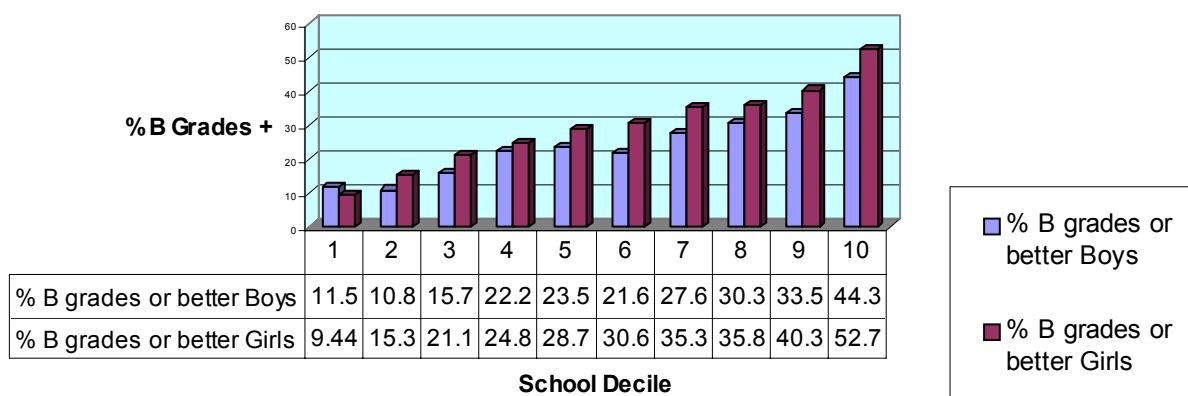


2002 NCEA Level 1 Grade Distribution by Gender – From NZQA (2003)

## Boys' Educational Achievement and Socio-Economic Background

The Education Review Office Study “The Achievement of Boys” (1999) showed that boys' educational achievement is lower than that of girls in almost all socio economic backgrounds. The socio economic background of NZ schools is measured by the decile index, decile 1 being the lowest and decile 10 being the highest.

**Boys & Girls Achieving B grades or better  
1998 School Certificate Results (NZ)**



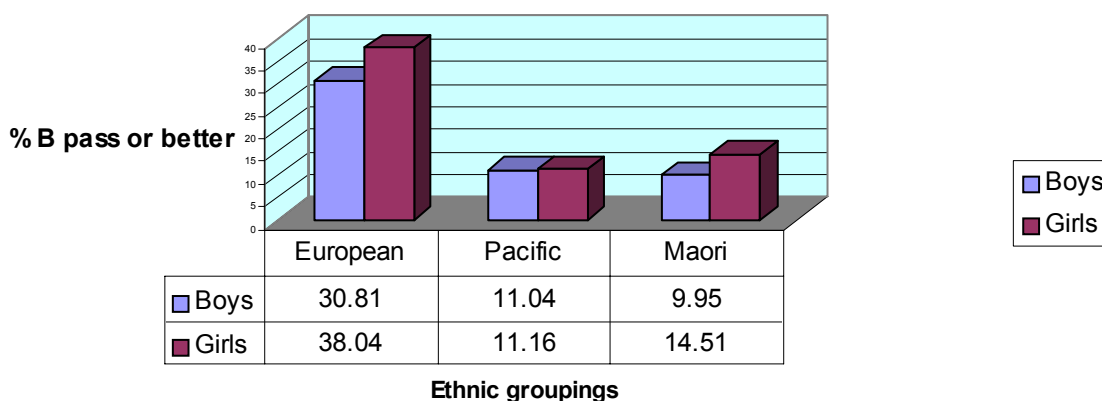
From Aitken (1999)

Comment: The fact that boys of all socioeconomic backgrounds are underachieving points to the importance of researching the barriers to learning which boys experience *as boys*.

## Boys Educational Achievement and Ethnicity

The Education Review Office Report also indicated that Maori boys were the most underachieving group of all students

**Boys & Girls Gaining B Grades or better  
1998 School Certificate Results NZ**

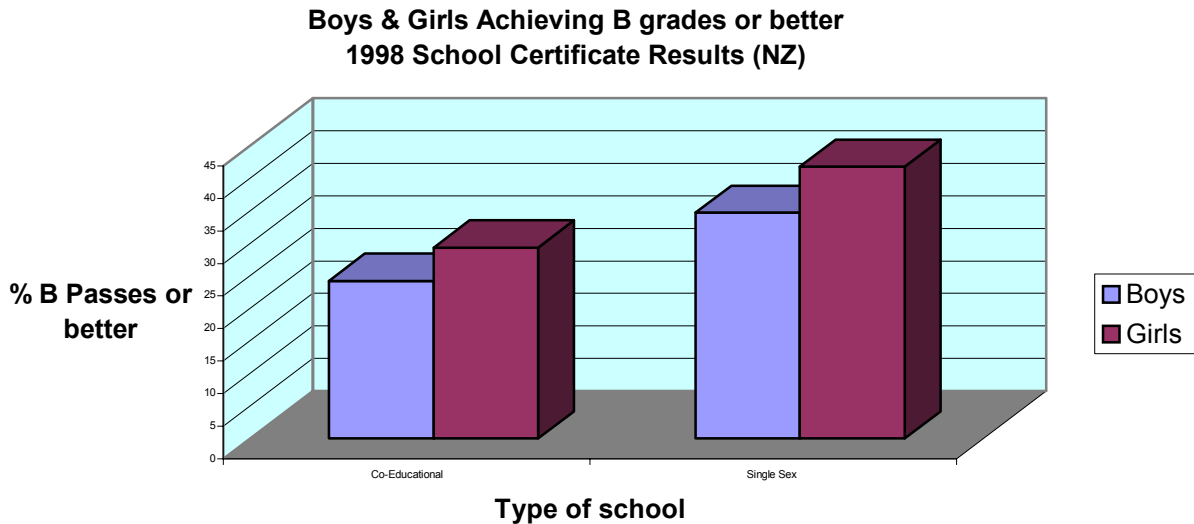


From Aitken (1999)

Comment: It is clear that in order to raise the achievement of Maori boys both ethnicity and gender needs to be taken into account.

## Boys' Educational Achievement and Single Sex Schools

The Education Review Office Report also indicated that boys' educational achievement was higher in single sex schools.

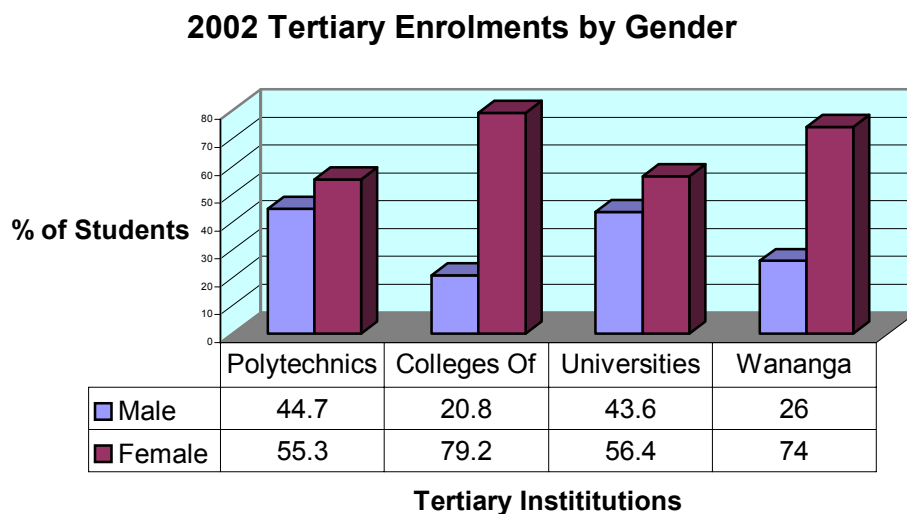


From Aitken (1999)

Comment: The success of single sex boys' schools points to the importance of researching the teaching and learning cultures of these schools, in order to understand what factors contribute to the higher success rates of these schools.

## Boys' Educational Achievement and Tertiary Enrolments

The disparity in school achievement is flowing on into the Tertiary Education Sector, with more female than male undergraduate enrolments occurring. In 2002 the ratio of female to male undergraduate was approximately 59.41% (Ministry of Education, 2003).



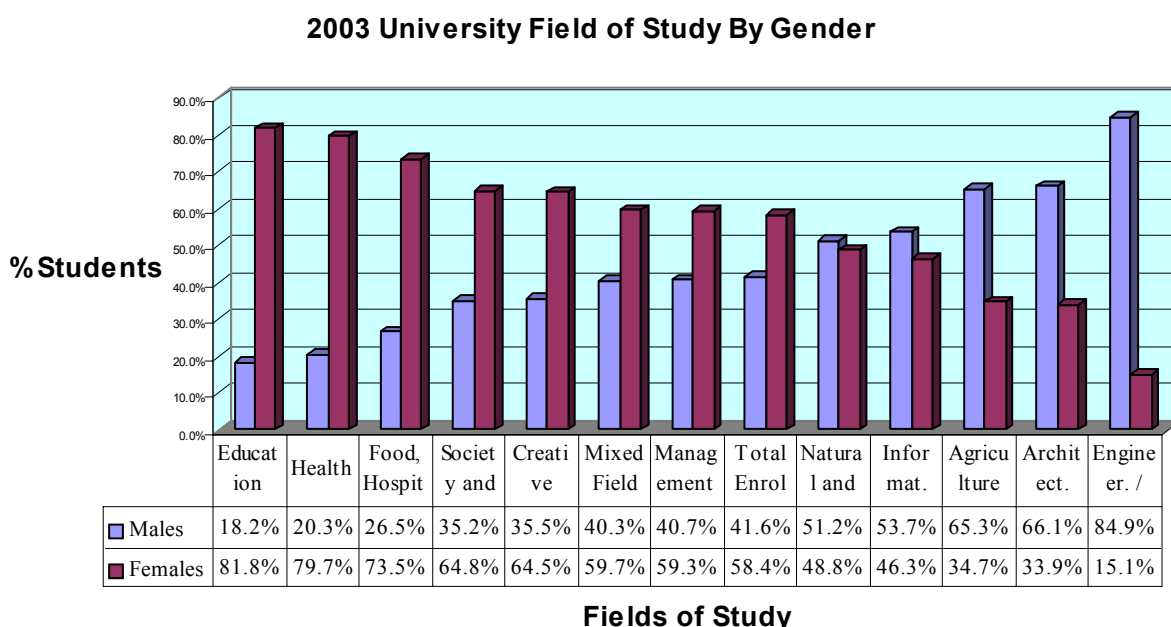
From: Ministry Of Education (2002)



Similarly, only 41.1% of undergraduates in 2004 were male (Ministry of Education, 2005, Table A.1).

Comment: The reduced enrolment rates for young men raises serious issues for society. The significant gender enrolment gap of the Wananga shows that the underachievement of Polynesian young men is being perpetuated by current educational policy settings.

These reduced enrolments by male students are also reflected in male undergraduate students comprising a low proportion of those studying in a number of professional areas:



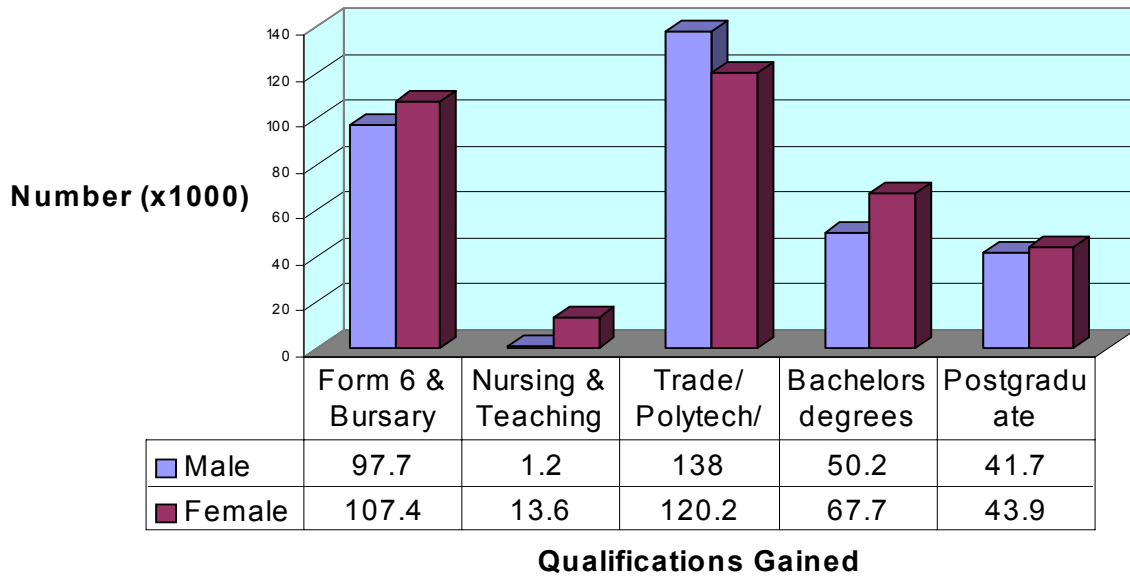
From Statistics New Zealand (2004)

Comment: The lack of gender balance in the enrolments in so many fields of study will have repercussions for society in the future. The lack of young men in these professions will further decrease the amount of role-modelling available for boys, and this will make it increasingly difficult to reverse these trends.

### **Boys' Educational Achievement and Tertiary Qualifications**

Boys' lower educational achievements are reflected in the lower number of young men gaining tertiary qualifications (Statistics New Zealand, 2004). The report shows that apart from trade and certificate related qualifications, young men gained a significantly lower number of qualifications than young women.

## 2004 Qualifications Gained By 15-35 Year Old Males and Females



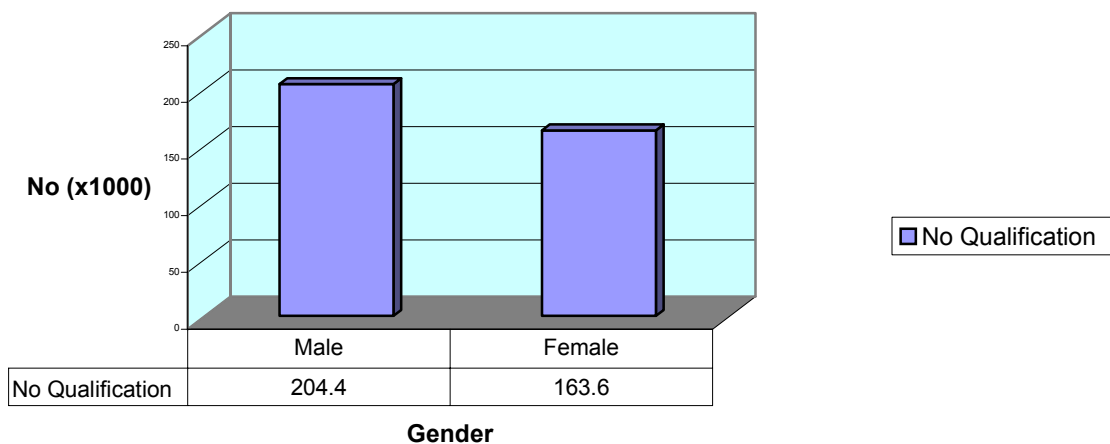
Statistics New Zealand (2004)

Comment: These figures show that young men are outnumbered in all qualifications, except trades and diplomas. If these trends continue over time, they point to an increasing narrowing of work and study options for young men.

### Boys' Educational Achievement and the Labour Market

Because of the persistent lower educational achievement of young men there is a significant differential between the number of men and women participating in the labour market without any school qualifications.

### 2004 Labour Market Participants Without Qualifications



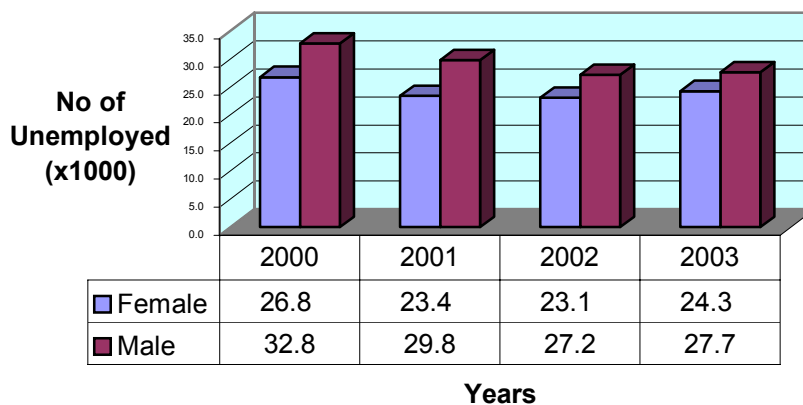
Statistics New Zealand (2004)

Comment: These figures show that young men will be more vulnerable in economic down turns since they will be less competitive in the market place. This will have significant social implications.

### Boys' Educational Achievement and Youth Unemployment

Boys' lower educational achievement is reflected in their lowered participation in the labour market. The NZ Department of Statistics annual demographic report 2002 shows that in the year 2000-2003 there were significantly higher rates of youth unemployment amongst young men (Statistics New Zealand, 2004).

#### 2000 -2003 Unemployment amongst 15-29 year old males and females



Statistics New Zealand (2004)

Comment: The recent strong economic performance of the New Zealand economy hides an increasingly structural gender differential trend, which will become more apparent with the next economic downturn.

### Summary

Boys' educational underachievement is having a significant impact on the participation of young men in the tertiary education sector and on their rates of unemployment. The continuation of these trends in the future must be a cause for concern for society as a whole, since they signify a gradual decline in participation of young men in the workforce generally, and the knowledge economy in particular.

This will have significant social repercussions not only for the young men involved, but also for New Zealand society as a whole.

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## Chapter Three

### GENDER AND POWER - MYTHS AND MISUSES<sup>1</sup>

By Warwick Pudney

The issue of power in relation to gender and also to violence has been raised and closely examined over the last 40 years to the extent that power has become synonymous with men and a basis for major social change. This paper seeks to recognise the feminist analysis but complement it by the missing analysis of men's powerlessness.

Men and women have different forms of power that are both socially constructed and genetic. The inclusion of genetically attributed power is based on the larger muscle mass of men and the neurologically based differences in brain functioning that give males some technological and spatial advantages.

The forms of male power have traditionally and cross-culturally been in the wider social and institutional sphere. The forms of women's power have traditionally been in the internal worlds of feeling, and interrelationship. These differences have a strong socially constructed base that has, through challenge, been moved significantly over the last 40 years.

We know much about men's power and women's powerlessness due to the feminist movement. We know something about women's power due to the personal growth movement. We know little about men's powerlessness due to the denial of this by feminism, the denial of this by men so that they can stay strong protectors of the family and community, and the denial of this by women so that men can remain strong protectors of women.

#### **The Politicising of Gender to Create Imbalance**

There has been a strong and successful attempt to change the socially constructed gender difference. We see this in the intention of the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

There has however been denial of the genetic or biological difference. We see this in our school system where boy's achievement has dropped with increasing momentum over the last 15 years. While there is research into how girls can do better in maths and sciences, there is no research in NZ into how boy's language and social studies marks can be improved.

A device in many fields has been to value women's process and values and ignore male process and values. This is seen in the counselling and teaching fields particularly where the majority of practitioners are women.

The women's process and values are then increasingly regarded as 'normal' and no longer 'women's', partly due to a belief that they are superior. Men and boys are then expected to

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<sup>1</sup> Paper for the Second NZ Men's Issues Summit, Christchurch City, Auckland, 5 August 2005.

behave within that definition of 'normal'. They will likely fail as it is neither culturally appropriate nor neurologically normal. In 2003 the number of completed tertiary qualifications by women exceeded those by men by 50 percent.<sup>2</sup> There is no apparent concern at this huge discrepancy even though it has huge implications for men's status, earning, partnering, and mental health for the future.

This process of 'rebalancing' power implies a process of oppression which is largely unconscious. The initiators believe that they are righting wrongs not creating them, or they are paying back out of their own pathology. This is true of responses to pakeha over Maori oppression, white over black oppression, Christian over Islam oppression, West over East oppression. There is a devaluing of one culture by a presumed superior culture. Add to this a Marxist dynamic of ideological justice to correct it, and you have not an equalising of power, but the setting for a reversal of power on the same basis. As men we must not fall into this trap. **We must regain dignity with dignity** not by behaving in undignified or retributive ways.

There is much power claimed by women by claiming 'victimhood' and the right and need to be 'rescued' from disadvantage. There is much power claimed by men by appearing strong, able and rescuing. The willingness of the wider community to rescue women and children is historic. A men's refuge would be unlikely to gather funds in the same manner as a women's refuge.

There is a fear by some women using Marxist feminism that men will steal the victim/disadvantaged position that gives so much power in the good/bad dichotomy and rationalises the need to continue to deny men's powerlessness and the need to advantage women. The result has been a 'women are good' and 'men are bad' marketing. There is immense power in the victim role that some forms of feminism are afraid of losing for some more authentic power.

### **Handling our Different Power**

Men and women also have many forms of power that are the same but also have differences which equals different power. "It is unrealistic to expect everyone to have equal power at any one time?" The *handling* of our power and powerlessness is the issue. I suggest that a person may be entitled to have more power than another person, but they have an obligation to use that power respectfully and wisely. Similarly, a person may be entitled to have less power than another person, but they are also obliged to use that position of less power (victimhood, disability, patient, helplessness) wisely for themselves and others. In other words, there is also power in being powerless due to the dynamics of relationship.

