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The changing distribution of paid and unpaid work in New Zealand

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The failure of highly educated women to stay in the labor market represents a wasted societal investment.Policy measures can address the reasons some women do drop out by making it more possible for professionals, as well as other workers, to combine work and family. In addition, the double standard in parenting needs to be attacked so that, eventually, men are just as likely as women to take care of children at the same level of intensity and women's and men's labor force participation patterns will look even more similar than they do today.

Hartmann (2004)

1 Introduction¹

This quote from Hartmann captures two important judgments that are sometimes made in relation to men and women's patterns of paid and unpaid work. First, for a variety of reasons, including maximising investments in education and striving for gender equality in both society and the home, increasing women's employment rates is considered by many an important goal.² Second, some analysts suggest that unless men increase their share of unpaid work, gender equality in both the home and the workplace will not be possible.³ Fulfilling these two goals would require a shift in the distribution of paid and unpaid work across society.

I begin by outlining various long-term changes in employment for individual men and women and in family type. These are well known but are worth repeating to set the scene for the subsequent analysis. Monitoring changes in both individual and household employment patterns is important if we are to fully understand employment choices given a significant number of working aged individuals live in households with other working aged individuals and will, therefore, often be making joint decisions about paid and unpaid work.

Drawing on a variety of data sources, including information on employment preferences, this section includes international comparisons of families' patterns of paid work. The data presented here complements the data on the employment of individuals presented at the conference by Grant Johnston (2005).

¹ This paper draws on a range of research reports including Callister (2004, forthcoming a & b) and Singley and Callister (2004). Funding for these research reports has been provided by a number of agencies including the Department of Labour, Treasury, Ministry of Social Development and the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology. I would also like to thank the School of Government, Victoria University for its support of this research. Finally, I would like to thank Grant Johnston of Treasury for his useful comments on earlier drafts and Janet Gornick for providing me with international data. However, opinions expressed in the paper and any remaining errors are my own.

² As an example, the New Zealand Women's Action Plan (Ministry of Women's Affairs 2004: 10) has as two of its goals "improve women's participation in employment, earnings, and quality of employment" and "increase women's participation in leadership and decision-making in the economic sector".

³ There is a large, and highly contested, literature on what equality between the sexes might look like and what barriers, either culturally constructed or biologically based, there might be to change. While resolving these debates is very important, in this paper measures of equality are at the basic level of ratios of hours of paid and unpaid work.

The paper then moves onto a discussion of unpaid work. This section includes exploring some future options for changing the mix of paid and unpaid work, including the gender division of such work, in New Zealand. Based on the discussion of both paid and unpaid work, the paper concludes by exploring whether, in a New Zealand context, there is the potential to develop a high-productivity society, where there is a good balance between paid work and family life, as well as a high level of equality between men and women in both the home and the workplace.

In much of this discussion I focus on the 25-34 age group.⁴ While the largest child-rearing age group for young children is the broad 25-44 years age group, 25-34 year olds are of particular interest. In early 2005, the government stated that, while New Zealand's overall labour force participation rates are high, the rate for some groups of New Zealand women, particularly those aged 25-34, are below the OECD average (Clark 2005). While recognising the importance of sole parenthood in the analysis of changes in work, this paper primarily focuses on couples.

In summary, the paper explores four main questions, primarily in the context of couples with young children. These are:

- How much total paid and unpaid work is carried out in New Zealand?
- How is this work shared between women and men?
- How does this compare with other countries?
- How might the mix of unpaid and paid work change in New Zealand in the future?

2 Long term changes in living arrangements and employment

Across industrialised countries, increases in divorce and non-marital childbearing, as well as shifts in the living arrangements of young adults and families have increased rates of single parenthood and single adults living alone alongside a decline in the extended family. In parallel but, at times, connected with these changes in living arrangements, there has been a decline in the employment of prime working-aged men, initially older workers but, in recent decades, low-skilled, prime-aged men. Over the same period, women's employment rates have risen dramatically as a result of changes in gender norms; increases in both women's level of education and in their real wage rates; decreased fertility; advances in household-production technology; the marketisation of unpaid work; and postponed childbearing (Figure 1). The changes in women's education in New Zealand have been particularly dramatic in recent years. For example, in 2001 in the 25-29 age group there were over 24,000 women with a degree or higher educational qualification compared with just over 18,000 men.