Power and powerlessness calls for co-operation, not competition. If the powerless and the powerful compete they exacerbate the situation and rarely equalise it. If they co-operate then they manage the problem and have a better chance of equalising it. It is time to acknowledge men's powerlessness and co-operate and equalise, not compete for the role and devalue the difference that is inherent.

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<sup>2</sup> Table 1 of Ministry of Education "2003 completion statistics", [http://www.minedu.govt.nz/web/downloadable/dl10186\\_v1/grads03.xls](http://www.minedu.govt.nz/web/downloadable/dl10186_v1/grads03.xls), accessed 31 October 2005

Let us now look at the issue of power and powerlessness in our culture. The following diagram examines these notions in the context of gender. They have been generated in community contexts (West Auckland Violence and Abuse Network forums, 1995) or by students. It is important to note the following:

- They are generalisations. We will all know of situations where these statements may not apply.
- Some of these things may not apply in NZ now but are there because they used to apply in our country and still do in others.
- Not everyone will agree with these statements that reflect the communities who have generated this analysis.

### **Men's Power**

Men's power has been described extensively by feminism. It may look something like this:

- Paternal figureheads
- Efficient hierarchical power system - Status and rank
- Mana Tane -respect for the essence of gender difference
- Respond well to crisis – bursts of energy
- Technical invention, Knowledge of technology
- Linear thinking, problem – solving, fixing, thinking
- Sport – opportunity & attention to male sport
- Sexual assertion - expectation and maybe genetic drive
- Drive car and vehicle - social custom
- Taught to suppress fear and be bold
- Taught to suppress hurt and vulnerability for periods of time
- Taught to give display of confidence and courage
- Entitlement to anger as an emotion
- Louder deeper voices
- Careers unbroken
- Rational compartmentalized knowledge
- Privilege - access to visibility and success
- Family name
- Physical strength-30 percent more muscle tissue
- Technology skills and the expectation of these
- Protector role – warrior, soldier
- Provider role -resources for family
- Economic and financial power
- Institutional power: government, health, church, business, education, law
- Protection forces: Police, Armed forces, Fire services, Ambulance services, Security, Customs
- Leader entitlement
- Middle and Upper management predominance
- Can misbehave, drink, act up and retain status
- Can take risks
- Older male workers paid more \$ than older women

- Privilege – public roles, own more land

## **Women's Power**

Women's Power has had useful analysis from the women's personal growth movement. It may look something like this:

- Living longer
- Living in better health
- Mana Wahine – respect for the essence of women
- Aesthetic expertise and difference: style, colour, fashion, decoration, art, beauty
- Celebratory dress of colour and style
- Cooking: decide food eaten by others
- Predominant in parenting
- Declare what is needed for the family
- Verbal skills superiority
- Do many things at once: multitask
- Connection to life through pregnancy
- Respect for giving birth
- Thinking is relational and understanding of the way things/people relate
- Emotional knowledge is superior
- Organisation skills via systems knowledge
- Sets moral standards & values, attitudes: holds others accountable
- Victim/"rescue me" role that draws assistance
- Children – custody and access rights
- Primary caregiver
- Spiritual initiators in home and community
- Sense of home "ownership" and home authority
- Controls choices of all rooms all rooms except garage
- Relationships skills and family relationship manager
- Manager of home base activity
- House buyer choice-maker
- First right to be provided for by spouse
- First right to be protected by spouse
- First right to sadness and hurt over spouse
- Modelling for girls
- Teaches boys about females
- Has supportive social networks
- Organises social life
- Better educated and educational achievement
- Better education opportunity
- Does household spending (70 percent)
- Sexual power (withholding, attracting)
- Expressive expert and privilege– emotions, dance, song
- Has organized gender advocacy
- Trained for greater empathy
- Higher softer voices



## **Women's Powerlessness**

Feminism has developed a strong analysis of women's powerlessness:

- Family ties and commitment appear greater
- Work often unpaid
- Earn less money over 30 years
- Own less property
- More manual housework
- Often parent alone
- Often parent and provide at the same time
- Role stereotyped as less powerful
- Often in service to others less able
- Often less assertive
- Looks, image, conformity, sensitivity expectations
- Aging effects appearances
- Less power in traditional institutions and organisations
- Dependent on provider for some time in her life
- Not in business or upper management as much
- Less status in traditional circles
- Nurture/care-giving work not recognized and valued
- Techno-mechanical learned helplessness
- Clothes less functional
- Miscarriage loss
- Unwanted pregnancy and abortion
- Rape, sexual harassment
- Less body muscle and size
- Unsafe in streets
- Quieter voices
- Less linear thinking and orientation to problem solving
- Have to appear 'nice' and smile
- Expected to maintain social and family relationships

## **Men's Powerlessness**

Men's powerlessness has had little analysis and suffers from considerable resistance from both men and women to discussion about it and generation of its visibility:

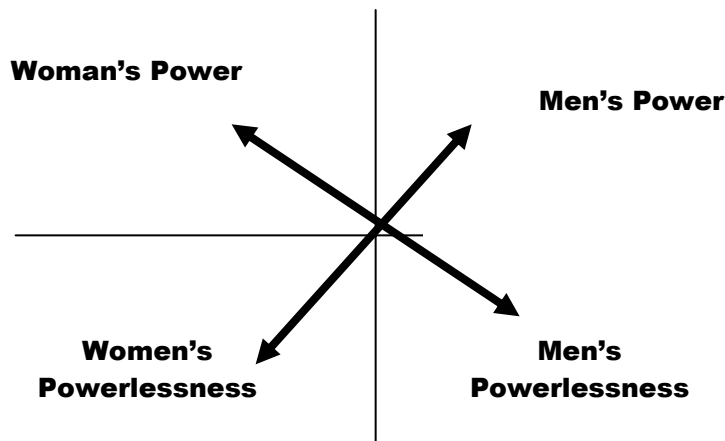
- Spiritual deadness due to functionality and mechanistic expectations
- Aesthetically dumb or untrained in order to maintain an functional role
- Less verbally skilled at all ages
- Less able to communicate inner life
- Alienating work based on compartmentalized production of goods and services
- Trapped in roles of service as providers and protectors
- 'Allowed' sex and have imagined greater sex drive
- Disconnected from relational world due to functionality

- Provider role (work ) equates to service and identity by function rather than being
- Expected to sit on anger except when protecting when it should be readily accessible
- Protector role, rescuer, emergency person require one to be prepared to die for others/women/children.
- Not allowed vulnerable emotions. These are denied or squashed down
- Little care-giving/nurturing training
- Live in an anti - male culture
- Strong association with alcohol and addictions to dull pain and have fun
- Dies about 4-8 earlier than women
- Poor medical service and health
- Isolated from other men and support
- Fatherlessness denies trust, esteem and identity for boys
- Risk-taking expectations and attitude has injury and death price
- War requires service and death and damage to own soul
- Are 95 percent of dangerous occupational deaths
- Custody/access settlements give low parent power and deny relationship
- Boys not cared for by same sex parent.
- School system biased against Boys learning in both content and process
- An emotional poverty or deadness is maintained for safety
- There is little willingness to listen to men's problems and issues
- Dependence on women for care, nurture and support
- Rigidness and inflexibility meaning men often only change in crisis
- Little celebration and expression of joy. Repressed – emotion, dance, song, joy, play
- Boredom of life and tendency to stick to known boundaried territory
- Suicide and murder is 4 x more than women
- Victims of violence is 2-3x more than women
- Deny self to serve others and family
- Low self-esteem. Pretend self-esteem and bravado for acceptance and advancement
- Taught to suppress fear, hurt and vulnerability in order to gain acceptance and partner/spouses
- Disconnected, spiritual void in much of existence
- Work to supply women's consumer needs
- Eats as directed unless they become the cooks
- Relational awareness is lower and less developed
- Less able to multitask
- Controlled relationally by guilt and shame

(West Auckland Violence and Abuse Network forums, 1995)

The male powerlessness quadrant is diagonally opposite the woman’s power quadrant and the woman’s powerlessness quadrant is diagonally opposite the man’s power quadrant. They are in fact a result and response to each other.

## POWER AND PRIVILEGE RELATIONSHIP

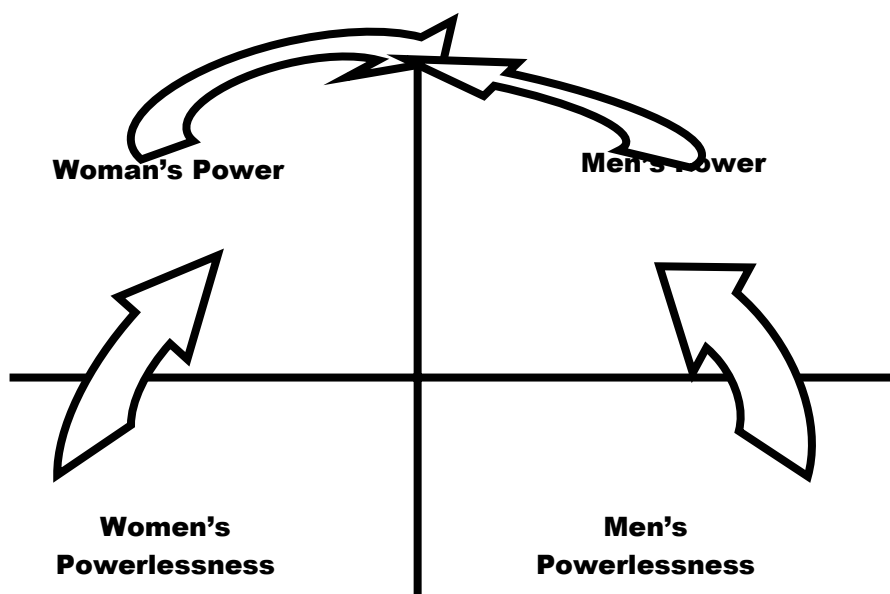


Some principles of this analysis become evident:

Principles:

1. One gender’s power is the other gender’s powerlessness
2. Abuse of power and privilege occurs when a gender uses its power in one area to overcome its powerlessness in another. See fig 2. A common response to feeling powerless is to use the areas that one feels powerful in to usurp and compete with the ‘other’, and so decrease powerless by increasing power. The result is conflict and mistrust of the ‘others’ power due to its misuse.

## “POWER OVER” DYNAMICS Fig.2



3. No-one will always have exactly equal power with another.  
There will always be a coming and going of power as there are many types and ways of having power and power is also continually moving.  
(A.U.T. University, Diploma of Violence and Trauma Studies, collaborative forum, 2000.)

### **The Way Forward in Gender Power Imbalance**

The solution to the imbalance and mobility of power and its sources is:

1. Respect for the other's power. Power need not be competed with, but respected for its difference and potential to complement.
2. Responsibility of having power. A commitment not to use one's power to compensate for any sense of powerlessness in another area is a start to reduced conflict and building trust.
3. Management of ego. Being able to sit in powerlessness, and hold and express that powerlessness without desiring power over is part of accepting reality rather than pathological desire and action to always be in charge and never trust the 'other' to work for your advantage.
4. Empathy and generosity. Being able to give power from one's power, when one sees powerlessness in another, is an act of caring and complementarity that is rewarded when the reverse is true. This generates co-operative relationship.
5. Responsibility for one's powerlessness. This is the taking of responsibility for one's powerlessness in a manner that does not act against others or disempower others, unless they are misusing power, in which case the task is still to leave the misuser with authentic power rather than a direct power reversal.  
Authentic power integrates the personal quality of honesty about one's powerlessness as well as seeking internal sources of power as opposed to external 'power over'.  
A will to assist others in powerlessness is a step beyond not misusing the power imbalance over others. It calls people to relationship and partnership rather than individual interest.  
Power begins to have an internal location rather than by an external comparison or the taking of security by having power over others. It is intrinsic to the person rather than extrinsically taken from others.  
This calls out empathic collective values rather than individual and comparative values.

Our task is to do some changing in a pathologically insecure world.

Power, well-used, needs to be accepted in order to retain the dignity of our genetic difference and cultural social constructions. It is therefore good to be a man or a woman. It is also good to respect the other gender and assist inequity of power by three things, using power for the common good, building a complementarity of power into mutual action, and also sharing/giving power that is asked for in good faith with good reason. The competition of gender difference, the marketing of 'good' and 'bad' genders, the compartmentalising of gender within ideology are useless tools of a past age of fear and objectification of 'other'.

In order to shift this we need to build the authentic inner world of esteem, relationship, trust, spirit and emotional quality and listen with empathy as to how we can use our power for the good of all. Gender power has the potential to increase respect for difference and increase a more cooperative equality.

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July, 2000.

## Chapter Four

### FATHERS AFTER SEPARATION PROMOTING THE TWO HOME OPTION<sup>1</sup>

By Don Rowlands

In the 1970's and 80's fathers were seen as dispensable. Often the view expressed was: "It would be better for the kids if you go away and allow the kids to settle in one stable maternal home after separation". The continuity of the mother-child relationship was the most important thing. Geographic stability was favoured at the cost of the child's emotional attachment to their fathers. Little consideration was given to the twelve day period of broken attachments that children suffered when the default position of alternate weekends contact for fathers was routinely applied. The fathers became more like uncles, peripheral to their children's lives. The psychological damage of infrequent contact to preschool children and reduced importance in the lives of fathers resulting from the reduced involvement accelerated the trend to father absence.

Research indicates that a quarter of biological fathers have no contact with their children after parental separation and between a third and a half have lost a significant parenting relationship. One USA study reported that less than one third of boys and one quarter of girls reported having a close relationship with their fathers. One Australian Family Court study found that 73% of fathers would like more contact with their children.

Since the 1990's there has been a trend towards increased involvement of fathers after separation. In the United States, 35% - 40% now see the fathers once a week or more. The reasons for the increased involvement of fathers have been due to the pressures applied by Fathers' Groups and the promotion of research indicating the benefits to children of more father contact.

There have been changes in the culture of parenting in married families as more women re-enter the work force after the birth of children and fathers are increasingly engaged with their childcare. This change of culture has been reflected in recent films emphasizing the value of fathers: *I am Sam*, *About a Boy* and *Jack and Sarah* are good examples.

Change has been slow in New Zealand with 42% of fathers of preschoolers still working outside the home for more than 50 hours per week and 20% working more than 60%.

Delays in achieving court orders can lead to months without contact. This can occur when the obstruction of access occurs outside the courts. In addition, the lack of effective sanction against the breach of court orders have damaged the child's right to contact with their father.

The adversarial process can create a risk for children. The win/lose approach can exacerbate conflicts. Affidavits that focus on demeaning or undermining the other parent can cause long

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<sup>1</sup> Address to the Men's Issues Summit II in Christchurch.

term damage to co-operation within the co-parenting relationship. A link has been found between demeaning affidavits and later conflict and violence. In most cases mediation and counseling achieve better outcomes for children with less financial cost and better prospects for the co-parenting relationship. The New Zealand Family Court offers six free sessions of counseling for separated couples.

Barriers to fathers in the form of traditional attitudes and beliefs about gender parenting roles are alive and well in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Outdated attachment theories still persist in justifying legal decision making.

The consultation document on the Family Court by the Law Commission in 2002 attributed the rise in fathers seeking more day to day care to men's perceived loss of power and control and to the resistance to paying child support. The desire by fathers to contribute to the well being of their children by more involvement was not considered a possible reason.

After parental separation mothers are preferred primary caretakers because fathers are not seen as competent parents. It is sometimes suggested that custody disputes should be resolved by giving the child to the parent who has been the primary carer. This is simply mother-bias in disguise. A father who wishes to be highly involved will have become a secondary carer after birth due to cultural and economic factors. The caregiving potential of the father is often ignored in this situation. The legal system too often reflects the personal experiences of the practitioner in parenting and public opinion. Fathers who get as far as contesting custody in the courts usually have a very strong case, strong support and a belief system that challenges the pervading culture.

### **Default Position**

Frequently the legal advice and decisions at the time of separation fails to take into account the developmental needs of children for a close relationship. In practice the "default position" has babies under one year with their fathers for three hours per week in the mother's home.

Children aged one year to three years are allowed one overnight stay per week and children aged 5-9 years are normally allocated alternate weekends. These guidelines disregard the child's needs to build a strong father-child relationship. Babies respond better to contact in a neutral environment that is safe rather than the mother's home where the vibes of hostility can be picked up by the child.

When a father has never lived with his baby and is a complete stranger when the attachment has been broken it is important to develop the relationship carefully over time with regular visits. Inappropriate fortnightly contact at supervised access centers sometimes do not contribute to reestablishing a long term relationship with a baby because they are too infrequent and the end goals of the parenting plan are not clear. Fathering skills need to be developed in conjunction with the reestablishment of contact.

## **The Tender Years**

Daycare research has confirmed that babies will sleep in many places. Moving to father's house is usually moving from one attachment figure to another. Moving to stay overnight with the father does not cause adjustment problems and overall contact with father is positive.

## **Father Contact**

Australian survey by Parkinson and Smyth into parental satisfaction found that 75% of non-resident fathers wanted more contact with their children compared to 40% of mothers. The Australian Bureau of Statistics 1998 report that of the 41.2% of children in sole care, 41% visited the other natural parent (at least once per fortnight); 21% visited at least every month to six months; 36% visited one per year or less often; 33% had contact rarely or never and of those a third had contact by telephone or letter.

Of those who see the other parent, a minority of 34% never stay overnight with them. 88% of biological parents absent from the family home were fathers.

### **Family Court**

The New Zealand Family Court system is theoretically gender neutral and currently endorses the underlying principles of the "primary caretaker" and the "best interests of the child" when deciding parenting orders. In practice, where working fathers with young children separate, many are disadvantaged in the long term by the provider role they had in their past relationship. Are the limitations that full-time work places on time with his children, and the potential of that father to extend his parenting role given adequate consideration? In the New Zealand Family Court in 1988, seventy per cent of Court decisions awarded custody to the mother, 15 per cent the father, and 10 per cent were joint custody orders (Family Court Statistics). Although less than 10 per cent of childcare decisions subsequent to separation are made by the Court Lawyers, counselors and other agencies in the experience of the Christchurch Caring Fathers Group, offer insufficient support to fathers and encouragement in their ongoing parenting role.

In New Zealand, most parents remain legal guardians after divorce, and therefore in law after separation. Major decisions, including region of residence, health and education are retained by both parents. Unfortunately, guardianship in reality counts for very little with many institutions and in public perception.

In the past it was the "custodial parent" that has the status and authority and it is often difficult for the "access" parent to gain information, consultation on major decisions or even enforcement of legally awarded access. Access parents of both genders find difficulties with the system. A group for women, Mothers Without Custody, was formed to support access mothers with similar difficulties. In New Zealand, however, the vast majority of access parents are fathers. We are yet to see if the Care of Children Act will improve the situation by removing the words "custody" and "access."

The disengagement of fathers from the lives of their children after divorce, particularly those most involved with and attached to their children during the marriage can be the result of a



parenting arrangements which they perceive as “disqualifying” them as parents. Many caring fathers find that meaningful, regular and frequent parenting is not possible within the bounds of limited paternal care; the very concept of “contact” or “access” connotes for many fathers a de facto cessation of their parenting role. These fathers want at least partial physical care of their children.

Many Fathers consider shared parenting with their former spouses as the only arrangement that would allow them to maintain a meaningful relationship with their children.

Disengaged fathers have suggested that more equal parenting orders would have allowed them to continue their parenting role and responsibilities after divorce. The most vulnerable fathers vis-a-vis loss of post-divorce contact with their children are those who were previously most actively involved with and attached to their children. Research evidence indicates that the key factor in the positive outcome of most children to divorce is the continued involvement of both parents in child rearing. The appropriateness of sole custody or unequal parenting orders determinations is called into question. The desirability of shared parenting orders as an alternative arrangement warrants serious consideration. In cases where both parents possess adequate parenting abilities and wish to maintain their parenting responsibilities in an active manner following divorce, a shared parenting arrangement may potentially have the most positive long-term benefits for all family members.

The following situations faced by clients illustrate the difficulties faced by caring and competent fathers:

- A primary school fails to forward copies of school reports or notices to the father even after stamped envelopes have been supplied.
- A mother moves to another town without consultation and makes access impossible for more than holiday periods.
- A father with agreed care of slightly less than the 40 per cent threshold figure for reduced child support payments is unable to afford appropriate accommodation or provision for his children because he must pay full child support.
- A rotational shift worker is given fixed days for the care of his children even though the Court has been supplied with work schedule information. It was a job he obtained after many years of unemployment.
- Employers are often constrained by the demands of a financial pressure.

## Two Home Families And Shared Parenting Two Homes Work Best

“Children have expressed higher levels of satisfaction with joint physical custody than with sole custody arrangements citing the benefits of remaining close to both parents. Joint custody does not create confusion for the majority of youngsters about their living arrangements or about the finality of the divorce, not does it increase loyalty conflicts.”

*Joan Kelly 1993  
Family Therapist and Researcher*

Changing gender roles for men and women and increased scrutiny of information on what is truly in the best interests of children have contributed to challenges that the needs of children are best served by traditional arrangements in which mothers have sole custody.

### *The Language of Shared Parenting*

The term shared or joint custody is used in New Zealand to describe what the Americans call Joint Physical Custody. Guardianship or Legal Custody, as they say in the U.S.A., is about the rights and responsibility to be involved in decisions concerning the child’s education, religion and health, but it may not necessarily mean that the Guardian has day to day care.

In shared parenting arrangements the frequency of the alternate cycles of care varies from case to case. Increasingly the developmental age and needs of the child have become the influential factor in determining the frequency. It is not only the degree of time that is important in joint or shared custody but it is the quality of parenting by both adults that improves. They are both likely to consult each other and to see each other as equal partners rather than one as the primary care giver and the other as the visitor. No hard line has been drawn on the time allocations for shared care but a minimum involvement of a third of parenting time would seem to be needed. In California joint physical custody is defined as having more than 30% of time with both parents. In practice joint custody arrangements will give children two homes and two psychological parents.

Shared parenting and co-parenting are terms commonly used to describe the involvement and co-operation of both parents in the care of their children after separation. This care could be undertaken in a variety of arrangements.

The New Zealand Care of Children Act 2005 introduced the terms “day to day care contact” and “parenting orders” to replace custody and access. The intention is to bury the idea that children are chattels. The Australian law makers are considering going a step further in removing the language of hierarchy and ownership by using the neutral term “day to day care” when describing the care arrangements.

### **Benefits**

Dual residence women were more satisfied than mothers with primary physical custody whose children saw their fathers or had no contact with their fathers. Mothers reported less burdensome parenting responsibilities that freed them to pursue other avenues.

Joint physical custody appears to result more often in the maintenance of the father-child relationship in contrast to diminished contact overtime in post divorce mother-custody homes. Father drop out occurs more often in sole custody arrangements. More additional parenting costs are paid by joint custody fathers. Joint custody parents rely on each other more often for child care. The risk to children of lost attachments after separation is powerfully described in the research of Wallerstein and Kelly.

“The central event of the divorce process for most children is the parental separation. The child frequently perceives the parent’s departure as a departure from him personally... The central event of divorce for children is psychologically comparable to the event of death and frequently evokes similar responses of disbelief, shock and denial.”

Research on divorced fathers found that joint custody fathers are more satisfied with their custody status than are non-custodial fathers and report being close with and having greater influence on their children.

“Whereas the artificial nature of visiting for children does not foster a normal parental relationship between father and children to the extent that joint custody allows interaction in normal day to day living situations. Even fathers who were somewhat uninvolved with their children prior to divorce are able to become nurturing parents.”

*Judith Grief*

Custodial fathers are more likely to report increased feelings of self esteem and nurturance than are non custodial fathers. Non custodial fathers often report feelings of loss and depression that may be related in part to unsatisfactory relationships or limited involvement with their children.

Even when we allow for the differences in the pre-divorce fathering, joint custody arrangements do result in fathers being more involved with their children after divorce.

### **How To Make Two Homes Work**

1. Homes close together make it easier for children to maintain their peer friendships and school continuity.
2. Try to duplicate clothing, equipment sports gear and toys to avoid stress over shifting and lugging huge amounts from house to house.
3. Children need their own space in each home.
4. Children can adjust to different rules in different households but common ground rules and curfew for teenagers can help make sure they don’t play one off against the other.
5. As the children get older be more flexible about the arrangement and encourage them to say what they think.

6. Parents must put the children's needs first.
7. Both parents are committed to make it work.
8. Good communication skills and the willingness to negotiate on issues concerning the children.
9. The parents can put aside their conflicts when it comes to making arrangements for the children.
10. Parents do not use the children as messengers and involve them in adult issues.
11. For this arrangement to work both parents need good financial resources to run two homes on separate locations.

The Child Support formula tends to be an obstacle to shared care arrangements in New Zealand unless care above 40% can be negotiated. At 146 nights per annum the formula is adjusted to allow for shared parenting. Payments will alter in the shared parenting formula according to the income of each parent. A parent who is on the Domestic Purposes Benefit, who chooses not to work, who works part time or has a low income job may pay the minimum contribution (12 dollars per week). The parent on the higher income will be required to pay according to the formula on all earnings, including overtime beyond 40 hours.

Occasionally, when parents agree and court orders are made the equivalent of the domestic purposes benefit is paid to separate parents for the week they have the children in their care. The income support agency will not pay two DP benefits. One parent will be required to seek work and receive the much lower entitlement of the unemployment benefit. Determination of which parent is to receive the DPB is based on prior parenting arrangements and the parent who is first to apply. In theory the DPB covers the total cost of parenting the children. In practise the recipient is unlikely to contribute to the costs of parenting when the children are in the other parent's care.

“Although I was more involved from birth as a parent the courts decided on joint custody. The problem occurred when her mother got the DPB and I was left to struggle to pay the cost of a two bedroom flat on the unemployment benefit. In the week I had my daughter I struggle to supply the basics and I can't even afford to buy an ice cream at the Mall for her. The pressure is on for me to become a weekend father and get a full time job.”

*Christopher*

Finances can make it a difficult struggle for low income fathers to exercise shared care unless Grandparents are willing to help. Fathers can only do their best within these constraints. Until the child support and income support systems are changed to value the relationship of fathers to their children the barriers will remain.

Fathers who share day to day care generally have more assets, income and education. They are in a position to establish a “second home” at the time of separation. They probably had the resources to engage legal assistance to negotiate the shared arrangements. It is likely that they would have been aware of the option of joint custody and to possess the self belief to pursue that option. The ex wives of men with higher education may be less threatened by the loss of a sole parent role and have the need for time to pursue their own careers. Most joint custody fathers have some job flexibility that enables them to assume daily responsibilities for the children in their care. For example a teacher finishing work in the afternoon may be able to supervise their child after school and during the holidays. A father who is self employed may be able to work flexible hours.

## **Conclusion**

The jury is out on the Care of Children Act. Will it be business as usual and the terms day to day care and contact could become synonymous with “custody” and “access”?

The publicity material distributed by the Family Courts is encouraging and supportive of fathering and shared care after relationship separation.

The rebuttable presumption of shared parenting would have strengthened the law and signalled to the legal and social service networks that fathering was valued and both parent were responsible for the ongoing care of their children after separation.

## Chapter Five

# FATHERS AND FATHERLESSNESS<sup>1</sup>

By Rex McCann

### Introduction

Fatherhood is an important social institution that binds men to children. Throughout history men have been encouraged to remain active in their children's lives. This links men to social purposes and helps them think of others and become good men and good citizens. It is society's way of shaping the male identity. It enhances women's contribution to children and advances civilisation.

Society's success depends on its encouraging men to be fathers. Men who are deeply involved with their children enhance their well-being through their money, protection, character, and love. Fathering is good for fathers. Fathering is good for children, Fathering is good for families.

We shouldn't have to justify this claim. Children, mothers, fathers know it is true, and common sense tell us it is so.

### Fatherhood as Cultural Story

Fatherhood is held in place by the stories society tells itself. Compared to the mother's role in birth, the biological role of becoming a father is very small. All that is required is a sperm. The rest of what is considered fatherhood is a mixture of instinct and culture.

Today the cultural story that holds fathers in place has weakened and the institution of fatherhood as previous generations knew it is in decline, and it needs our urgent attention. This is the number one important issue for this men's summit.

Some of the stories we are telling seem to imply that fatherhood is redundant.

1. The idea of fatherhood has generally lost esteem. A father's authority is seen as something to be ridiculed and we tend to be suspicious of his involvement with children. Many television programmes show fathers as bumbling fools who need to be taught a lesson by their wives or children. This is a reflection of a society where men are often marginalised in the home by women's "ownership" of children.
2. Much of social science has seen fathers as superfluous and many family scholars have simply ignored them. 'Home' is mothers, and fathers exist on the margins or not at all.

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<sup>1</sup> Paper for the NZ Men's Summit Christchurch 5 August 2005

3. In its actions, the Family Court reflects an assumption that children belong with the mother and that men's main usefulness is their pay-packet. The vast majority of contested custody cases in New Zealand have been awarded to the mother.
4. The father is replaceable by a new boyfriend or partner or not necessary at all, as witnessed by the number of single-parent households led by women.
5. Father absence today is not only caused by death or sacrifice (such as in war). It seems to be about personal freedom and lifestyle choice – men being driven off from families or choosing to wander off. We seem to be forgetting that fathers are vital in raising balanced children.

An example that demonstrates graphically the absence of men in our figuring of family is an extensive billboard campaign in Auckland some time ago advertising “The James Family” a major provider of family services. The James Family billboards simply depicted a giant photo of a mother and a child alongside their name, driving the point home – no dad was present.

### **Fatherhood and Masculinity**

To talk about fatherhood is to talk about men. Fatherhood is a core expression of the masculine identity and any discussion of contemporary fatherhood needs to be against a backdrop of changes for men.

In much of the world, what it is to be a man and a father is being questioned – women have an expanding sense of self and are moving out of the home while men are slower to take up roles within the home, and these roles are not so valued by society. There has been some academic attention to these diverse masculinities but men in general have been slow to own this discourse.

Cross culturally research confirms men are universally subject to narrow definitions of masculinity, and therefore, by association, fatherhood. In one study of 156 cultures, only 20% promoted men's close relationships with infants, and only 5% with young children. Men are valued for providing, discipline and passing on skills but are not generally seen as the caregiver. Personnel in parenting and policy areas often assume fathers are disinterested or hard to reach, therefore limit their efforts to engage men.

### **Negative Discourses About Men**

We are living through a time that is noted for the negative discourses about men, such as men are violent, men are aggressive, men are emotionally inarticulate and failures at relationship, men are control freaks, etc. You can sum up the discourse about men in the last twenty years as “men are a problem and men need to change”.

We need to move the story from being about Changing Men from the outside, according to the agendas of the women's lobbies of the last decades, to “what do men want to change, and why do men want to change?” i.e. what is moving in the hearts of men themselves, and specifically what is moving in the hearts of men as fathers and what would be their motivation for change?

This is a strategy of engaging men in critical debates about changes in the world and changes we are effecting in response.

The public expression of masculinity has traditionally been to do with external power, commerce, and a sense of impervious strength and ability to get the job done. We have shielded our tender and vulnerable sides within our families. We are uncomfortable to be vulnerable when subjected to the gaze of other men.

These attitudes need to be confronted as we claim the diversity of ways we are as men and as fathers. Expectations of men to be tough and invulnerable means we aren't used to expressing or listening to men's vulnerability, and, as a culture, often trivialise it.

Fatherhood, as we are increasingly expressing it, includes celebrating our tenderness and generativity. There is ground for us to claim this expression of masculinity in the public domain. There is a more articulate expression of men's inner world emerging. We need to claim the public domain with this, so that our sons do not have to hide it.

### **New Father vs Traditional Father**

In the past men's role in raising children has been to create the physical and economic environment for them to grow. Times have changed and as women have expanded their choices, men are being liberated from solely carrying that burden. The New Father emerging over the last decades is a phenomenon visible in the media globally. The basis of the new fatherhood story is men's *relationship with* their children and hands on nurturing, not simply *doing on behalf* of their children.

The New Father is often contrasted with the Traditional Father, associated with providing and protecting, and other ways of being increasingly seen as negative such as authoritarian head of the family, harsh discipline, and provider of money, but not loving attention.

However many traditional male roles are positive, such as care for the family, sacrifice to support them and protect them from danger, work, loyalty. In reality the Traditional father and the New Father co-exist in society, and also within each individual father. Each man has to navigate his own path amongst the mixed messages and there is an ambivalence writ in the heart of each father.

NZ research (Commission for the Child) shows a high percentage of men and women think fathers should be involved hands-on with their children, but a much lower percentage of men feel confident to do this. This confidence gap in fathers is what we need to be addressing.

Many men are sensitive to the new messages from women, and to the aspirations arising in their own hearts, but need support to move these new aspirations into action. There needs to be a supporting framework to guide men to make their own agendas towards satisfying fatherhood and family relationships.



Fatherhood is expressed in a wide diversity of ways and we need to create a better appreciation of this diversity through the lenses of culture, family structure and the patterns of men's connection with their children. There is no single father role to aspire to. Rather success as a father in terms of children's development is to do with his meeting the demands of his context.

### **Global Overview of Trends**

In 2003 an International Fatherhood Summit held in Oxford, UK, brought together practitioners and researchers from twenty countries (including NZ) to discuss spending a week discussing areas of international concern around fathers. Some significant emerging global trends were noted:

- Some increased involvement of men in childcare,
- Men increasingly contesting the custody of children,
- Men questioning traditional trends that pull them from the family,
- The proportion of time men are spending with their children is increasing globally,
- Men are increasingly represented at childbirth (USA figures 1970's 27%, 1990 85%),
- The new father is showing up repeatedly, linked to women's increasing education and workplace opportunity, men's questioning of a father role beyond simply being a provider, and associated with increased financial security.

The common theme identified at this global summit, however, was the sense of invisibility of fathers.

Recent Australian research shows that fathers expect more of themselves, as does the community around them. Most fathers have got the message that they are important, and that fathers today are closer to their children and spend more time alone with them than the previous generation of fathers. The most important aspects fathers identified were: being accessible to children, guiding and teaching children, providing income, providing emotional support to children. Seventy-one percent indicated they felt very competent as a father and 97% say they have a strong commitment to their role as a father.

### **Taking the Man out of Father**

With the social revolutions of the past three decades we have seen emerge the ideal of father as "co-parent", sharing with the mother the day-to-day care of the child. This ideal has the role of mother and father as interchangeable as women move into the workplace.

We seem to have been defining the maleness out of the father's role by saying there is nothing particularly male that children need from a parent. There are fewer and fewer things we see distinctively as the father's job that could not be done by anyone. The media and parenting experts celebrate the new hands-on, nurturing father. His benefits are obvious in his availability to his children, his sharing the load of child rearing with their mother and the freedom to develop himself as a nurturer.

But have we expected men to become a "mother-father" and simply assumed fathers will follow mothers and do it like they have. This offers men very little in terms of developing a uniquely

male way of being a parent. For a fundamental shift of men and masculinity towards involved child-rearing we need to develop a strong cultural story that links hands-on fathering with male identity.

### **Fathers are Important**

It is worth reminding ourselves that fathers bring a unique contribution to the child that is different from what the mother offers. He represents connection to the world beyond the mother, and to the world of men. Fathers tend to play more with their children, and a father's play tends to be more adventurous and risk-taking than a mother's, thus leading to greater self-esteem, resilience, and capability for self-defence. His male expression of love and trust teaches children to trust maleness, and promotes emotional well-being. His challenge and boundary-setting fosters the ability to separate from the surrounding world, think abstractly, and be self-reliant.

Research shows that father's presence helps children develop social skills and a high level of guidance from fathers is linked to children feeling more industrious and productive members of society. Children whose fathers offered kindness, care and warmth during primary school are more likely to do well at secondary school.

Half the child's genetic material comes from the father and he brings his side of the extended family and his worldly contacts. His relationship with the mother has the possibility of modelling relational tenderness, and his presence promotes confidence in his son's sexuality. Fathers are critical for the development of gender identity and provide scaffolding for the sons psyche to grow on and his presence helps to develop internal structure and character in both boys and girls. Fathers are definitely more than a fifth wheel on the car of mothering.

### **Consequence of Father Absence**

Children growing up without a father have a high association with many negative outcomes. The deficit in the children is often palpable as they live with a void where they should be getting access to the male love and way of being that they can internalise into their own structure. Boys without a father have high negative associations with the law and difficulties with authority, and are vulnerable to taking on a hyper masculinity as compensation. Father absence in boys is also associated with more academic and social problems, and in girls with earlier average age of sexual experience and high association with early pregnancy.

Fatherless sons are desperate for male attention, boundaries, and access to men's feeling mode and modelling of how to be at home in their skin as men. They are left floating in a void without it and turn to many negative behaviours to compensate for the loss. The "youth problem" of today can be seen as a father absence problem, as a high percentage of this generation of young people grow up without the benefit of an active father in their lives.

All men have a collective task to show up in our communities and be available to these boys and young men.

Some specific issues:

### **Work/Home Balance**

Recent Australian research (Fitting Fathers into Families, a report for the Dept of Family and Community Services) confirms what we in the field know, that both fathers and children see work as the greatest barrier to men's involvement with their children. Most workplaces are blind to the needs of men outside the workplace. Men are strongly identified with paid work and career success, which becomes a barrier to hands on fathering. Initiatives are needed to address this at the home and workplace level.

We need to focus on fathers Parental Leave, childcare and flexible working practice.

### **Custody and Access**

This has been the hot issue over recent years, with some headway being made in both policy and practice of the Family Courts and a long way still to go. The important issue to keep raising is promoting the assumption of joint custodial care as the default position in cases of conflict, unless there are good reasons against it.

There is an important aid to being an effective father – that is living with your children. While not a guarantee of effective fathering, it at least provides the possibility of fathering. Today this is collapsing. In New Zealand probably at least a third of children live apart from their father. If a man is not living with his children and he does not get along with the mother, his ability to be a father is limited, no matter how good a man he is and how hard he tries.

Sole parent households (mostly mother-led) are often referred to as sole parent families as if the father isn't a parent because he isn't living with the child. The contribution of the non-residential father is often discounted – however a few recent studies point to the psychological, emotional and financial significance of non-residential fathers. The increase of female-headed households means women often serve as gatekeepers to men's relationship to their children.

### **Fathers at Birth**

The most effective window of time for reaching men with information to foster their confidence as a father is around the time of the birth. However, as the coordinator of the Barnardos Fair Centre recently put it, “perhaps one of the most disturbing tendencies in research policy and service delivery is to place the mother at the core of the family, with the primary responsibility for raising the child, while making the father a more unimportant figure”. The vast bulk of resources and programmes for beginning parents is aimed at mothers, which leaves men the message to stick with the traditional roles and cuts them out of the learning possibilities at the time of their highest motivation.

Birth has been described as an initiation for men. His presence at the birth of his child exposes him to the magical forces of new life - the awe, the humility and the love. Forces strong enough to call him into mature, engaged Fatherhood. Judy Cottrell a midwife in Auckland puts this into

words. “I have numerous images in my mind of big blokey West Auckland dads catching their children as they are born, with tears pouring down their cheeks, and those babies arrive into hands trembling with love.”

Research shows that fathers who attend baby care courses are more likely to take on more care later. The delivery of parenting information generally needs to be orientated more to men. However, in the same way that women have complained about glass ceilings in the workplace, men are finding glass doors in the agencies responsible for resourcing parents. Many agencies do not realise how blind they are to the needs of fathers. This is not surprising as they were set up by women for women, and actively involved fathers are still a pioneering minority.

### **Social Father**

There is little documentation of the impact of social fathering. The effects of mentoring by social fathers are understudied, though we intuitively know the wisdom of associating fatherless boys with other generative men. However we need to challenge the creeping sense that the father is replaceable by the mother’s new lover, which sidelines the biological father and alienates the child from its heritage.

### **Action**

Deficit models for looking at the issue of fathering start with looking at men’s insufficiencies. They miss seeing and valuing what men actually do and feel as fathers, and ignore the positive potential in men to be good parents. Programme staff, policy makers and family members make assumptions about men and roles that ignore the complexity and diversity of men’s aspirations. We need an approach that considers men as they are, and that gives an open and accurate account of what men do think and feel in relation to their children and how their positive involvement can be supported personally and systemically.

### **Research**

There is a call world-wide for more research specific to the needs of men as fathers. Research in social science commonly ignores the father, and there are large gaps in research on fathers in families. This needs to be remedied in order to create provisions for supporting fathers in the family. We need studies that:

- Give a detailed analysis of the diversity of fatherhood across different ethnic, religious, socio-economic, workplace, and social sectors and subcultures;
- Study the effects of divorce, separation, new partners, social fathers and father absence on health, welfare and educational performance;
- Study fathers within the network of the family and wider community, not in isolation (or neglected altogether);
- Establish the importance on fathers in children’s lives;
- Study cross-cultural fatherhood.

Two key issues here are the allocation of research money, and ensuring that social research is inclusive of fathers.

### **Providing Services**

Social services generally fail to see and meet the needs of fathers, despite the efforts of some sympathetic people in them. The blindness is due to the lack of men involved and the lack of a research base informing of men's needs. We need to be pushing for men involved in designing social policy with a focus on men's needs. Engaging men in fathering requires research, written resources, programmes, funding, and suitable outreach.

Changes in the organisations involved need to be systemic, not simply adding on a father programme to a service that is fundamentally blind to the needs of men. We need to partner with creditable agencies and get the senior leadership of such agencies on board to champion internal cultural change. (Agencies such as Family Court, Relationship Services, Banardos, Plunket, midwives groups, etc.) One strategy to this end would be to promote a cultural audit of current activities to identify barriers to men's involvement and a framework for action planning.

Issues identified to do with father education include:

- The recruitment and publicity of father programmes;
- Local needs assessments asking local dads what they want;
- The importance of getting engagement of men and fathers;
- Male staff members that are aware of men's issues, (some male staff members may collude with female attitudes of contempt for men);
- Broader social awareness;
- Groups for men - these are useful as they promote social cohesion;
- Advocacy for fathers in accessing services.

In a nutshell, agencies need to develop policies and practice that are inclusive of fathers, and that enable and sustain father involvement and connections with children.