⁴ There are some important underlying demographic and educational changes taking place in the 25-34 age group that potentially affect discussions about changes in paid and unpaid work. These are set out in Appendix 1.

In the immediate post WW2 period, most working age men and women 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. Women were also primarily responsible for most of the household production. This represented an extreme level of specialisation within the household. Although the extent of income sharing within households is debated, at this stage of our history most income redistribution was within rather than between households.

Figure 1 –



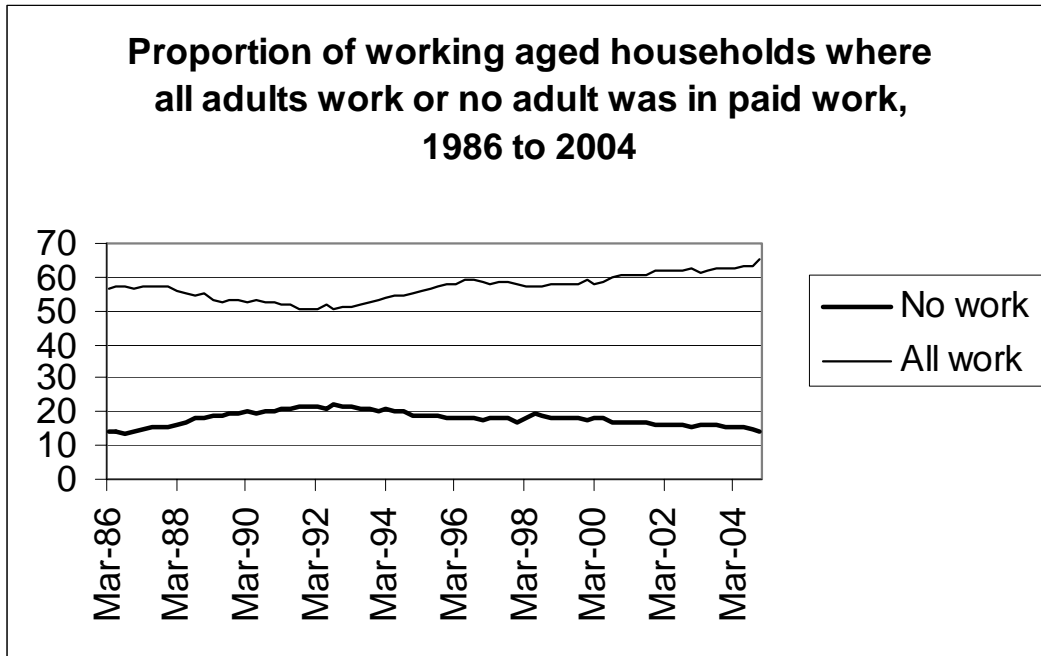
Source: Derived from Chapple (1994, 1999).

3 Changes in household employment

Johnston (2005) has clearly set out changes in employment for individuals. However, in recent years, researchers have identified a gap between individual-and family/household-based measures of joblessness in certain OECD countries, including the United Kingdom, Australia, and, during the 1980s and 1990s, New Zealand (Singley and Callister 2004).⁵ Figure 2 uses HLFs data to show trends in household employment from 1986 to 2004. It shows the effect of the major loss of employment in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However post this period, the chart shows a growth in all-job households and a decline in no-job households. A growth in the number of adults living alone or in sole-parent families means that employment in these households will always be either no job or all job thus contributing to the polarisation of work across households. But, also of importance, is the concentration of employment within couples, with the emergence of no-job couples and couples where both partners are employed.