They need to:

- Presume that mothers and fathers have shared responsibility for children;
- Support research to demonstrate programmes that work;
- Develop support systems and ongoing staff training;
- Create clear strategies to develop agencies to be father-friendly;
- Find ways for government and funders to support this growing field.

### **Public Policy**

Throughout the world financial and social policy, as well as law and custom, have a profound impact on fathers' behaviours and aspirations. There is an extensive array of areas where making the role and needs of fathers visible would have significant impact. For example: welfare policy affecting workers and parents; laws around marriage, divorce, custody and access; liable parent contribution; taxation; workplace policies; parental leave; childcare policies; definitions of guardianship, biological father and social father; educational policy and curricula; health policy and practice; and relationship to vulnerable children.

In so many ways these policies are father blind and expect men to have identities that ignore their aspirations for fatherhood. They have huge potential to influence the extent to which fathers are involved in family life and are areas that need to be addressed if we are to foster the role of fathers in society and create a strong and positive father story.

### **Speaking Up**

As men we need to support a new authoritative story of confidence in men as fathers. We need to develop a voice – commonsense, practical, from the heart, aware and visionary. We need this everywhere and all the time because our task at the moment is to interrupt the silence about what men need. We need to fill the void with something positive rather than leaving it to the negative or shaming discourses that have occupied us for the last twenty years. Fathering is an expression of male love and generativity and it is our task to claim space in the public domain for it.

If we want to achieve our goals, we also need to challenge the reactive voice that has begun to make itself heard on behalf of men with a homophobic and misogynist flavour. This voice will get in the way of our issues being understood and taken seriously and supported. We need to make changes and point to models of how we as men are doing it for ourselves now.

### **Positive Example**

The Essentially Men Pathways to Manhood Programme is a five-day event created by men to support their role with their teenage sons. It addresses the need for developing rites of passage for young men that are meaningfully held by older men. Creating such an event calls for fathers to develop confidence in what they have to offer and to reflect on the values and ways of being that are expressed through their masculinity.

### **Conclusions**

Fatherhood, like motherhood, is a cultural treasure passed on to us by the previous generations and moulded by the stories we tell ourselves. This is a challenge to both men and women. We must ask ourselves how to go about developing new and authoritative cultural stories of fathering together – stories in harmony with the changes taking place in the roles of men and women and with new expectations of power sharing. We need stories that express a uniquely masculine identity that will take men into the future as a confident, healthy and powerful force for good in the lives of their children and their community. From where will these new stories emerge?

Men are doing it in many ways, showing up and being a positive influence in the lives of their children, to the best of their ability with the tools they have. Our political task is to get behind them and in tune with this renaissance of masculinity and fatherhood with confident new stories resourced by research, education and changes in social policy.

The engine that will provide the will for such change is visibility of fathers in the social sphere. Fatherhood, as we are increasingly expressing it, is about celebrating our tenderness and generativity. There is ground for us to claim in the public domain for this expression of

masculinity. There is a richer expression of men's soul emerging, that is more articulate of the inner world. We need to claim the public domain with this and so provide the "heart and soul" to the new fatherhood stories that will add crucial momentum to fuel the systemic changes needed.

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## Chapter Six

### MEN AND VIOLENCE: THE COST TO MEN<sup>1</sup>

By Warwick Pudney

*Abstract: Due to the politicising of a particular gendering of violence there has been a public assumption that male to female violence is the most prevalent type of violence, however, male to male rates are probably 2-3 times that of male to female. Figures are confounded by a variety of factors including male reluctance to report violence to oneself.*

*The price to males for being 'brave and strong' in protector roles is considerable and this is described. A change of attitude of men to each other, to that of concern, care and trust is suggested.*

I have spent many years working with men in counselling, support groups, and Stopping Violence groups especially in the context of their experiences of violence both as perpetrators and as victims. This paper summarises some of my experience and examines men in relation to violence, both as victims and as perpetrators.

Men are both perpetrators and victims of violence as are women and children. This is a human problem and as humans we have a full range of emotions from hurt, grief, and fear to anger which often underlie a choice to be violent. If we combine with this, varied belief systems and choice, we have the wonderful vulnerability of the human condition and the power to act positively and be responsible for our hurt to others.

Violence in relation to gender can take four forms:

1. Male to male
2. Male to female
3. Female to male
4. Female to female

I suggest that the prevalence of violence in our community is in the diminishing order from 1 to 4. Male to male violence is the most common violence in our community followed by male to female. Much of the male to female violence happens in our homes. Female to male violence also is more common in our homes than we would want to acknowledge and may in fact be equal to male violence, and lastly there is female to female violence. I also suggest that measurement of rates of violence is confounded by biased measuring tools and reluctance to report violent incidents.

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<sup>1</sup> Paper for the First NZ Men's Issues Summit, Waitakere City, Auckland, 6 May 2005



The politicising and publicising of male to female violence would lead us to believe that this is the most common form of violence in society and indeed is often presented as the only form of violence. However, statistics of injury and death clearly and consistently suggest men are more commonly victims of violence than women.

There are more ‘deaths by assault’ of men. In table 1, the number is almost double. These figures do not indicate the gender of perpetrators.

**Table 1. Major causes of death – numbers and percentages by sex, 2001.**

	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Ischaemic heart disease	3387	23.9	2981	21.3
Hypertensive disease	99	0.7	133	1.0
Other forms of heart disease	550	3.9	700	5.0
Cerebrovascular disease	1035	7.3	1745	12.5
Cancer	4165	29.4	3645	26.1
Colorectal cancer	(607)	(4.3)	(571)	(4.1)
Cancer of the trachea, bronchus and lung	(841)	(5.9)	(593)	(4.2)
Prostate cancer	(592)	(4.2)	-	-
Breast cancer	(2)	(0.0)	(615)	(4.4)
Stomach cancer	(195)	(1.4)	(108)	(0.8)
Pneumonia and influenza	148	1.0	264	1.9
Diabetes mellitus	405	2.9	377	2.7
Chronic obstructive respiratory disease	861	6.1	765	5.5
Transport accidents	377	2.7	158	1.1
Falls	129	0.9	161	1.2
Intentional self-harm	382	2.7	117	0.8
Assault	32	0.2	18	0.1
<b>All causes of death</b>	<b>14,160</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>13,968</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: NZHIS provisional mortality data for 2001.

There were more cases of injury by assault of men than of women. In Table 2 they are three times the number.

**Table 2. Public hospital discharges involving injury or poisoning, 2001/02**

	<b>Total cases</b>	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
Falls	34,523	15,665	18,858
Drugs, medicaments and biological substances causing adverse effects in therapeutic use	13,718	6,026	7,692
Complications of medical and surgical care	42,146	20,796	21,350
Misadventures to patients during surgical and medical care	1,166	435	731
Transport accidents	12,905	8,212	4,693
Exposure to smoke, fire and flames	434	336	98
Accidental poisoning by and exposure to noxious substances	2,535	1,292	1,243
Accidental drowning and submersion	117	75	42
Intentional self-harm	5,095	1,721	3,374
Assault	4,350	3,302	1,048
<b>Total injuries</b>	<b>134,033</b>	<b>72,408</b>	<b>61,625</b>

Source: provisional data, NZHIS.

The rate of murders of men is consistently around three times that of women. The data suggest that Male to Male violence is the most prevalent type of violence at a rate of double to treble.

Having established that males are most prevalent victims I also suggest that males are the most prevalent perpetrators.

Of the cases that resulted in conviction in 2001, and for which the gender of the offender was known, eighty-nine percent of the convictions for a violent offence in 2001 involved male offenders and only 11% involved female offenders (see Table 3).

**Table 3. Total number of cases resulting in conviction in 2001, by type of offence and gender of offender**

Offence type		Male	Female	Unknown	Total
Violent	No.	8,655	1,105	2	9,762
	% <sup>2</sup>	89%	11%	-	100%
Other against persons	No.	1,293	217	6	1,516
	%	86%	14%	-	100%
Property	No.	14,153	4,260	5	18,418
	%	77%	23%	-	100%
Drug	No.	5,397	939	0	6,336
	%	85%	15%	-	100%
Against justice	No.	5,375	902	2	6,279
	%	86%	14%	-	100%
Good order	No.	7,107	793	0	7,900
	%	90%	10%	-	100%
Traffic	No.	33,747	7,627	776	42,150
	%	82%	18%	-	100%
Miscellaneous	No.	2,313	500	171	2,984
	%	82%	18%	-	100%
Total	No.	78,040	16,343	962	95,345
	%	83%	17%	-	100%

Source: Ministry of Justice Publications Reports 2003, Conviction and Sentencing of Offenders in New Zealand 1992 to 2001.

It should be noted that police or justice data may not be accurate due to gender differences in reporting and police treatment of complaints.

I conclude from the above data that males comprise the greatest number of victims by a rate of between two to three times that of women, and that men are the most common perpetrators of violence, perhaps as high as three to four times the rate of women, based on the data presented. We may conclude from this that male to male violence is the most common gender-based form of violence in our community. There are however some problems with the data.

## 1. Male to Male Violence

There are major problems with the validity of reports of violence to males by either male or female perpetrators

The key problems are:

- Men do not consider many incidents to be violent;
- Men do not report violence if they do consider it to be violence;
- Men will try to solve the problem by themselves;
- Men are not believed when they report violence;
- Violence to men is minimised when it is reported;
- There is a lack of investigation and research on men as victims.

This is likely to increase the actual number of men as victims both of male and female violence. Society also prefers to not acknowledge men as victims at government level. As an example the Ministry of Justice Publications Reports 1997 Directory of Criminal Justice Research PART 10, contents page, (Table 4.) on VICTIMS, has data sub-chapters on women on 7 different topics but fails to mention men. This is despite the fact that men are victims at the rate of 2-3 times that of women.

**Table 4. Directory of Criminal Justice Research**  
PART 10: VICTIMS

<u>J010 A victim support network</u>	<u>J110 Recall of child sexual abuse</u>
<u>J013 Child sexual abuse in a sample of women</u>	<u>J130 Repeat victimisation</u>
<u>J015 Confident Living Programme</u>	<u>J140 Research on violence against women</u>
<u>J020 Discrimination against lesbians</u>	<u>J150 Rights and compensation</u>
<u>J030 Families of murder victims</u>	<u>J160 Safety in Wellington</u>
<u>J040 Fear of crime in Manurewa</u>	<u>J170 Suicide in Wellington</u>
<u>J050 Giving victims a voice</u>	<u>J180 Traumatization case study</u>
<u>J060 Injury from assault</u>	<u>J190 Victimization survey</u>
<u>J070 Intentional injury</u>	<u>J200 Victims court assistance</u>
<u>J080 Mediation and reparation</u>	<u>J210 Victims' needs</u>
<u>J090 Older women's fear of crime</u>	<u>J220 Victims' needs bibliography</u>
<u>J100 Rape and fear of crime</u>	<u>J230 Violence against seniors</u>
	<u>J235 Violence against women</u>
	<u>J240 Violence against women law reform</u>

Male-to-male violence is condoned by both males and females. The reason is, I suggest, that we, as does any society, actively train our males to be prepared to fight to protect women, family, children, community and the nation. To have no men prepared to do this leaves the nation exposed, anxious and vulnerable. It is immensely reassuring when 15 of the fittest and toughest men go out onto the rugby field wearing the local or national jersey and do battle for 80 minutes over another's territory and win. It is reassuring to know that people are prepared to die in the course of your protection.

The protector role both elevates and devours men. When my son was 17 I found a container of bulk muscle food in my pantry. He was doing a course of weights at the gym to build his body. He looked a 'hunk' (a women's term). It didn't transfer into labour in the garden but it did attract young women. I suggest that women are collusive in the desire to have men strong, brave and able to fight, and in fact may penalise them if they fail at this task. Training commences at birth with the unconscious holding of male babies for shorter amounts of time, with less eye contact, less verbal communication, rougher handling, and holding further away from the caregiver's body. A boy who is being bullied is likely to be assisted or told to 'stick up for himself'. A girl is likely to elicit parent intervention. We hit our boys more, boys are more likely to be physically abused, and then we are likely to punish or incarcerate them for longer (Jefferies 2002).

Protection has always been gendered and role-bound. Males on average have 30% more muscle tissue. We train men to be able too protect children, women, and society. It is socially functional to protect the continuance of a society or culture. Men are currently dying, doing protection, in various parts of the world.

There is, however, a cost. In order to compete for resources and to protect others it is necessary to objectify others before being able to hurt or disable them. In order to do this there is an emotional postponement of internal process and to some extent an emotional shutdown. To young men the common cry is to 'toughen up'. 'Tough' implies being able to hold ground, repress empathy, and be prepared to strike another. There are costs if this does not take place. Such costs may be:

- Loss of autonomy to another male;
- Loss of autonomy to a women;
- Loss of desirability to women as partners;
- Loss of resources or loved ones;
- Loss of respect of others (Gay men know some of this dilemma).

However there are also costs to being tough:

- Men suffer more injury on behalf of women;
- Men suffer more injury at the hands of each other;
- Men die earlier;
- Men repress vulnerable emotions;
- Men express anger easier or instead of other emotions;
- Men process vulnerable emotional states slower;
- Men may be less emotionally literate;

- Men may be more open to emotional manipulation;
- Men may not build and maintain emotional relationships with each other so easily;
- Men may be more isolated from each other.

Thus we have a dilemma of costs.

Internationally, men die earlier due to protector role dangers and, arguably, the unhealthy repression of vulnerable emotions. The remaining families may suffer greater poverty and dysfunction. Not only will the immediate family suffer, but the generations following will experience the consequences. The grandfather who I, personally, never saw, who died as the result of lung damage after experiencing mustard gas in the trenches of WW1, was unable to pass an imprint of grand-parenting to me. Ninety-one years later I am aware that I will have to invent this relationship consciously from less personal models.

Protection of family is an indelibly strong imprint. I recall a man, who, on his graduation from an anger management programme, when asked, as a test, what he would do if someone in the pub took his mother's name in vain, responded immediately that he would without hesitation, take him outside and hit him. We receive as boy children strong injunctions to not hit girls, and perhaps equally strong injunctions to stick up for ourselves and not let ourselves get pushed around by other boys. These are two very different messages. This permission giving to be violent to other males is reflected in male injury statistics and in the much lower rate of violence to women.

Internationally there are other models that mix vulnerability with strength as males.

Considerable changes have also been taking place:

- The state is taking greater involvement in protection of women and children;
- Women are taking on the wider social role of protector too;
- The world, however, is becoming a more dangerous place.

The costs to men for their aggression towards one another are enormous. It creates violence that is unnecessary between men. The way forward is for men to cease the current high level of violence towards each other and co-operate to solve problems.

I suggest then, that male to male violence is in fact in excess of offences reported and that it is probably more than three times as prevalent as male to female. I recommend attention to the attitudes that choose to condone and ignore the damage done to males through violence.

## **2. Male to Female Violence**

Most inter-gender violence takes place within the family home. Family violence is only part of the total violence in our community. Feminist research on male to female violence has given a strong political base from which feminists can comment. Feminist research consistently claims that about 90% of violence is being perpetrated by male partners. However non-feminist research indicates that it may be closer to equal or that women may be more frequently violent (50%/50%). The Dunedin longitudinal study makes such a suggestion (Magdol et al, 1997).

Tables 5 and 6 show violence perpetration and victimisation rates for the 21-year-olds in that study.

**Table 5. Violence Perpetration Rates**

	Male %	Female %
Verbal aggression	85.8	94.6
Minor physical violence	21.8	35.8
Severe physical violence	5.7	18.6
Any physical violence	21.8	37.2

**Table 6. Violence Victimization Rates**

	Male %	Female %
Verbal aggression	89.7	83.8
Minor physical violence	31.8	26.1
Severe physical violence	21.2	12.7
Any physical violence	34.1	27.1

I suggest that research is inconclusive due to:

1. Political motivation consciously or unconsciously affecting results of research. The HAIPP Project (Hamilton) which found 94% of violence to be male (HAIPP. 1991), had researchers who were from within the project and not independent, and failed to seek female perpetrators.
2. Incomplete or specific cohort samples. The Dunedin study reported on a cohort of 21 year-olds.

Scales used for measuring violence are based on the experience of male to female violence. The tools for measuring violence are also developed within a women's experience of violence. Men and women have different expressions of violence. There can be no doubt men are more physical and stronger so physical and sexual violation is more overt. Women's expression of power and control is likely to be more relational, emotional and verbal and therefore less detectable as abuse.

Bias in the measurement tools may lead to skewed results. It is likely that male violence to women is occurs more frequently and that the percentage varies but lies somewhere between 40

to 90%. It should be clear that any violence from either gender is intolerable and has destructive effects on both the perpetrator and the victim.

### 3. Female to Male Violence

The following quote is from a case that took place in West Auckland, 2003-2004. It shows examples of male reluctance to report, reluctance by the police to hear, lack of police support of the order and possibly reluctance by the perpetrator to believe that anything would happen.

C.S.

*'I thought many times before I finally went for a protection order from my ex-wife. I did not want to. I had put up with stalking, vandalism, sabotage to my business work, assault and incessant abusive phone calls.*

*When I did get it the order initially it made no difference. I complained to the police as I was told to do, but they did nothing. I could sense that they thought that I was pathetic or weak or even joking. After about 5 complaints to the police including some serious incidents something happened but only because the Victim Support challenged the police and I threatened to lay a police complaint. Then they did something. It wasn't till after about three court appearances and a remand in the women's prison that she sort of stopped.'*

*(C.S. verbatim, 2004)*

The major influence on most of the above problem is the condoning of violence to males on the basis that they need to be tough enough to look after themselves. The above example runs counter to the male protector role. The condoning of violence is the major reason that we know so little of male to male violence, or female to male violence, and are even resistant to noticing violence to males.

While men have more physical strength, women have the power of superior emotional and relational training. This may be used to:

- Isolate men in families, or manage and control the father/male's relationship with others;
- Emotionally manipulate, and relationally manipulate;
- Use 'mother transference' to prevent male partner autonomy;
- Manipulate the children's relationship with the father.

Additionally:

The tendency for both men and women to want to rescue females from men, makes the male the least credible in any conflict, hence police reluctance to arrest women at 'domestics'.

Through years of awareness-building, women have been encouraged not to tolerate any form of violence and to report abuse or define boundaries and consequences immediately abuse begins. Men have not done this. They need first to have awareness that behaviour defined as violence is happening, then also to report the violence.



While the reporting of male-to-male violence is seen as a sign of a somewhat weak and inadequate male, the reporting of violence, by a woman to a man, is even more embarrassing.

I would suggest that the incidence of female-to-male violence is in fact considerably higher than reported for these reasons

**4. Female to Female Violence** is not the subject of this paper but we acknowledge that it takes exists.

#### **Are we really committed to stopping all violence or just stopping some violence?**

Current treatment models are focussed on, and limited to, stopping violence to women. We must ask whether just asking men to stop violence to their partners is enough. If we care, then we must stop all violence, including violence against men. Can we assist men to a non-violence that excludes themselves? Stopping **all** violence would make any therapy for managing violent behaviour easier and more consistent.

#### **Results of Violence**

In a violent interaction of any sort there is a reduction in wairua or life-force, self esteem, and self-love for both the perpetrator and the victim. There is a huge cost to public services such as prisons, hospitals, A.C.C., police, employers, productivity, GNP, courts, and the benefit system. A questionable study has concluded that family violence costs up to \$5 billion each year (Snively, 1994). If this figure is considered sufficient to justify major policy interventions, and the total cost of all violence (including violence against men) must be at least double this, surely there should also be attention to this aspect of violence.

#### **Cause of Violence to and by Men**

I suggest that the *causes* of violence to and by men include:

- The condoning and training of males to be violent for the well-being of family and society;
- The denial of a problem of male to male violence;
- The lack of a holistic approach to looking at all violence in men's lives and a drawing of political attention to just violence to women;
- Beliefs that men are entitled to power over others by force or demand;
- Beliefs that men are supposed to fight each other to win regard;
- Poor cognition of relational matters that leads to feelings of powerlessness;
- Poor skills to handle any other way;
- Lack of empathy for men, much caused by poor fathering;
- Passivity that later explodes;
- Individually poor choices amongst limited choices;
- Abuse and fear as children

## **We Need**

As male perpetrators:

- Debriefing after socially condoned conflict (Long, 1992; Stephens, 1996; Stephens, 1996a, b);
- Support and training in emotional/relational matters, birth, partnering, separation to assist men to handle relational and emotional change;
- An approach of rehabilitation rather than punishment- we are building more prisons, and incarcerating men for longer (Jefferies 2002);
- Much better anger management/non-violence programmes that acknowledge not just the individual choice to be violent but the powerlessness of many men's lives that limits their choices drastically.

## **We need:**

As male victims:

- Police changes in attitude to assisting men who make complaints of violence from men or women.
- A clear understanding and acceptance that women also have power that can be misused towards men.
- Support for men who are victims. Police do not do this. Social services neither advertise nor provide such services. Services delivered by men would also reduce the dependency on women for help and increase the appropriateness of services delivered.
- Specialist services at the Family Court for men. The point at which a man's relationship is breaking up is when he is most vulnerable to depression, isolation and suicide.
- A change of male-to-male attitudes to ones of care and concern. Australian Mensline has five times the number of calls they are able to manage. NZ Mensline could handle five times more calls than it currently does.

## **More broadly we need:**

- Men to take responsibility for their relationships and themselves. I suggest that currently responsibility or initiative is often left to the closest woman, or not taken at all, thus resulting in denial.
- Men to take responsibility for each other. Men coming together and talking generates an understanding of the same problems and provides a reassurance that one is not alone but sharing a reality from which mutual support can arise.
- The recognition that fathers are important as the first source of learning on how to love, and be loved, in a trusting relationship by men.
- The development and promotion of training for fathering that promotes fatherhood and the involved nurture of children so that boys learn at an early age to build nurture and intimacy with men rather than relationships of distance, isolation or competition and toughness.
- Notions of self-care as well as the care and protection of others
- The seeking of models that allow protectors to function alongside safe emotional expression.
- More research into male to male violence and female to male violence.

The answer to violence, to and by men, is not to be found in punishment and blame, nor in persecuting men, but in a bounded compassion and care for men, preferably by men. The treatment of men as objects of protection, abuse, oppression or provision will ultimately perpetuate the dysfunctional dynamic that we seek to challenge. A change to compassion and care for and by men of men creates a change for society that is a challenge to war, homophobia, and pathological individualism.

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**Tables:**

Table 1 Major causes of death – numbers and percentages by sex, 2001.  
Source: NZHIS provisional mortality data for 2001.

Table 2 Public hospital discharges involving injury or poisoning, 2001/02.  
Source: provisional data, NZHIS.

Table 3 Total number of cases resulting in conviction in 2001, by type of offence and gender of offender. <http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/2003/conviction-sentencing-2002/chapter-2b.html#2.14>

Table 4 [Directory of Criminal Justice Research](http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/1998/directory/part_10.html)  
[http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/1998/directory/part\\_10.html](http://www.justice.govt.nz/pubs/reports/1998/directory/part_10.html)

## Chapter Seven

### NEW ZEALAND FATHERS: OVERWORKED, UNDERVALUED, AND OVERSEAS?<sup>1</sup>

Dr Paul Callister

#### Introduction

Are New Zealand fathers (and New Zealand men in general), overworked, undervalued and, increasingly, overseas? To help answer this question, some background demographic data are firstly presented. These data cover some important changes in the structure of the New Zealand population; long-term changes in employment for men and women; more recent changes in tertiary education participation and the gaining of tertiary qualifications by men and women; and also includes a very brief examination of family change.

Next there is a focus on the working hours of fathers, in particular partnered fathers with young children. While the main attention is given to paid work, some comments about unpaid work are included.

#### Setting the scene: Demographic, employment, educational and family change

##### *Demographic change*

Changing demographics provide a first insight as to whether men are undervalued in New Zealand. A change in the composition of the New Zealand population partly reflects that, for a variety of reasons, many New Zealand men prefer to live and work, either short term or long term, in countries other than New Zealand.

Reflecting a naturally occurring ratio in the number of boys born relative to girls, in all age groups under 20 there are more men than women in New Zealand. Historically, apart from brief periods in WW1 and WWII, from the time of European colonisation through to 1968 there have also been more men than women in the total population (see Figure 1). However, at each census since 1968 more women than men have been recorded living in New Zealand. In 2001, according to the census, there were 5% more women than men.<sup>2</sup>

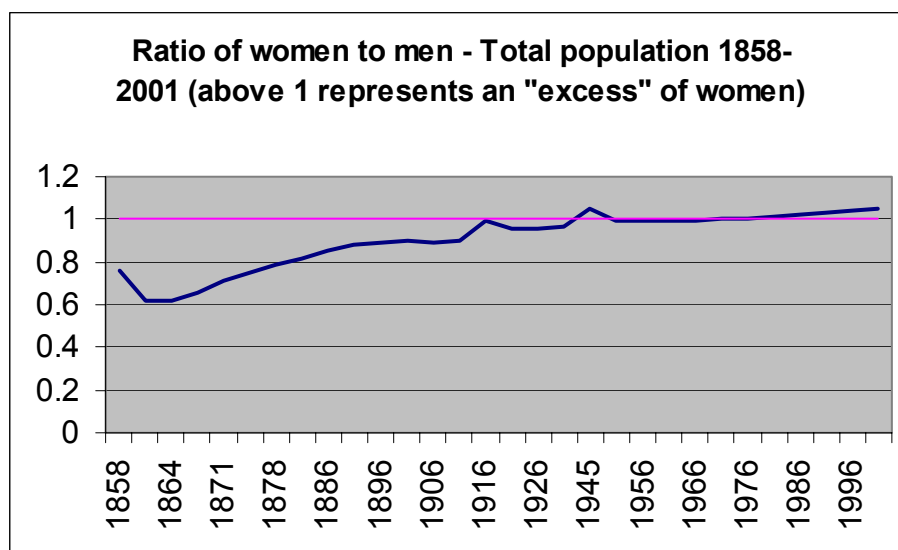
While the birth ratio in New Zealand continues to favour boys, census data show that since the early 1980s among prime working and childbearing age groups the ratio of men to women in New Zealand has also reversed. In 1986 there were just over 700 more men than women in the 20-49 age group with this reversing in the 1991 census, with 13,000 more women than men. According to census data, this excess of women rose to over 35,000 in

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<sup>1</sup> Paper presented at the NZ Men's Issues Summit, Christchurch August, 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Population estimates produced by Statistics New Zealand for 2004 put this slightly lower at 3% more women than men.

**Figure 1**



1996 and to just over 53,000 in 2001. Some of the “missing men” are simply undercounts by Statistics New Zealand, and some temporarily overseas at the time of the census. Table 1 shows estimates of sex ratios taking into account these factors. It still indicates a major imbalance in the 25-49 age groups.<sup>3</sup>

**Table 1. Estimated Population Sex Ratio - Total New Zealand Population – as at 31 December 1991-2004 and June 2005**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2004	2005*
20-24	1.02	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.00	0.99	0.99	0.98	0.96	0.95	0.96	0.96
25-29	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.04	1.04	1.03
30-34	1.04	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.05	1.06	1.07	1.08	1.09	1.09	1.09	1.09
35-39	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.04	1.05	1.05	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.07	1.08
40-44	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.03	1.03	1.04	1.05	1.06	1.06
45-49	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.01	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.03	1.03

Source: Estimated Resident Population data, Statistics New Zealand

\* Provisional

To place these figures into a long-term perspective, the following table shows census data for 1921 and 1926 alongside population estimates for 2004 in some key age groups. In 1921 and 1926, we were busily building war memorials in all small towns to “missing men” killed in WW1. The overall picture of sex ratios in 2004 is even more dramatic than the on-going effects of male loss due to WW1.<sup>4</sup>

This imbalance between women and men has been picked up by the media in recent months, with headlines such as “Dirty thirties myth” and “Young women flock to New Zealand” (Collins 2005, Davis 2005). Research undertaken by Professor Richard Bedford and myself suggests a number of reasons for this imbalance, including more women than men migrating to

<sup>3</sup> International comparative data suggest New Zealand stands out with respect to this “excess” of women.

<sup>4</sup> One major difference of course is that the current group of “missing men” may one day return to New Zealand.

New Zealand in recent years. But the main reason is the loss to other countries of New Zealand born men.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2. Ratio of Women to Men Aged 25-39, 1921 and 2004**

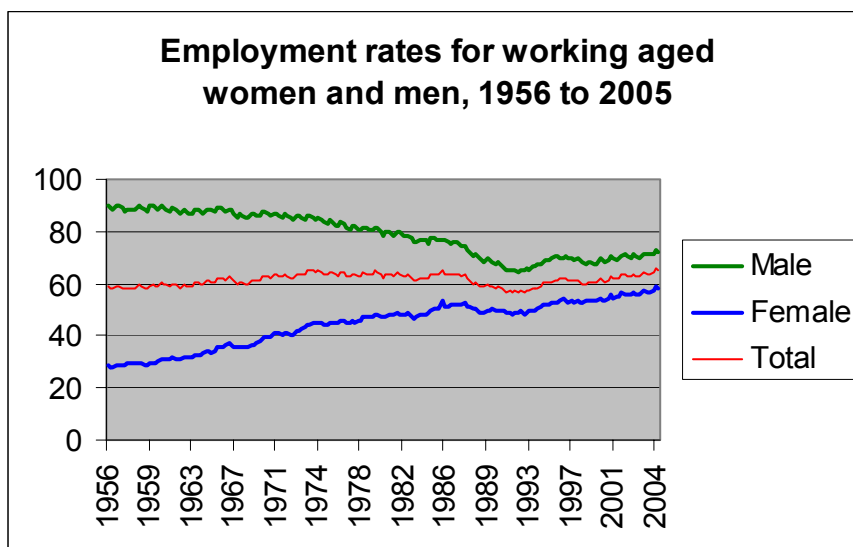
	1921	1926	2004
25-29	1.10	1.00	1.03
30-34	1.01	1.09	1.09
35-39	0.94	1.01	1.08

It is likely there are many reasons for New Zealand men leaving this country (just as Australian men are leaving Australia) But one reason is that they (like young women) often have much better earning potential overseas. This measure of sex ratios alone suggests that many New Zealand men feel undervalued in New Zealand.

**Long-term employment change**

In the immediate post WW2 period, most working-aged men were in paid work, and men and women in this broad age group lived as married couples and raised children. In these couples, the main pattern of employment was the male working full time and the female at home looking after children. This was an extreme of specialisation of roles within a family.

**Figure 2**



Source: Derived from Chapple (1994, 1999) and Household Labour Force Survey

Figure 2 shows women’s employment rates at the highest point since the 1950s. In contrast, while men’s employment rates have increased in the early years of the new century, they are still well below that of the 1950s. The decline in men’s employment from the 1950s through to the early 1980s primarily related to men retiring earlier. But younger men also started working later in their lifecycle due to participation in tertiary education. This could be seen as a positive trend. However, the latter decline was primarily through job loss, particularly for men with little or no formal education. Some of the recent gain in male employment is due to growth in the employment of older men (Retirement Commission 2005).

<sup>5</sup> This issue is the subject of further investigation – see <http://www.callister.co.nz/research.htm>.

Restricting the analysis to men born in New Zealand and using data from the five yearly census, Table 3 shows trends in full-time paid work for various birth cohorts of men (full time work is 30 or more hours of paid work per week). Table 3 covers the time period 1976 through to 2001. In the time period shown, in each successive cohort, and across each age group, there was a decline in full-time employment. For example, of those men born in 1947-51 and who were aged 25-29 in 1976, 91 percent worked full time. By 2001, of those born in 1972-76 only 77 percent worked full time when they were 25-29.

**Table 3. % of Total New Zealand Born Men who Worked Full Time, A Cohort Analysis**

	Born in							
	1937-41	1942-46	1947-51	1952-56	1957-61	1962-66	1967-71	1972-76
15-19					50	50	47	27
20-24				83	85	81	64	66
25-29			91	92	88	75	78	77
30-34		92	95	90	80	81	81	
35-39	92	95	92	82	82	82		
40-44	95	92	84	83	83			
45-49	91	84	83	83				
50-54	79	79	81					
55-59	69	74						
60-64	54							

Source: Census, Statistics New Zealand

A small part of this shift is positive as it represents some men having the freedom to take on roles as primary caregivers, to undertake further study, or to work part time. But, for most men, the loss of full time jobs has not been an active choice.

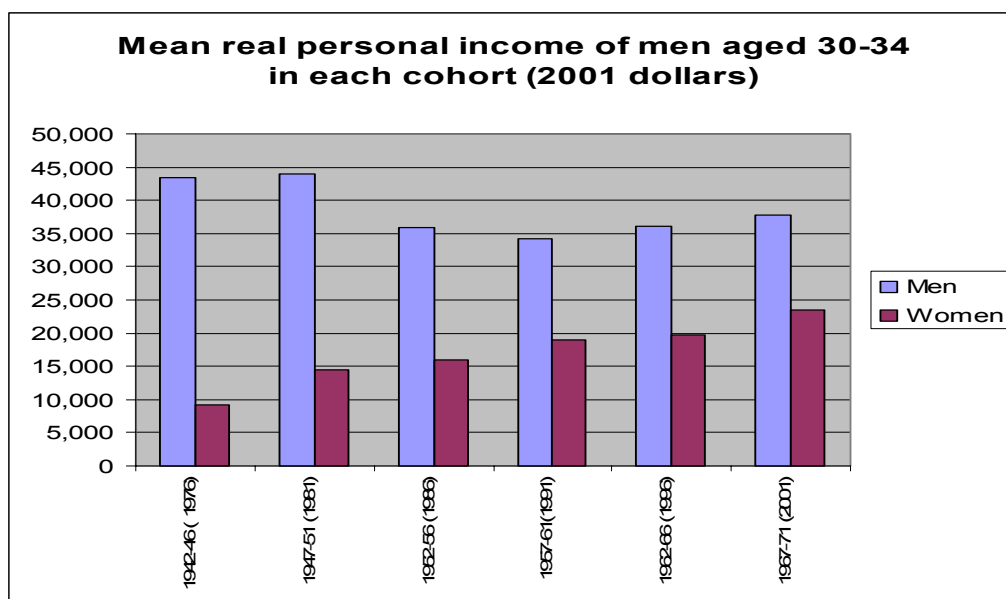
The loss of full-time paid work translates through to income earning potential. Figure 3 shows inflation adjusted average yearly income (from all sources and before tax) for men aged 30-34 in 1976 through to 2001. This is an age group when many men will be setting up homes and raising children. Figure 3 shows that while inflation adjusted incomes have risen from a low point in 1991, they are still below levels of 1976 and 1981. These are average data, and therefore do not take into account the distribution of income. Some men, for example, have dramatically increased their earnings in recent decades. But equally, some men are earning far less. Overall, the employment data and the income data together suggest that there is a group of men in New Zealand society who face major employment and financial challenges and are worse off than in previous decades.

I have written much about the loss of jobs through to early 1990s for men and its effect on families (Callister 1999a, b & c, 2000). The outlook for young, low-skilled men in terms of employment, forming stable long term relationships, and providing a significant level of financial support to a family seemed particularly gloomy in the early 1990s. The Australian Marginal Men study found that many men who had poor labour market prospects were also far less likely to live in stable couple households (Sydney Morning Herald 1998).<sup>6</sup> Instead, they tended to live either alone, or in non-private dwellings such as boarding houses or had returned to live with their own parents. Also in Australia, Gregory (1999) argued that

<sup>6</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald article was primarily based on a report by Birrell and Rapson (1998).



**Figure 3**



Source: Census, Statistics New Zealand

changes in the labour market had already resulted in a large accumulated income loss for young males over their initial years of adulthood, which had significantly reduced their ability to finance household formation and to support children.<sup>7</sup>

Despite its impressive performance since the mid 1990s, the New Zealand economy remains a tough environment for men, and women, with little or no formal qualifications. Table 4 shows the proportion of men in the labour force (which includes both those employed and those seeking work) from 1987 through to 2003. Men with no formal educational qualifications face major problems entering paid work and, if they do, finding a job that can support a family.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 4. Participation Rates for Men With No/School Only Qualifications**

	No qualifications	School qualifications	Total
1987	72.4	76.1	78.6
1991	65.1	70.2	74.1
1996	61.2	71.5	74.4
2001	59.6	70.0	73.7
2003	59.2	70.6	74.3

Source: Household Labour Force Survey

### Educational change

Boys and education is another theme of this summit. While what happens at primary and secondary school is extremely important as it shapes subsequent education choices and outcomes, I briefly focus on outcomes from tertiary education.

<sup>7</sup> A paper presented at the Workshop on Labour Force Participation and Economic Growth Wellington, 14-15 April, 2005 by Gregory suggests that although Australia has experienced strong overall employment growth in recent years, this has not translated into full-time jobs for low-skilled men.

<sup>8</sup> The proportion of men with no formal qualifications has been declining over time. For example, in 2001 around 35% of men in their 50s had no formal qualification while for men in their 20s it is around 17%. It is likely, therefore, that disadvantage is becoming more concentrated in this group. For women in their 20s, around 13% have no formal qualifications.

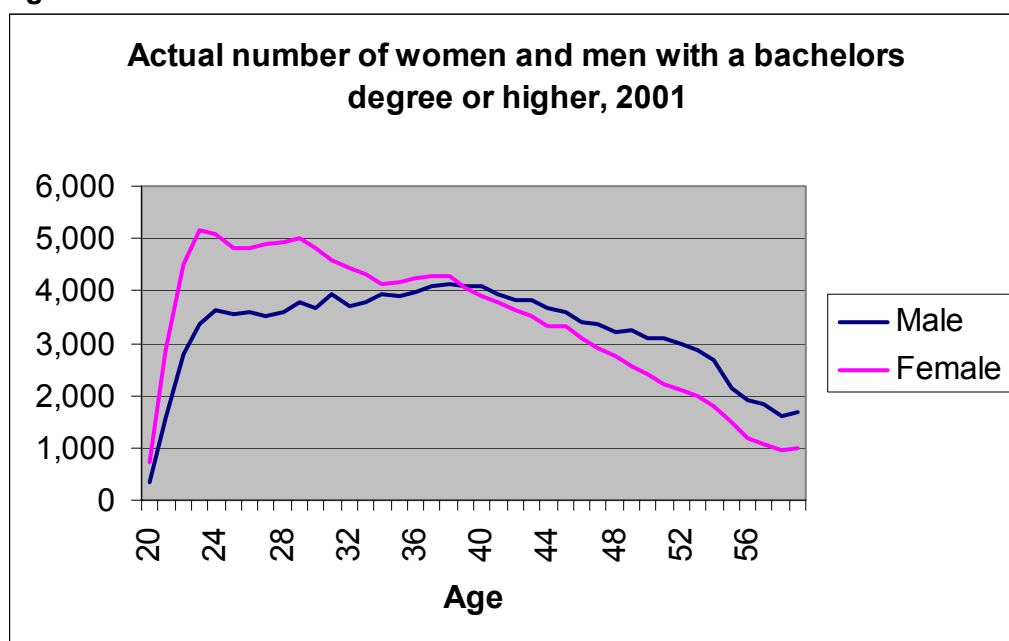
In a recent edition of *Asymmetric Information* (2004) it was noted:

In a Human Rights Commission report by Judy McGregor (Equal Employment Opportunities Commissioner at the Human Rights Commission) and Lance Gray, *Modern Apprenticeships: Training for the Boys* it was announced, “equity issues must be addressed. Two years since the introduction of the Modern Apprenticeships Scheme females represent 6.6 percent (381) of total participants (5739)”. In other words, in these apprenticeships, males outnumber females by about 5000. To put this in context, in July 2002 there were 133,979 male and 185,907 female tertiary students, or about 52,000 more women than men.

It is not only in 2002 the number of women in tertiary education greatly outnumbered men. This has been occurring for a number of years. It appears to be more of a participation issue than simply that men are “missing” overseas. Tertiary institutions are now more attractive to women than they are to men. There are many possible reasons for this, for example just look at the *Welcome to Massey University* home page for future students– there are six women and two men on that page.<sup>9</sup>

Figure 4 shows the number of women relative to the number of men with a bachelors degree or higher qualification in 2001. It shows in the younger age groups that women greatly outnumber men. There are a number of labour market and family implications that may be flowing out of this imbalance and this is the subject of ongoing research.

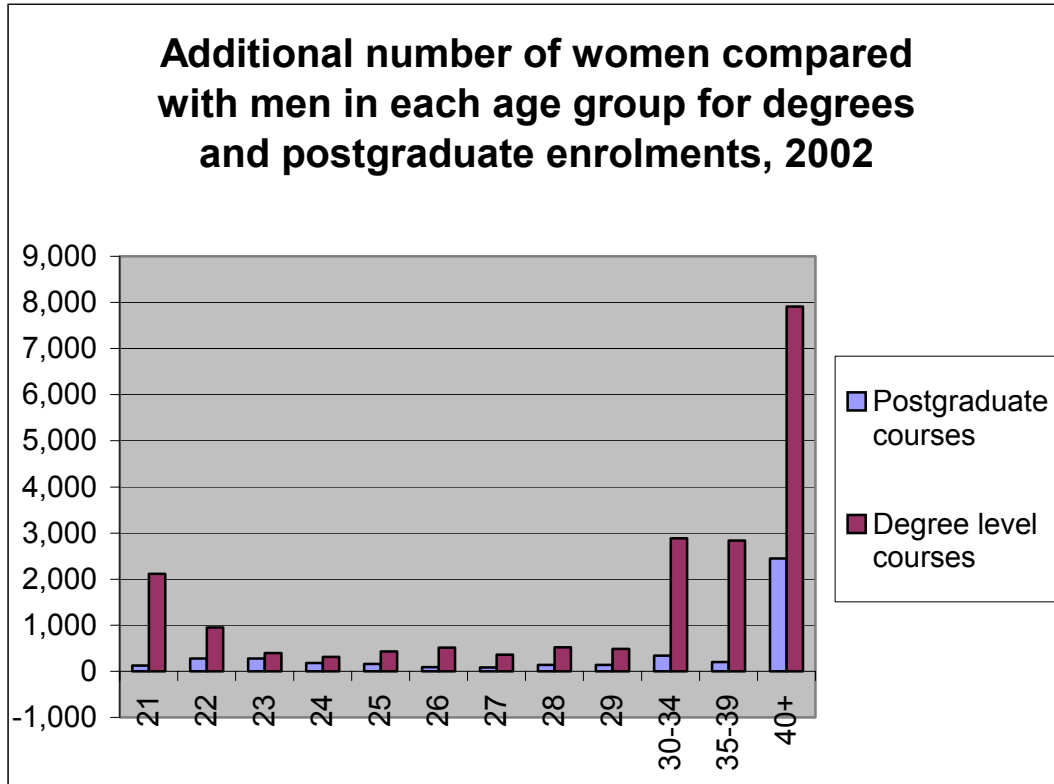
**Figure 4**



<sup>9</sup> <http://futurestudents.massey.ac.nz/>. Auckland University has 3 woman and one man on a similar webpage. <http://www.auckland.ac.nz/uoa/for/prospective/home.cfm>, Waikato University three women and one man. <http://www.waikato.ac.nz/student/future.shtml>, Victoria has one woman and one man and a mixed crowd scene. [http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/prospective\\_students/index.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/prospective_students/index.html), Canterbury University has four women and one man. <http://www.canterbury.ac.nz/prospectivestudents.shtml>, the Auckland ? of Technology. [www.aut.ac.nz/students/](http://www.aut.ac.nz/students/) has four women and one man and Otago has a man and a woman. <http://www.otago.ac.nz/prospectivestudents/index.php> (Accessed 2 August 2005).