⁵ While household and family measures often overlap, there can be some differences. For example, two families may reside in one household and single persons living in a dwelling are generally not seen as being a family unit. In addition, families can cross households in terms of financial flows and care of children.

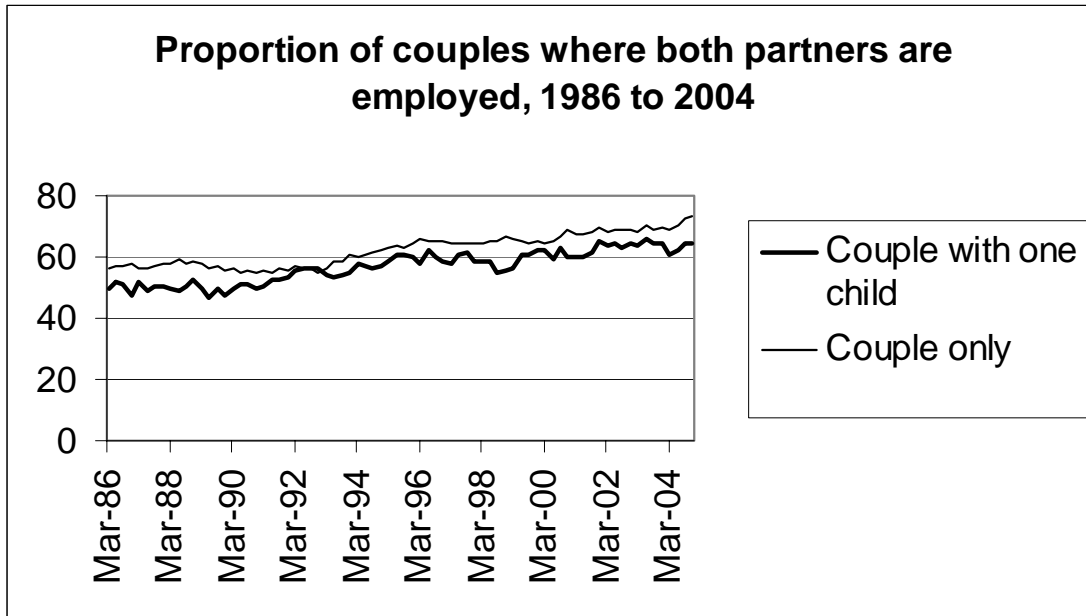
Figure 2 –



Source: Household Labour Force data, Statistics New Zealand.

A key component of the growth in all work households, illustrated in Figure 2, has been the growth of all-work couples, including couples raising children (Figure 3). One of the key drivers has been increasingly well-educated women joining their equally well-qualified partners in employment (Callister 1998). As Johnston demonstrates, in 2001, 47 percent of all partnered mothers with a child under five who had no formal qualifications participated in the labour market, while for those with post school qualifications the figure was much higher at 64 percent.

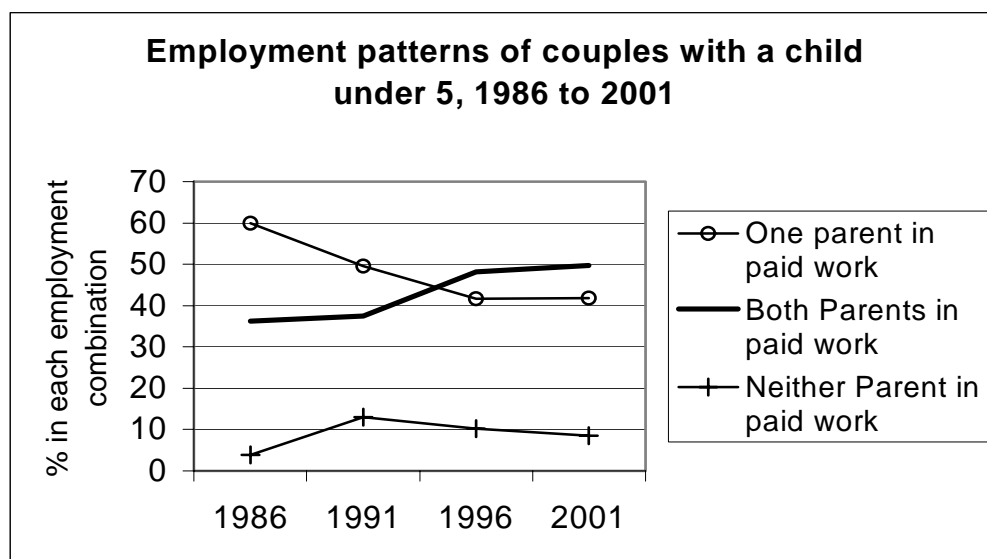
Figure 3 –



Source: Household Labour Force data, Statistics New Zealand.

Figure 4 narrows the focus to couples with a child under five years of age. It uses census data to show the growth of all-work and no-work childrearing couples over the period 1986 to 2001. It demonstrates that the major decline has been in “mixed work” couples, primarily those where the father worked full time and the mother was at home full time with the children. Based on the 2001 data, Figure 4 indicates that future increases in partnered parents’ employment in New Zealand might come from both those couples where neither partner is employed (so both, or either, mothers and fathers could move into employment) and the mixed-work couples (where it is mainly mothers who could move into employment).

Figure 4 –



Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, Statistics New Zealand.

However, Figure 4 disguises some important dimensions of hours of work. “Both parents in paid work” can be further divided into two key groups. One of these is where both partners work full time (the so called “egalitarian” model), while in the other group the man works full time and the woman part time (the “neo-traditional” model).⁶ To set the New Zealand data in an international context, Figures 5, 6 and 7 draw on European data to show patterns of employment for couples with pre-school children. (A preferred working arrangement in each country, based on the response of the mother, is shown in Appendix 2).

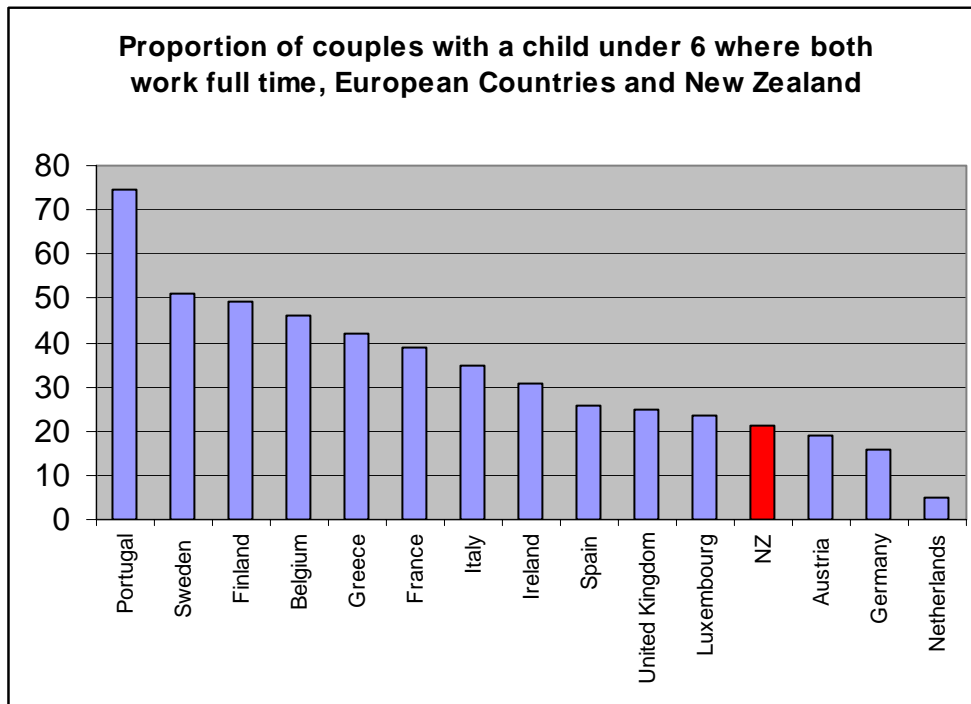
A number of patterns are discernable in these graphs. First, as Johnston (2005) indicates with his data on partnered mothers, when compared with European countries New Zealand is not at the high end of the spectrum in terms of the proportion of dual, full-time employed couples with young children. Not surprisingly, Sweden and Finland are amongst the countries with the highest proportion of couples both working full time. However, when the “neotraditional” arrangement (where the woman works part time) is considered (Figure 6), New Zealand is higher in the rankings. Because of the relatively high levels of part-time work amongst New Zealand mothers, New Zealand is in the middle ground in terms of “traditional” couples rather than being at the high end (Figure 7).