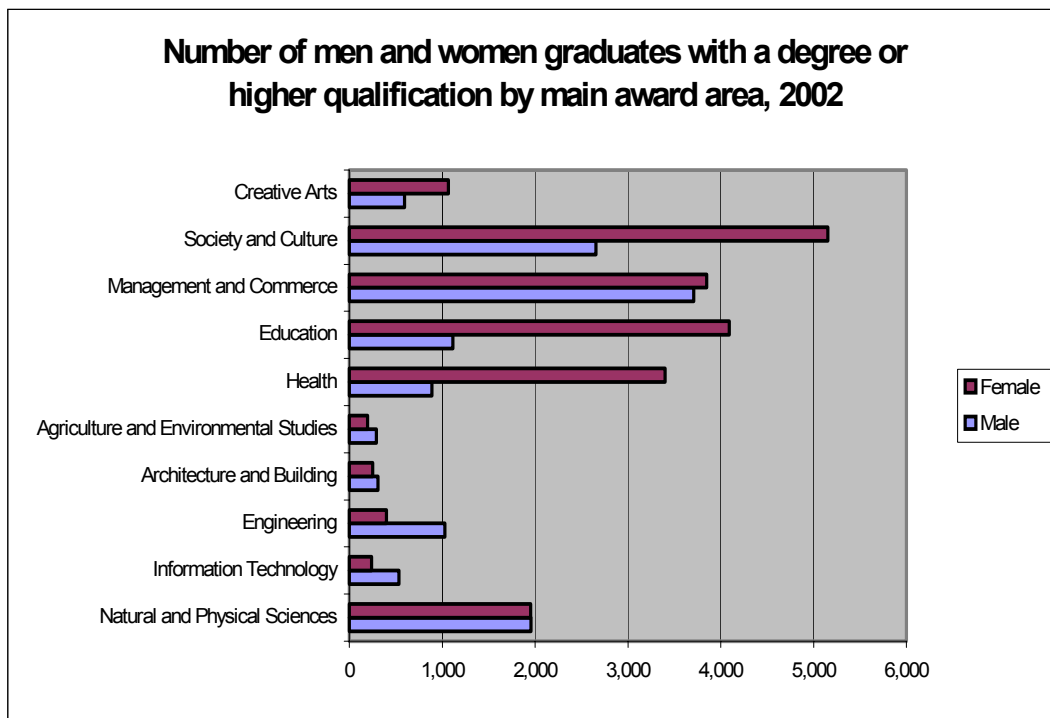
Given that a significant number of older women return to tertiary education, over time the gap between the number of men and women over age 40 with tertiary qualifications is also narrowing (Figure 5).

**Figure 5**



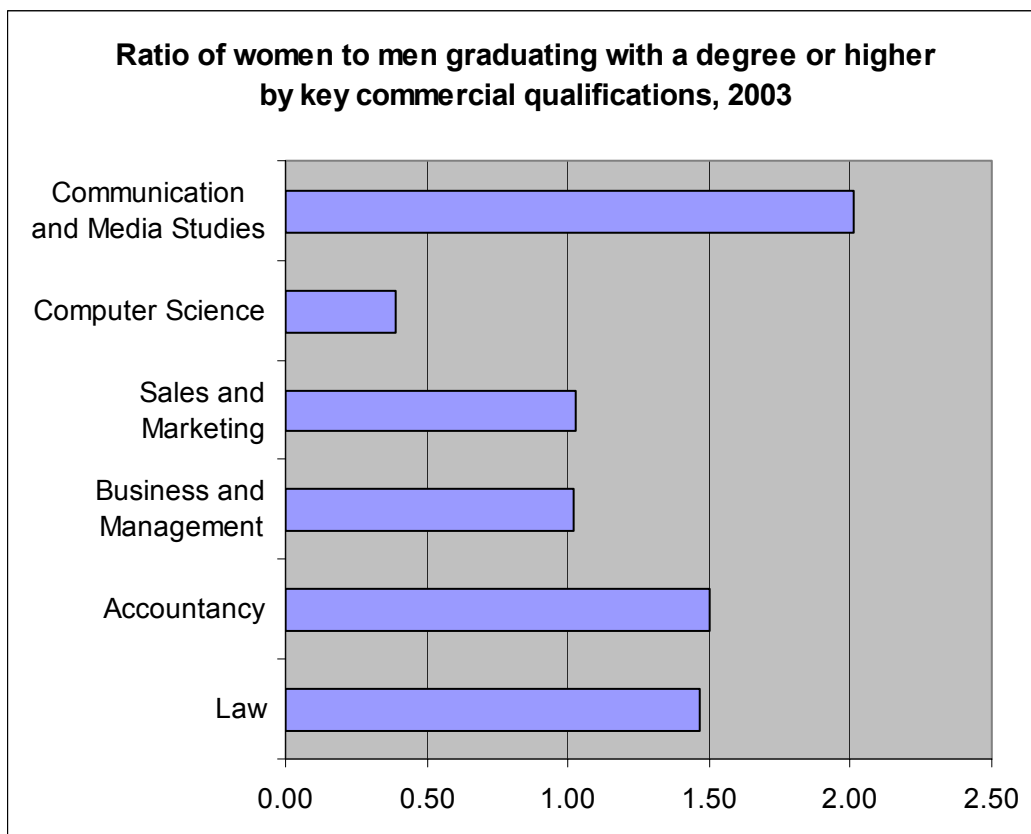
The identification of the male-female imbalance in tertiary as a possible gender equity problem is met by one response is that we should not be concerned about this as men still fill the majority of the highest managerial and professional jobs in New Zealand (apart from a number of senior public sector jobs, including the Prime Minister, and some private sector companies, including Telecom and IBM New Zealand). Another response is that women tend not to gain qualifications in science and business areas so will remain lower paid than men. However, these patterns are also changing too. Figure 6 shows the number of women relative to men gaining degrees in a range of subject areas in 2002. It is noteworthy that there are now more female than male graduates in management and commerce type qualifications; there are roughly equal numbers of men and women in natural and physical sciences, and in areas such as information technology women are rapidly catching up. In the health arena, it is primarily nursing that leads to women dominating the field but women also outnumber men in areas such as graduate doctors.

**Figure 6**



Increasingly businesses will be recruiting women in key business specialities. For example, in 2003 women outnumbered men by 2 to 1 in communication and media studies and 1.5 to 1 in accountancy (Figure 7).

**Figure 7**



I welcome the increase in the number of women in tertiary education. There are many positive outcomes from having a well-qualified population. But, if gender equity concerns apply only to situations where women appear to be disadvantaged, this then shows a double standard in research and public policy. We should be equally concerned when men seem to be “falling behind” in education, particularly if we want New Zealand to be a high-skill, high productivity economy.

We also need to keep an open mind as to what might be causing the on-going “pay gap” between men and women, despite the impressive gains in education by women. Research shows the “gap” is the strongest for women who have dependent children (e.g. Waldfogel 1998). The solutions which tend to be put forward for eliminating or reducing the pay gap include greater support for working women in areas such as childcare and paid parental leave as well as making sure there is equal pay or equal work (for instance, comparing work and pay for police and nurses). However, virtually no support is given in New Zealand to policies to help men increase time spent with children. In fact, in New Zealand in areas such as paid parental leave, the law discriminates against fathers (Father and Child Society 2003).<sup>10</sup> Shared custody arrangements would also increase the time fathers spend with their children.

As in New Zealand, there is concern in Australia about women’s relatively low labour force participation rate. However, unlike in New Zealand there also appears to be concern expressed about men who are not in the labour force (Karvelas 2005). For example, in an article about encouraging fathers to become “stay at home Dads” Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Pru Goward is cited as saying:

In the same way that special measures were made available to women seeking to enter certain sectors of the paid workforce, perhaps governments have to consider special measures to men to enable them to enter the unpaid workforce.

However, there are researchers who suggest that the “pay/work gap” will never disappear because a significant number of women, including well educated women, simply do not want to make the sacrifices needed (for example, in terms of time away from the family) to compete with men in the upper end of the labour market (Hakim 2003). For women, the choice to work part time or to exit the paid workforce this generally requires them to be financially supported by either a partner (generally male) or the state. In turn, this often means men have little choice over their paid work options.

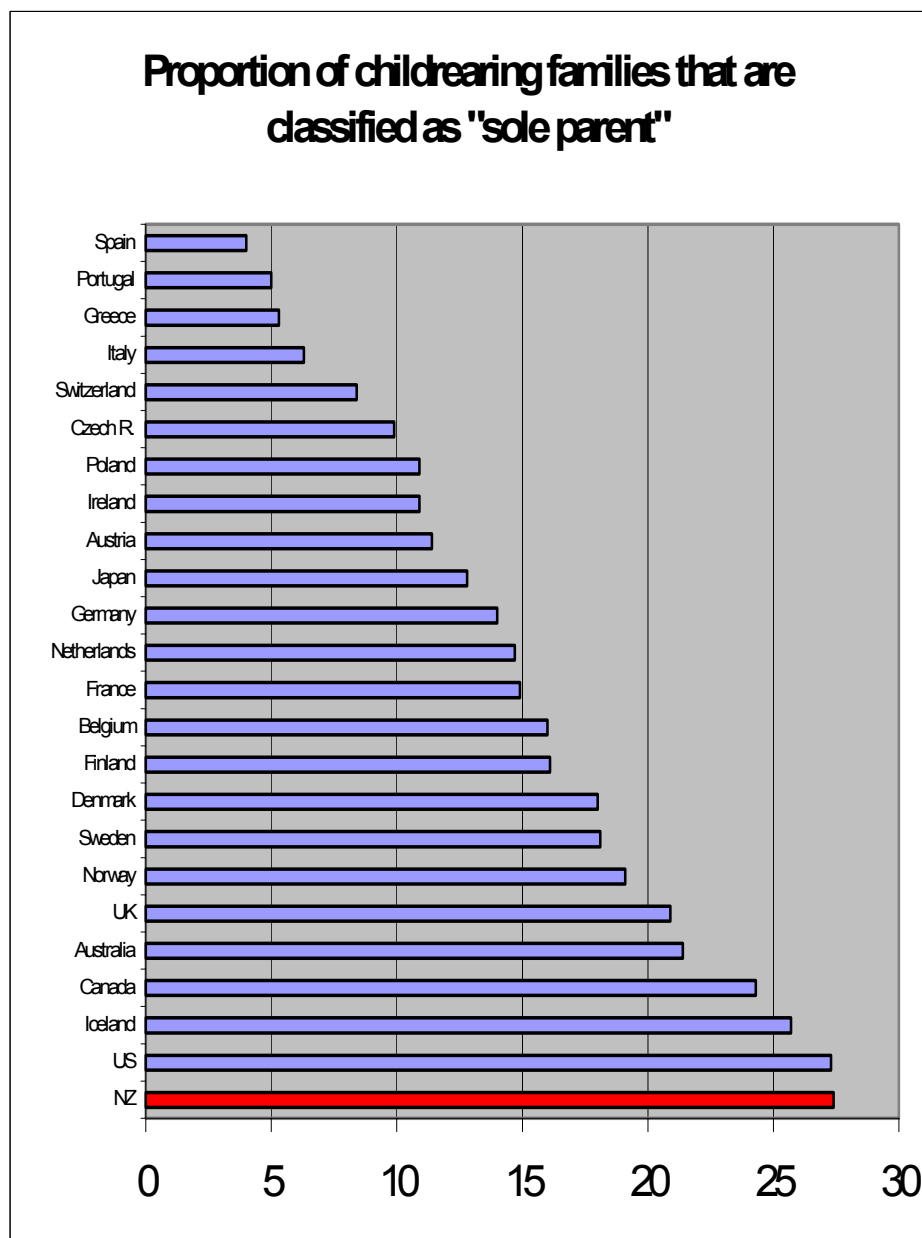
### ***Family Change***

Many factors influence family change. However, there is some evidence that labour market change, including the loss of jobs among men or the inability of low skilled men to earn reasonable incomes, can influence family form (Callister 2000). One area that New Zealand stands out internationally is in the number of “sole parent households” (Figure 8). The term, ‘sole parent’, is, nevertheless problematic as Birks (2001) has pointed out. In many of these “sole parent” households the children will, in fact, have two living biological parents.

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<sup>10</sup> In contrast, in Sweden (and Norway) there is “positive discrimination” to encourage fathers to take a period of parental leave (Galtry and Callister 2005).

Figure 8



Source: Johnston (2005)

A significant number of New Zealand fathers do not live full time with their children, and, while we do not have New Zealand data, a small but not insignificant number appear to have little contact with their children.<sup>11</sup> A significant number of New Zealand sole mothers are not in paid work when compared to sole mothers in other industrialised countries (see Table 7). This means that directly, or more generally indirectly through the tax system, these sole parents have to be supported by other New Zealanders, including former partners. The working hours of employed fathers (and mothers) therefore needs to be considered in the context of family change and the income transfers required to support both sole mothers not in paid work and partnered women not in paid work.

<sup>11</sup> While the popular media and politicians often focus on cases of “abandonment” of children by fathers, the men’s and father’s movement tends to focus on situations where access to children is blocked by mothers and the court system.

## Overworked Fathers?

### *Paid Work*

International research indicates that, over the past couple of centuries, the average hours spent by individuals in paid work have reduced (Bosch and Lehndorff 2001).<sup>12</sup> Yet, in the last decade, concerns about overwork in New Zealand have re-emerged (e.g. Department of Labour 2004, New Zealand Council of Trade Unions 2002). A comparison of the proportion of employees working 50 or more hours per week among a selection of OECD countries shows that New Zealand has one of the highest proportions of workers putting in long hours of paid work (Messenger 2004). Some of the concerns about long hours of paid work relate to workplace health and safety issues. Other concerns focus on the possible negative effect on families and children. Table 5 shows changes in working hours between 1986 and 2001 for women and men age 25-54.

**Table 5. Long Hours Worked Per Week (% Working 50 or More Hours Per Week), By Sex and Age, 1986 and 2001**

	Men			Women		
	25--34	35--44	45--54	25--34	35--44	45--54
1986	30.9	36.5	32.3	9.3	10.3	10.1
2001	33.8	40.6	43.0	13.5	13.5	17.0
$\Delta$ 86--01	2.9	4.1	10.7	4.2	3.2	6.9

Source: Census data, in Callister (2005a)

In New Zealand, fathers of young children make up a significant proportion of those working long hours. As an example, in 1986, 34 percent of employed, partnered fathers aged 25-34 with a preschool child worked 50 or more hours per week.<sup>13</sup> By 2001, this had risen to 39 percent. Older fathers tend to work even longer hours. Yet, at the same time there was also a small rise in the proportion of fathers working very short hours, under 20 per week. Overall, the main shift for fathers was away from the traditional 40-hour week, with some working shorter hours but most working longer ones. In contrast, less than 10 percent of employed partnered mothers with a preschool child worked 50 or more hours per week.

**Table 6. % of Employed Partnered Mothers and Fathers Working 50 or More Hours Per Week, By Age of Parent with a Child Under 5 Years, 1986 and 2001**

	Mothers		Fathers	
	25--34	35--44	25--34	35--44
1986	9.0	10.2	34.3	37.0
2001	7.9	9.8	38.6	43.0
$\Delta$ 86--01	-1.1	-0.4	4.3	6.0

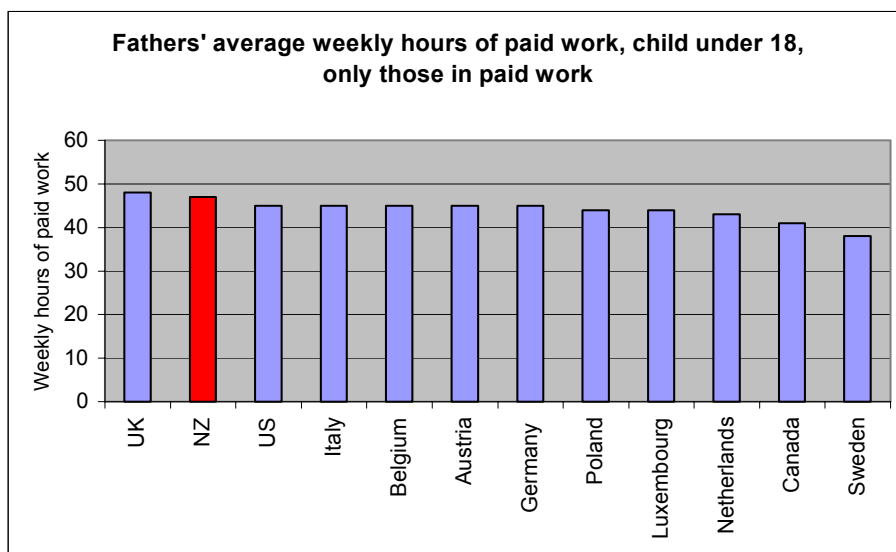
Source: Census data, in Callister (2005a)

<sup>12</sup> This section draws heavily on Callister (2005a)

<sup>13</sup> In terms of sole parents, there are far fewer sole fathers than sole mothers. However, sole fathers are far more likely to be employed than sole mothers and, if so, are much more likely to work long hours (Callister 2005a).

International comparative data, based on average hours worked per week, indicates that New Zealand fathers' working hours are at the upper end of the scale (Figure 9).

**Figure 9**



Source: OECD data Gornick (2005), New Zealand data from the Census, Statistics New Zealand.

Why do many New Zealand fathers work long hours? There is likely to be a variety of reasons, but one is that men are still expected to be the main financial providers in many families. This provision of income for family wellbeing is generally unrecognized, even in much of the recent literature on 'fatherhood'. Christiansen and Palkovitz (2001) argue that 'providing' is often overlooked because it is taken for granted, is invisible to the family, holds negative connotations, and is inadequately conceptualised.

Patterns of paid work among New Zealand mothers of young children can put pressure on fathers to fulfill the provider role. Partnered mothers of preschool children have been increasing their employment rates in New Zealand, with just over half of these mothers were employed in 2001. However, this rate is well below that of some other industrialised countries. At the top of employment rates for mothers is to be found Sweden at 81%, while Canada has a rate of 70% and the United States 61% (Table 7). This provides one possible reason why a group of New Zealand men work long hours, that is to make up for the lost income when their partner is no longer in paid work (or perhaps only working part time).

Yet, when total hours of paid work (averaged across those in paid work and those not) for partnered mothers and fathers with a dependent child are calculated, New Zealand has higher total average working hours than Sweden despite the high employment rates of Swedish mothers (Callister 2005b). So New Zealand couples with young children work longer hours than their Swedish counterparts, but also earn less income (when measured on per capita GDP).



**Table 7. Employment Rates for Mothers with a Child Under 6 Years of Age**

	Total Mothers (ranked)	Partnered Mothers	Sole Mothers
Sweden	75	81	65
Portugal	72	70	83
Finland	67	58	65
Austria	67	66	76
Netherlands	66	62	39
Canada	63	70	68
Belgium	62	72	49
United States	59	61	68
France	56	57	52
United Kingdom	55	61	37
Ireland	53	46	35
Germany	52	51	50
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>32</b>
Greece	47	48	63
Italy	47	45	72
Poland	46	50	33
Australia	45	48	30
Spain	45	42	65

Source: Johnston (2005)

### *The effect of long hours of paid work by fathers on children*

There has been much debate about possible “maternal deprivation” when mothers enter paid work. However, while focusing primarily on the effects of maternal employment, a recent study undertaken on behalf of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (2004: 43) noted that one of the important influences on child outcomes is paternal care. There are still few studies of the effects of paternal employment - particularly long hours of work - on child outcomes. However, interviews with young Australians about work-life balance issues suggest that many young people wanted to spend more time with their fathers (Pocock 2004, Pocock and Clarke 2005).

There is a further potential problem with partnered fathers working long hours, especially if the mother works part time or is not in paid work. That is if they separate. There is then the potential for the fathers to be seen as “not there” for their children, with a possibility they may get limited access to see them if custody is disputed. Even if they had been working 60 hour weeks, fathers would have likely to have been able, in many cases, to tuck the children into bed every night rather than meeting them for an hour or two at McDonalds once a fortnight. Specialisation in work and family roles can therefore be risky for men as well as women.

### ***Unpaid work – Fathers suffer from a “double burden” too***

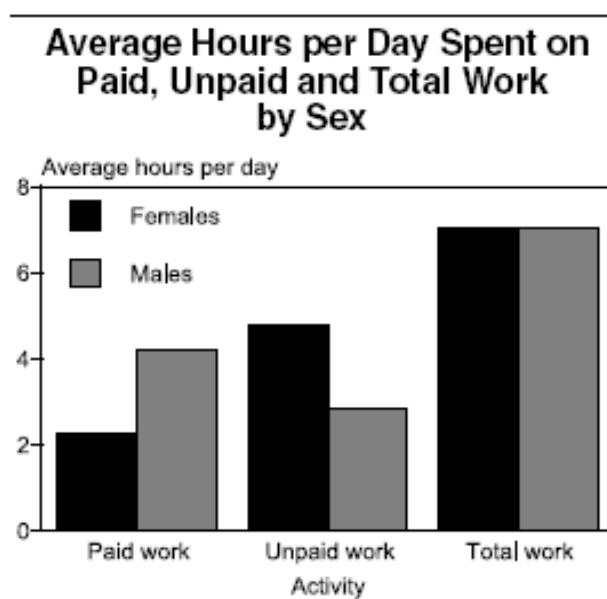
Looking at paid work only tells half the story. Total workload, both paid and unpaid, is important.<sup>14</sup> As Stuart Birks pointed out in his paper given to the Auckland summit, with statements like “Why are women still doing almost all the work - in the fields, offices and home?”, rhetoric about unpaid work (and total working hours), often comes to the fore rather than facts. When talking in the media, promoting the importance of time use surveys, well known time-use advocate Marilyn Waring constantly refers to the ‘double burden’ facing women, but does not acknowledge that men can also face this so called ‘double burden’ of paid and unpaid work.

Fathers are now under a double pressure to be both good providers and good fathers. So how do fathers balance their paid work and childcare? In New Zealand there has only been one time-use survey carried out, so changes in total working hours over time cannot be determined. But the time use data that Waring considers so vital, does not support her assertion that the ‘double burden’ is a problem solely for women. Statistics New Zealand report the following on their website:

Men and women spend about the same amount of time working, on average seven hours a day, or 49 hours a week. Females spent two hours a day more than males on unpaid work, while males spent two hours a day more than females on paid work. While approximately 60 percent of males’ work is paid, almost 70 percent of females’ work is unpaid.

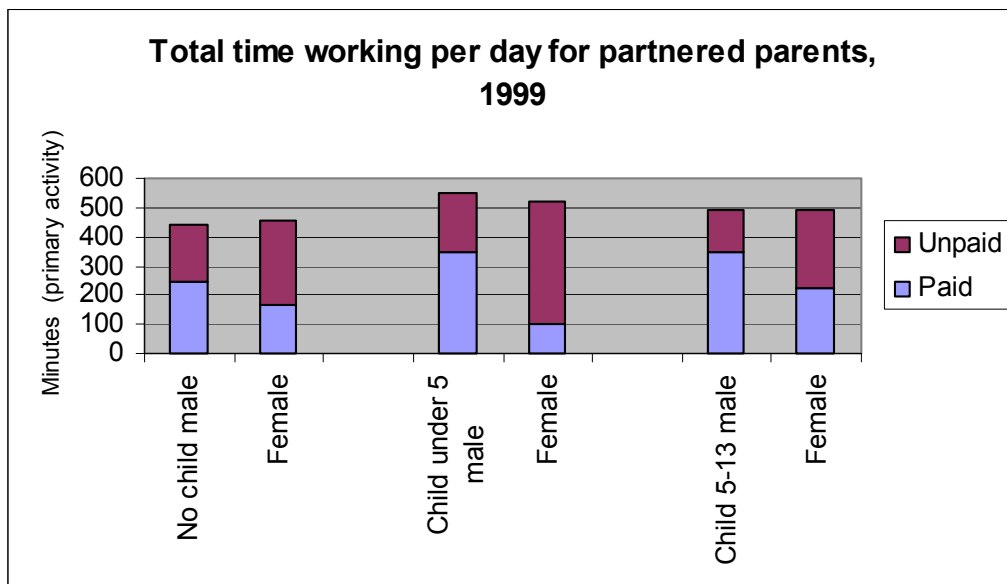
<http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/FF42228D-F958-4598-8AD7-36D5A2CEED7B/0/GenUnpdWk.pdf>

And here is the graph from that website, which does not support the idea that women are doing almost all the work in society.



<sup>14</sup> While paid and unpaid work are usually seen as separate activities, New Zealand time use data show that there is a small, but nevertheless significant, amount of simultaneous paid and unpaid work undertaken in New Zealand (Callister and Singley 2004).

So what about families with young children? When the New Zealand time use sample is restricted to partnered men and woman with a child under five, Stevens (2002) demonstrates that total hours of work are higher for parents of young children than for men and women without children. Steven’s data also show that the ratio of total hours of women to men’s work was 0.96; that is, on average partnered men with a child under five work longer total hours than partnered women.



Source: Stevens (2002)

Again contrary to popular discourse, the total hours data, drawn from an official survey undertaken with the support of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs suggest that, in New Zealand when children are young it is, on average, fathers who suffer more from the “double burden” than mothers. This double burden fathers is not unique to New Zealand. In Norway, fathers with a child under six on average work longer total hours (paid and unpaid combined) than mothers (Statistics Norway 2005).

This “double burden” for partnered fathers is also confirmed by research carried out in countries where fathers work long hours. This research shows that they are spending more time with their children than in the past. For example, for dual-earner couples in the United States, since 1977 fathers have increased the time they spend on workdays doing household chores, including childcare, by approximately 42 minutes, while mothers have reduced their time by the same amount, although still doing more than fathers (Bond et al 2002). This long-term pattern of change is likely to have also taken place in New Zealand.

So how have fathers managed to increase their time with children while, at the same time, generally continue to be employed rather than becoming full-time parents at home? A small group is now working part time but most, if employed, still work full time. US research also shows that fathers (and mothers) are now also spending less time on themselves. In the United States, in 2002 fathers spent 1.3 hours on themselves on workdays, down from 2.1 hours in 1977 (Bond et al 2002). This is effectively the “domestication” of men’s leisure time.

In addition, New Zealand time-use data also show that some fathers with long working hours are undertaking paid work at home in the evenings and weekends, time that children will also be generally home (Callister 2004). A further investigation of these data indicates that nearly 24%

of working parents recorded undertaking simultaneous paid work and childcare. Not surprisingly, almost all of the simultaneous childcare being passive rather than active (Callister and Singley 2004). However, given the popular idea that it is mainly women who multi-task, an unexpected result was that, when both passive and active childcare are considered, there was little difference between women and men. The data showed that just over a third of employed New Zealand mothers and fathers undertook a spell of simultaneous childcare and paid work in weekends, while during the week the figures were a fifth for fathers and a quarter for mothers.<sup>15</sup>

### **Are Fathers Happy With Their Long Paid Working Hours?**

Research carried out in Australia on the working preferences of partnered fathers suggests that, overall, fathers' satisfaction with their work hours decreased as the number of hours worked increased (Weston et al. 2004). In addition, the proportion of fathers who would prefer to work fewer hours (taking into account the impact this would have on their income) increases with the number of hours worked. Yet, the research also found that a quarter of fathers working very long hours (60 or more) were satisfied with their working hours. In New Zealand, a non-random on-line survey of fathers indicated that 80% of them wished they could spend more time with their children (EEO Trust 2003).

More research is needed in New Zealand as to why so many fathers work long hours and how hours of paid work can be reduced for those wishing to do so. But one thing we do know already, in part because of the accepted discourse on the 'double burden', is that policy makers still tend to see work-life balance as a women's issue alone. For example, in the preamble to a Green's sponsored bill currently being considered by parliamentary select committee, a bill designed to reduce hours of paid work, it is stated that "women in particular who are often the main care givers of children are frequently burdened with the extra stress from having to do both paid work and domestic labour" (p. 1). The preamble also notes that "greater opportunities for flexible working will enable some parents who would otherwise leave the labour market to remain in employment at the end of *maternity leave*" (emphasis added p. 2). Such statements, particularly considering that in New Zealand it is actually technically parental leave not maternity leave, indicate that, like much family related policy in New Zealand, concerns about fathers are very much a secondary issue (Father and Child Society 2005).

### **Conclusion**

Is fathers' work undervalued in New Zealand? The answer has to be the affirmative with regard to the lack of public recognition in New Zealand of their "double burden". In addition, not enough credit is given to fathers in their provider role. Fathers are now generally expected to be dedicated full-time workers as well as "good fathers". To fulfil both roles often requires long hours of work.

Are fathers (and men in general) undervalued in the labour market? The answer is also potentially yes – for some men at least. The reason for this is the fact that so many men find they are more valued in overseas labour markets than in New Zealand. Given globalising labour markets, unless New Zealand incomes can be significantly elevated it is difficult to see how this trend will be reversed.

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<sup>15</sup> For a further discussion of paid and unpaid work see Callister (2005b).

Are fathers overworked? At one end of the spectrum, poorly educated men find it difficult to participate in the labour market and, if they do, are often poorly paid. This has an impact on their ability to form stable relationships in which they can raise children. There is a group of men who are falling behind in the educational arena and this issue needs to be given more prominence. In the global economy, unskilled or low skilled workers (both men and women) in industrialised countries face a difficult future.

At the other end of the spectrum, there is a group working very long hours. New Zealand stands out internationally in the proportion of men, including fathers who work long hours. It is not known if the increasing employment of mothers will eventually lead to a reduction in men's hours of work. In recent times, increasing women's employment has simply led to longer total hours for couples.

One of the ways that men's long hours might start to reduce is if there was greater recognition of the fact that work-life balance issues also affect men. There has been some limited progress in this area, but more attention is needed.

Overall, the data show that men, like women, are an increasingly heterogeneous group. Simply suggesting that men are from "Mars" and women from "Venus" disguises increasing within-group complexity. Many men have good jobs; the hours of work that suit them; and satisfying family lives. But a significant number do not. Policies designed to assist men, and fathers in particular, to have a high level of wellbeing in New Zealand need to recognise this diversity.

### **Acknowledgement**

This paper draws on a range of research reports produced over the last decade. Funding for these research reports has been provided by a number of agencies including the Department of Labour, Treasury, the Ministry of Social Development and the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. I would also like to thank the Institute of Policy Studies, Victoria University for its support of this research. Stuart Birks provided useful comments on this and an earlier paper. Finally, I would like to thank the Father and Child Society for providing the financial support to attend this conference.

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## Chapter Eight

### MEN IN RESEARCH<sup>1</sup>

By Stuart Birks

It might be expected that this paper would consist primarily of a list of research topics on men's issues. That would give a very narrow perspective. With the limited resources for research, it is important that they be used as efficiently as possible. The really important concern relates to the question, what information is influencing decision making? In other words, what information is available, and how is it being used? Are key points being disseminated? Often, the most important part of the research is the choice of questions to ask. There is little value in getting the correct answers to the wrong questions.

Today I shall give a few examples to illustrate the situation, including some readily available statistics which should lead us to question current thinking. Then I'll briefly mention some areas which are being largely overlooked.

Central to my thinking is the view that society consists of all of us, men, women and children, living and working together with shared interests and goals. That is not a view that is often expressed these days, with the focus on individualism.

#### Some Current Issues and Statistics

##### i) Dated Perspectives

Two months ago, the National Women's Convention was held in Wellington. It was intended to have an influence on decision making, and was timed to be held 30 years after the 1975 United Women's Convention. Many of the same women were involved. There would also appear to be close links to government, given that the *Action Plan for New Zealand Women*<sup>2</sup>, launched in 2004 by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, was a base document for the convention. It is an outdated agenda of an ageing group of people, and it was interesting to note that the programme was severely trimmed and attendance was much lower than expected.

Given that we are heading for an election, I have been involved in various attempts to elicit the views of political parties on a range of issues, not least the future being offered to young people, especially young men. Most responses indicated a failure to understand the question.

There is an entire generation that has grown up with the feminist-based message that marriage is bad for women, women are disadvantaged, they are victims, men have been privileged. Power in a male context is bad ("power and control"), whereas for women it is good ("empowerment", "girl power"). I could go on to talk about messages in relation to income, unpaid work, violence,

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<sup>1</sup> Paper for the NZ Men's Issues Summit, Christchurch, 5 August 2005, a different section from the Auckland Summit is included as Appendix II.

<sup>2</sup> Available via: [http://www.mwa.govt.nz/cont\\_pb.html#actionplan](http://www.mwa.govt.nz/cont_pb.html#actionplan)

family responsibility, caring, health behaviours, even dating behaviours, socializing, networks and clubs. How often, in all this, have we seen feminists writing good things about young men?

These views are not evidence-based. They distort our views, they affect the policies we consider, they shape the legal and policy environment we pass on to our children, and they have a fundamental influence on young people's views of the world and of their place in society.

From a policy perspective, we should be looking to the future to identify the issues they will face, and to act on them early. We are willing to look forward twenty years to consider the needs of an ageing population – that is us. Why are we not looking forward twenty years to consider the future needs of our children?

Paul Callister will talk about the population gender imbalance among younger people. There is also an education and career imbalance. This is not the one commonly mentioned, that there are not enough women in senior positions. Nearly 60 percent of tertiary students are women. In twenty years this could create a gender imbalance in more senior positions in several professions. On current work patterns, many of our women doctors and vets are unwilling to work full time or to be on call. This has been partly explained in terms of family life and work-life balance. If these views persist, we will need more trained people to do the same work, and those few who are willing to work unusual hours will be heavily burdened.

Today, the focus on men and children appears to be in terms of child support responsibilities. What signal does this send to young men who want to be assured of an ongoing relationship with any children they may father? While we may be signaling to young men that their irresponsible behaviour will be punished, are we demonstrating that responsible behaviour will be rewarded? We are not showing our young people that we recognize these issues. At least for young men, our focus is at best irrelevant, and at worst, disillusioning.

I will now look at some specific distortions.

## ii) “Diversity of Family Types”

The current government has put great emphasis on the “diversity of family types”. In particular, recent legislation and discussion has been directed at same-sex couples and parents. Are we getting an accurate picture of families in New Zealand, or have significant types been overlooked?

A Statistics New Zealand publication gives some household data.<sup>3</sup> Households are subdivided into family types. This means that there are no categories for families which are spread over more than one household. Data from the publication are given in Appendix 1 of this paper.

While there is much talk about a “diversity of family types”, in 2001 same sex couples comprised approximately one percent of all couples without children. Of couples with children,

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<sup>3</sup> Statistics New Zealand (2002) *2001 Census: Families and Households*, <http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/ED8AF5A8-9FA8-4865-BD82-8ADA357DE7E3/0/FamiliesandHouseholds.pdf>

less than a third of one percent are same sex couples. There are approximately 2,200 dependent children in these households. Not all of these children would have been born into an existing same-sex relationship.

In comparison, in 2001 there were approximately 667,000 dependent children in opposite-sex couple households (from Table 14 of the publication). That does not mean that both members of each couple are parents of the children. Family types that include couples with children do not distinguish between parents and step-parents or other new partners of a parent. There is no family type that recognizes that some of these children have a parent living in a different household. These children may be spending time living in two households, but that is not recorded either.

In 2001 there were approximately 250,000 dependent children in sole parent households. Most of them have another parent somewhere, and they could be spending much of their time with that parent. There is no family type recognizing that relationship.

In summary, while there are efforts to recognize the relatively small family types of same sex couples with and without children, there is a marked failure to acknowledge a far more common family type, that of children whose parents live apart.

### iii) Suicides

The following is from a Ministry of Health publication on suicide prepared for the media.<sup>4</sup>

#### ***Suicide and gender***

- The male: female ratio for suicide in 1996 was 3.8:1.*
- While the rate of suicide is much higher for males, more women attempt suicide.*
- One reason for the gender difference in the rates of suicide may be due to males' choice of more lethal methods of suicide such as firearms and hanging. Females use methods such as self-poisoning and therefore are much more likely to be found and given life-saving treatment.*

In terms of “successful” suicides, the gender differences in methods may not be as clear as this suggests. The Ministry of Health data for 1996 show total suicide and self-inflicted injury deaths totalled 428 males and 128 females.<sup>5</sup> Suicide and self-inflicted poisoning numbers were 156 for males (more than female suicides by all methods) and 60 for females. Of these, the suicide by gases and vapours figures were 126 and 31, a gender ratio of 4:1. The remainder involved solids or liquids, and numbers were about equal. Hanging, strangulation and suffocation comprised 44 percent of male suicides, compared 37 percent for females (189 to 41). Firearms and explosives were used almost exclusively by males, numbers being 46 and 1, but that is still less than 11 percent of male suicides.

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<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Health (1999) *Suicide and the media: The reporting and portrayal of suicide in the media - A resource*, September, available on the Ministry of Health's Web site: <http://www.moh.govt.nz>

<sup>5</sup> Data from tables 4 and 5 of Ministry of Health (1999) *Mortality and Demographic Data 1996*.

In any event, for every category, there were more male than female suicides, so choice of method alone cannot explain the higher attempted, but lower actual, suicide rate for females.

In summary, while there are some gender differences in methods used in these deaths, they are not enough to explain the big difference in total numbers, especially as even for suicides by poison, male suicides still greatly outnumbered female. The Ministry explanation is wrong, but the reasoning has been used to downplay the issue of male suicides.

#### **iv) Family Violence Fatalities**

Given the attention to deaths from family violence, it is probably worth putting them in context. The Ministry of Health document in footnote 6 gave total numbers (not just family-related) dying by homicide and injury purposely inflicted by other persons in 1996 as 45 males and 24 females. Of these, 10 males and 8 females were under 20 years of age. If all adult female deaths were from family violence, at a maximum, there would have been 16 adult female deaths from family violence in that year. Similar data for 2000 shows a total of 17 deaths of females 20 or over (and none between 10 and 19). These numbers are clearly far smaller than those from suicide.

Christchurch Coroner Richard McElrea was reported in *The Press* of 18 June 2005, stating that, of eleven suicide cases in September to December 2004, relationship break-ups or problems featured significantly in four.<sup>6</sup> Might exclusion of someone from a family be considered a form of family violence? If so, should such cases be included among family violence fatality statistics?

For another comparison with family violence deaths, and an indication of their relative significance, Statistics New Zealand publishes the Accident Compensation Corporation figures on work-related fatal injuries that resulted in claims made to the ACC.<sup>7</sup> For the 2001/2 year, there were 85 claims, 80 male and 5 female.

In a speech on 23 March 2005, Steve Maharey stated<sup>8</sup>

#### ***Economic costs of social problems***

*In New Zealand, half of all female homicides are the result of domestic violence. Ten children are killed every year in acts of domestic violence. The non-financial cost of family violence is inestimable. The financial cost of family violence in New Zealand is between four and five billion dollars. And this is a conservative estimate calculated ten years ago. This cost is partially comprised of greater use of health services and police and court time. But it also includes loss of income and work for employees due to family violence.*

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<sup>6</sup> Norris J (2005) "Suicide factors emerge", *The Press*, 18 June.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics New Zealand (2003) *Injury Statistics 2001/2002: Work-related Injuries*

<sup>8</sup> Maharey S (2005) "Social and Economic Goals of Labour Market Policy", 23 March, <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=22533>

In 1996, half of all female homicides means 12 homicides, and this would include female children.

Steve Maharey's focus on costs could lead us to wonder about the economic costs of suicides, and whether we are paying sufficient attention to that problem in comparison to domestic violence. More basically, the estimates of the costs of family violence are from a study by Susan Snively.<sup>9</sup> This study has been shown to have serious flaws.<sup>10</sup> For example, she assumed that all family violence was by men against women and children. Although data from the Hamilton Abuse Intervention Pilot Project would suggest perhaps 60 cases a year requiring dental treatment, Snively assumed 37711 cases when calculating costs to the government. However, according to her study, many of these were not even aware that they were victims of family violence.

Despite the problems with the study, raised with Steve Maharey in questions asked of him in Parliament (2001 Questions Nos. 1442 and 2088), he still uses the results over ten years after the study was published.

On 16 June 2005, Muriel Newman asked a question in Parliament about the advice given by the Ministry of Women's Affairs to its Minister on violence by women.<sup>11</sup> It appears that the Ministry does not acknowledge the scale of women's violence against men or children. This is despite its responsibility not to withhold important known facts.<sup>12</sup>

We cannot expect sensible policies to arise from a base of misinformation.. If we are misrepresenting domestic violence, there is a real danger that we may be applying inappropriate policies. Can we be sure that the supposed solutions are not generating bigger problems than they solve?

#### **v) Sole Parents, Poverty and Independence**

Table Builder, on the Statistics New Zealand web site,<sup>13</sup> can be used to construct a wide range of tables of New Zealand data. The following table reveals some interesting information.<sup>14</sup> It relates to households consisting of one parent, dependent children and no others.

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<sup>9</sup> Snively S (1994) *The New Zealand Economic Cost of Family Violence*, New Zealand: Department of Social Welfare

<sup>10</sup> See Chapter 3 of Birks S and Buurman G (2000) *Research for Policy: Informing or Misleading?* Issues Paper No.7, Centre for Public Policy Evaluation, Massey University, Palmerston North, <http://econ.massey.ac.nz/cppe/papers/cppeip07/cppeip07.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Question for Written Answer 7396 (2005), available via:

<http://www.clerk.parliament.govt.nz/Publications/QuestionsForWrittenAnswerIndex.htm>

<sup>12</sup> In the section on "free and frank advice" in State Services Commission, *Political Neutrality: Fact Sheet 3 - The Relationship Between the Public Service and Ministers*, Last updated 25/9/2003,

[http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?navid=183&docid=3995&pageno=2#P51\\_5389](http://www.ssc.govt.nz/display/document.asp?navid=183&docid=3995&pageno=2#P51_5389)

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.stats.govt.nz/products-and-services/table-builder/default.htm>

<sup>14</sup> From the entry URL, select "Tables by subject – income statistics", and from there follow the menus down via "Income tables – Households - Type of Household also showing Type of Income". Expand income types, to get a table showing "Average and median weekly household income by source of household income and household type".

Household Type	One parent with dependent child(ren) only				
Measures	Average Weekly Wage and Salary Income	Average Weekly Self-employment Income	Average Weekly Government Transfer Income	Average Weekly Investment Income	Average Weekly Other Transfer Income
Year					
2003	218	40	235	11	0
2002	217	39	242	6	0
2001	230	21	234	-	2
2000	183	24	266	-	2
1999	160	26	266	-	0
1998	145	41	263	-	0

Missing Values:

- Default Missing Value

The share of income made up of government transfer income is very high, 59 percent in 1998. It fell markedly to 47 percent in 2003, but it is still high compared to other groups. For example, the figures for couples with one dependent child are 6 percent in 1998 and 3 percent in 2003, and with two children they are 5 percent and 3 percent.

Over the same period, average weekly income increased from \$449 in 1998 to \$504 in 2003, or by 12.25 percent. This compares to inflation of 9.3 percent over the five year period.<sup>15</sup> This group is therefore holding its own in terms of income, but there are other groups which experienced large increases in income over the same period, such as 30 percent for couples with one dependent child and 37 percent for those with two. In comparison, one parent households are falling behind.

If we are concerned about our ability to support large numbers of old people in years to come, shouldn't we also be concerned about our ability to support large numbers of sole parents? If so, shouldn't we be looking to reduce the number of people in this situation?

### Overlooked Topics

If I were asked to identify characteristics that distinguish the current policy environment from the past, high on my list would be the lack of regard for the relationships between children and their fathers. Any perspective on society other than the most individualistic must place people in the context of the people with whom they have close attachments. They affect their motivation, their aspirations, and their life choices. In that context, the following areas merit more attention:

<sup>15</sup> Third quarter 1998 to third quarter 2003, according to the Reserve Bank's New Zealand CPI Inflation Calculator, <http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/statistics/0135595.html>

**i) Men and custody**

We still do not have data on the award of custody by the courts or, more generally, the way parenting is shared when parents live apart.

**ii) Non-custodial parents and alienation**

Even now, the Family Court appears to be just waking up to the issue of parental alienation. We need to know the scale of the problem, including alienation of both fathers and mothers, what can be done to limit the harmful effects. We also need to know how the effects can be undone, if at all. This would include consideration of relationships between parents and their adult children.

**iii) DNA and misattribution of paternity**

There are no firm figures on the extent to which children have the wrong man named as their father, but, as a rough estimate, 10 percent might not be unreasonable. That would mean that about 400,000 in this country are mistaken in their belief as to the identity of their father. We now have the capability for giving near certainty about paternity, or at least for eliminating misattribution. How large is the problem, and should we solve it?

**iv) Men and work-life balance**

Much of the policy on work-life balance focuses on women, but it is an issue for men also. The male dimension should be explored.

**v) The future for young men (and women)**

A great deal of effort has been invested in telling girls what life options they have, and supporting them in achieving in a wide range of areas. We even have an Action Plan for New Zealand Women. What future is being signaled for young men in terms of work, family, and social inclusion? What do they see as their role, what expectations do they have? In particular, are our young men and women growing up with a realistic view of how they can live and work together and provide a healthy environment for bring up their children?

Good policy is based on quality information. This requires that the information be produced, and that it then be disseminated through policy circles and, via the media, to the public. I hope I have illustrated that there are areas where these processes are failing. Some positions are based on misinformation, although accurate information is readily available. In other areas, relevant questions are not being asked. There is a role for researchers in highlighting distortions, providing accurate information, and identifying questions. There is also a role for the media and others in ensuring that this information is given due attention.

## **Appendix I**

### **Data from Statistics New Zealand (2002) *2001 Census: Families and Households***

Table numbers refer to tables in the Statistics New Zealand publication.

From Table 11, 1996 and 2001 census figures on **same sex couples with children**:

	1996	2001
<b>Family Type by Child Dependency Status and Type of Couple</b>		
Couple with Dependent Child(ren) Only		
Male Couple	105	303
Female Couple	387	750
Total	492	1,053
Couple with Adult Child(ren) Only		
Male Couple	39	51
Female Couple	69	123
Total	108	177
Couple with Adult and Dependent Children Only		
Male Couple	18	33
Female Couple	45	69
Total	60	102

From Table 8, some equivalent data for **all couples**:

	1996	2001
<b>Family Type by Child Dependency Status</b>		
Couple with Dependent Child(ren) Only	300,726	296,826
Couple with Adult Child(ren) Only	77,619	66,984
Couple with Adult and Dependent Children Only	41,541	39,135



From Table 5, the following data are for **couples without children**:

	1996	2001
<b>Type of Couple</b>		
Opposite-sex Couples	352,017	373,191
Male Couples ..	1,275	1,836
Female Couples ..	1,296	1,878
Total	354,588	376,905

Of same sex couples with children, the following numbers from the 2001 census refer to couples with one, two, three, four or more, and unknown numbers of dependent children:  
528, 369, 156, 102, 24.

From Table 21, data on **sole parent households** (over 20% of these are with adult children only):

	1991	1996	2001
<b>Sex of Parent</b>			
Male	27,492	28,491	33,366
Female	124,263	139,764	149,556
Total	151,752	168,255	182,916

## Appendix II

### Part (i) of the section on Some Current Issues and Statistics from the paper presented at the Auckland Summit on 6 May 2005:

#### i) Work and the Women's Convention

In a month's time, the National Women's Convention will be held in Wellington. There was a report on this in a Palmerston North paper on 3 April. It began, "Why are women still doing almost all the work - in the fields, offices and home?"

The New Zealand Time Use Survey was conducted by Statistics New Zealand for the Ministry of Women's Affairs at a cost of \$2 million. It found that, on average, men did two hours more paid work than women, and women did two hours more unpaid work than men.<sup>16</sup> Clearly if some women are doing more than their partners, others are doing less. Why is this expensive piece of information still being ignored six years after it was obtained?

<sup>16</sup> "On average, females aged 12 and over spend about 2 hours more per day than males on unpaid work, while males spend about 2 more hours per day than females on paid work." (P.17 of Statistics New Zealand, 2001, *Around the Clock: Findings from the New Zealand Time Use Survey 1998-99*, <http://www.stats.govt.nz/NR/rdonlyres/8AD45C07-9A77-4C42-AE41-57BBE95CC2B1/0/aroundtheclock.pdf>).

This point has also been misreported in the media, including: *The Waikato Times* of 15 December 1999, "Unpaid chores push women's workload higher – survey"; *The New Zealand Herald* of 16 December 1999, "Women more productive than men: 'stymied' study", and 9 May 2001, "Survey confirms what women all know"; and *The Evening Standard*, 10 May 2001, "Women's work is rarely paid, let alone finished"; *The Evening Post*, 9 May 2001, "Women's work".

Given the purpose of this summit today, it is perhaps worth digressing briefly to look at the Women's Convention, which is intended to have an influence on decision making. It is timed to be held 30 years after the 1975 United Women's Convention. Many of the same women are involved. There would also appear to be close links to government, given that the *Action Plan for New Zealand Women*,<sup>17</sup> launched in 2004 by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, is a base document for the convention.

It could be a significant meeting, focusing on "the needs of women and men", although it is not immediately obvious that men's needs will get a realistic airing. A media release dated 16 August 2004 is intriguing.<sup>18</sup> Here is an extract (emphasis added):

*Learn from the Past, Look to the Future 30 years on from the last New Zealand Women's Convention*

*It was announced today that a National Women's Convention is to be held in Wellington in June 2005, 30 years after the last one held in 1975.*

*The Hon. Margaret Shields, convenor of the steering committee established to organise the convention, said today: "The convention has a number of important objectives. It will review and evaluate the progress made for and by women over the last 30 years in terms of demographics, and work and home life as well as the growth in understanding of the imperatives of environmental sustainability and peace. It will most particularly **look at the situations of young women** today and the different society of which they are a part. This will help us to **identify achievable policy objectives to accommodate the changing needs of women and men in today's world.**"*

How are men's needs to be identified, if only women's situations are considered? It goes on:

*"The conference will address many issues that are fundamental for New Zealand, **aligning women's achievements and aspirations with the country's social and economic development**, and setting a path for the next 30 years," Margaret Shields said.*

Although earlier referring to meeting the needs of young women, this sentence suggests otherwise. Are young women to be allowed to specify their aspirations, or are they to be "guided" to meet the requirements of an older, retiring generation? Presumably men's aspirations don't merit consideration, even though men might be expected to have a part to play in social and economic development. In any event, policy positions are being developed from a

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<sup>17</sup> Available via: [http://www.mwa.govt.nz/cont\\_pb.html#actionplan](http://www.mwa.govt.nz/cont_pb.html#actionplan)

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.womensconvention.telecom.co.nz/assets/sm/38/7/MediaRelease1.pdf>

narrow perspective that excludes men, and may not consider the joint aspirations of young men and women.

## Chapter Nine

### PROBLEMS IN WORKING WITH MEN<sup>1</sup>

By Philip Chapman

Working with men is not easy. It is not an established field, and the area as a whole has received little attention. In my work, I am invited in to agencies to talk about how they can include men. I ask them what they do for men, and they might say that they had a session for them some time before, but not many men turned up. One off sessions such as this can be worse than doing nothing, in that they reinforce the institution's view that men will not attend, and also men's view that there is only token attention paid to their concerns.

Why is this? Think of ante-natal. You cannot expect them to actively participate if you just tack on a session for the men after they've sat through six or seven sessions aimed at their partners, especially if, as I have experienced, the men's session is then for them alone in a separate room. When I work with groups of men, I try to talk to and with men in a down to earth manner. I don't treat them as if they are emotionally deficient and need to learn to "engage in dialogue", as if they should respond by being sensitive and exposing their feelings. I talk to them in a way that allows them to feel respected. I then find that, once they start talking, they don't stop. It is a myth that they will not talk. Rather, they do not respond well when they are talked down to. I try to work with them where they are, in factories or wherever. Even so, the work is still on the fringe.

In my work in public health, part of it is in the area of positive fathering. When I first started this work six years ago, I couldn't even use the term "fathering". I had to go in under "parenting". On men's health, I work with about ten women, who basically deliver services to women. I was even told not to mention the term "men's health". In the public health catalogue there are five pages of resources for women, four for Maori, but nothing for men. Despite efforts over a long time, this stuff has yet to be introduced and accepted as mainstream.

I have also carried out research into men and family services, the Plunket, anti-natal, and I run programmes for men, and for boys with behavioural problems, and for over 90 percent of those boys, there are no fathers in their homes.

Today I want to start by talking about some of the problems working with men, and then move on to the possibilities.

#### **Negative Media**

This issue is often spoken about, and has been mentioned by other speakers at these summits, so I won't repeat all that. There are a couple of points I'd like to make, though. We've all see the ads about men who have built bridges, but, for some reason, can't work out the two sticky tabs

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<sup>1</sup> Men's Issues Summit – Auckland May 2005

on a nappy. Alongside that there are some interesting things happening about women and advertising. Women are now the powerful ones in the adverts. There's been a change in both sides of advertising. We focus on the ones that tend to put down fathers, but there's also very strong advertising focusing on women, and there's a double standard there. Girls are wearing tee-shirts now with slogans such as, "This bitch bites". There's some sort of message there. Some time back, I tried unsuccessfully to find someone prepared to print father-friendly versions of them. I designed some tee-shirts with the heading, "The art of being a dad", and listing positive things fathers bring to families. No company would touch them, but they are producing joke tee-shirts for Fathers' Day such as the one with a cartoon of a dad hogging the remote, and his stock answer to all questions from his children is, "Ask your mother". Unlike for women, father-positive tee-shirts are seen as too political, and perhaps society is not yet ready for them. Hence, positive messages about men do not seem to exist, and men then buy in to the negative messages about their failings and deficiencies.

### **Myths and Stereotypes**

I work in the men's support and health fields. Myths are widespread in this work. The common assumption by researchers and workers in this area is that men are incapable of feeling. They have to be shown how to nurture and love their children. This is the classic "deficit model" of men, which emphasises failings and shortcomings. Men are not good enough, and it is their fault. This is so pervasive that men themselves believe it. It is not true, though. Men show love to their children. I can see it in their eyes, in the way they joke with them, even when they talk to them, you can hear it in their tone of voice. It is arrogant to say that men have to change to behave in these ways. It puts down our fathers, and in fact all fathers before us, to suggest that they did not know or feel these things. We have to be careful when we try to see ourselves as a type of "new father". We have to get away from these stereotypes, because, when they are so pervasive, men start to feel the effect. I find it helpful to view men as a marginalised group, and I see them displaying the characteristic behaviours, including putting themselves down. Men are believing the stereotypes rather than looking within themselves. (Is this an example of the Stockholm syndrome?) This view will be transferred to boys and become part of the culture.

### **A Risk not an Asset**

In much of my work in playgroups and around children, and I don't have to tell teachers this, I note that we seem to be seen as a risk. The more emphasis there is on men having to keep themselves safe when working in play groups, kindergartens and schools, the stronger the message to children that men are not safe, and the message to men that they are potential abusers, thereby making their working environment most unpleasant.

A recent experience illustrated to me the underlying negative views about men and the potential dangers they pose. We produced a set of father-positive posters of men with their kids. They have been widely sought throughout the country and overseas. Even after three years, they are still popular here and overseas. The two most common comments I have received are, "You make brilliant posters", and "There is a gap in this area". Paradoxically, while they are very popular, quite a few people thought they were risky. There was one poster of a man dancing with his teenage daughter, which for some reason made several women feel uncomfortable, and

there was an even stronger negative reaction by some to a father in a bath with his young children. What does that say about where men are in society? At the same time there was a widely distributed advertisement for nappies showing a woman biting a baby's bottom!

I would suggest that the popularity of the posters indicates a feeling that men's importance as parents has to be demonstrated, rather than simply accepted. Also, the reservations indicate a widespread lack of trust of fathers, they are seen as a risk, rather than an asset, with the dominant thought being the dangers they pose. Some agencies have even refused to take the posters.

### **Double Standards**

This is a really big issue for me. I see this so often, and yet there seems to be no general awareness in society of the double standards that are so widespread. Just to give one example, I gave an interview last week. The man who interviewed me was also a movie buff, and he'd written a review of a movie, "Sideways". A man and a woman get together for an intense short term affair, after which the woman beats him up for not telling her he was getting married. He said that women in the audience walked out, offended by the man's behaviour, but there seems to be no concern for the fact that the relationship was mutual, and the woman gave him a severe beating. What puzzled me was that men were not offended also at the woman's violence. It seems to me that, when a man is assaulted by a woman, he is thought to deserve it, when we would not think the same if genders were reversed. This is but one of many examples of double standards that I could give. Other areas that spring to mind include the range of behaviours that are acceptable, or even "empowering", for women, but are considered abusive or sexist by men. Commonly, whatever position she is in, the woman is presented as being the one who is victimised. We see this with comments on physical appearance, and sex by people in authority such as prison officers with prisoners and teachers with pupils. Consider also the different media representation of male and female strippers.

### **Tokenism and Resistance to Change**

Agencies are slow to adapt to meet men's needs. They have few resources, or even posters, aimed at men. They should realise that they are funded for families, not just for mothers and children. Nevertheless, most of their workers are women, and they see few men. They have to look at themselves to see what they are doing that deters men from using their services. It is not enough to blame men for not fronting up. We would not think it acceptable for a Maori service provider to employ hardly any Maori or show no knowledge or respect of that culture. There are some agencies that will take on a token man for a few hours a week, but it is hard for him to fit in to the team. To see men when they are home, he has to work odd hours. The staff may know that they have to work together, because their funding is to work with families, but it seems to be too difficult for them. That is understandable also, but it is not satisfactory as it is not working in the best long-term interest of families. So how do we get things to change?

## Poor Knowledge About the Needs of Men

We have heard a lot about this at these summits. It is a big problem. I have read lots of research on men. The fathering documents that were produced by the Commission for Children were, I believe, essentially the work of 8 or 9 women. A study on how men react on Viagra was conducted by three women. There are various studies on men by women. There may be nothing wrong with that, but shouldn't we include men in some of these studies? Imagine this the other way round, with men on their own conducting studies on women. It could not happen now. However, many of the women researching in the gender area have a very specific, gendered, policy agenda and are far from impartial.

Just as one example of a woman researching men, consider Celia Lashlie's work in her "The Good Man" project. There was good work done, and it gained huge publicity, but it would not happen the other way round. If I were to say that there are no good women in this country, and that is why our girls are failing, why girls' violence is going up, that's why they're smoking and binge drinking, most women would find it difficult. If I were then to go round girls' colleges to define what makes a good woman, it would not be well received. However, when a woman does this for boys, it is treated as something fantastic. When Kim Hill, in an interview, suggested to Celia Lashlie that it might be considered odd that she was doing that work, the response was that she could say things that men could not say. Why is that? Why can she say things that men are not allowed to say? What is happening so that men need a woman to speak for them? She says now that men need to move on. We need to talk, we need to get things going, but she is still on the talking circuit. Men do need to take over, but how are we going to do that with all of this stuff that is going on around us?

We have the convention now that Maori must speak for Maori, youth for youth, women for women, but when it comes to men, it seems that we ask our mothers. I can't quite work that out, but it is not helpful. If you read the research that the women did on Viagra, it was turned to focus on women, and presented a finding that Viagra was a problem for women because the men then wanted too much sex. There was another section in there that was not mentioned, namely the men's perspective. This is not research on men, for men, at all.

It is easy to get a negative impression of men through research. When I was researching new dads, I'd find some of them saying that there was a down side of there not being much sex. I could have stopped there and had a conclusion that they were useless, only wanted sex, and were not thinking about their partners who were still recovering from childbirth and coping with a young baby. Instead, I dug a bit further. What they were really saying was that they were feeling lonely, left out, and were also putting in more time at work to support the family. That's why I worry about some women researching men, they hear the first part, which could be just a dismissive remark or humour, but will they go beyond that to hear what the men really have to say? Men will talk and talk in the right situation, but otherwise you might not hear anything. Unfortunately even some of the people who speak up for men promote the deficit view, that men have failings and need to be rebuilt, rather than getting to that other level. We must stop doing that. We must start with what we know about the positive aspects of men, and reinforce the strengths.

## **Men Are Unaware of Their Rights**

When it comes to family-related services, it seems that men are not used to thinking about themselves in this context. In some of my research, I asked fathers what services their family had received around the birth of their child. I'd ask them how the services had met their needs. This often threw them. I would get responses such as, "As long as the wife's happy, I'm happy". They had not thought about themselves in the context of their being family. Is this a continuation of the "women and children first" mindset, where men are expected to sacrifice themselves for women and children? Clearly this is not working for men. We have to move away from the socialisation that makes us put ourselves last. That might have worked under the traditional unwritten compact of give and take and mutual respect between women and men. However this has been broken as a result of feminism. Yet men are confused about whether or not to adhere to the old standards, even at the possibly trivial level of holding doors open for women.

## **Self Apologising, Excusing, Isolating**

There is another thing that seems to come up when talking to men about women. If they ever sound as if they are criticising women, they feel that they have to qualify it by saying that they don't mean to be sexist. They are silenced because they don't want to be seen as misogynists, or angry losers, or, now, "the new victims". They seem to be afraid of what may happen if they speak up. Some men have even found it more rewarding to take the stance of apologist for men and all men's "sins" over the centuries. Perhaps this is why it appears that men need women to speak out on their behalf. This is not a basis for a healthy relationship between men and women.

## **Conflicting Egos**

This goes back to the men's movement. I'm not sure that we have men's movement, or just a trickle?

There is a diverse range of groups in this "industry", and this diversity is reflected at these summits. Nevertheless, we all have to come together and agree on some things. We can also agree to disagree on some issues, but, given the concerns I have briefly outlined here, we do need to work together for the good of children, families and men.

There is one last remark I'd like to make. In all that we have been saying about men, I just like to say something about children, and what they bring to us. My son taught me to love. I have never loved anybody as I have loved him. We should not forget that relationships are two-way things, and our connections with significant people are important for our emotional lives, and this is fundamental to us all. At the heart of it, this is the aim of all our work.



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## LIST OF ISSUES PAPERS

- No.1 S. Birks and G. Buurman, “*Is the Legal System an Efficient Regulatory and Dispute Resolution Device*”, October 1997.
- No.2 S. Birks, *Gender Analysis and the Women’s Access to Justice Project*, March 1998.
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