The preference data set out in Appendix 2 indicate that in almost all countries a higher proportion of couples would prefer both partners working than the actual outcomes suggest. It is not clear what holds women back from fulfilling these preferences. The reasons are likely to range from a lack of affordable, quality childcare; insufficient flexible jobs offering the desired hours and income; and a lack of sharing of unpaid work in the

⁶ In a United States context, Moen and Yu (2000) were amongst early users of the term “neotraditional”.

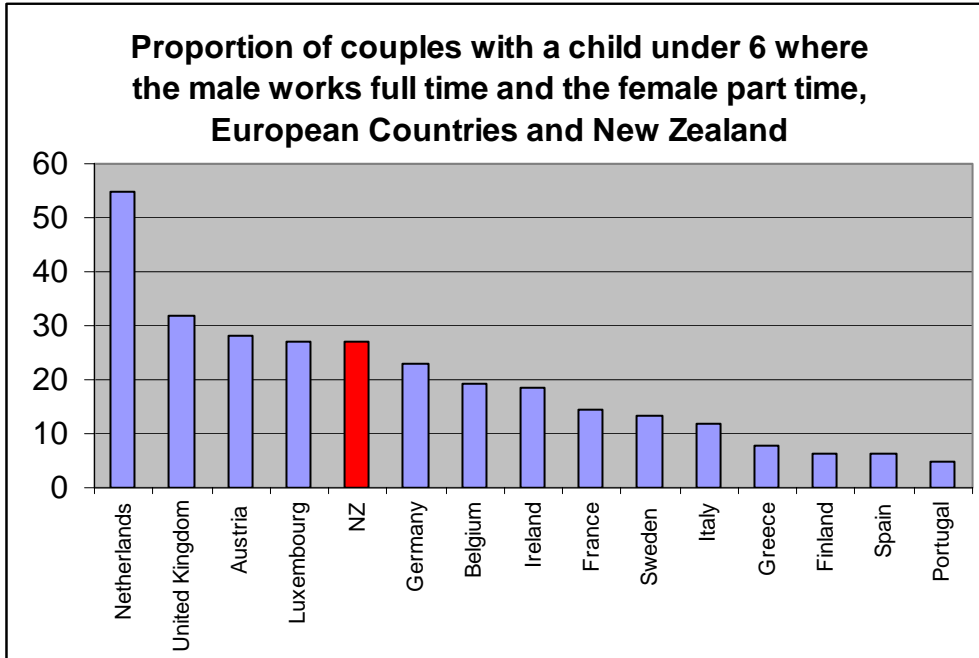
home. Other attitudinal data are also set out in Appendix 2. One set of data, based on attitudes in the mid 1990s, suggest that while New Zealand is not at the most liberal end of the spectrum in terms of sex roles for mothers and fathers, it is also far from being the most conservative. However, another data set, also a decade old, indicates that a high proportion of survey respondents think New Zealand mothers should be at home with their preschool children, but, if they are employed, should work relatively short hours. In addition, if Hakim (2000) is correct in her theory about the work preferences of women, there will be a residual group in each country who, no matter what incentives are offered such as free out-of-home childcare, will want to remain “home centred”.

Figure 5 –



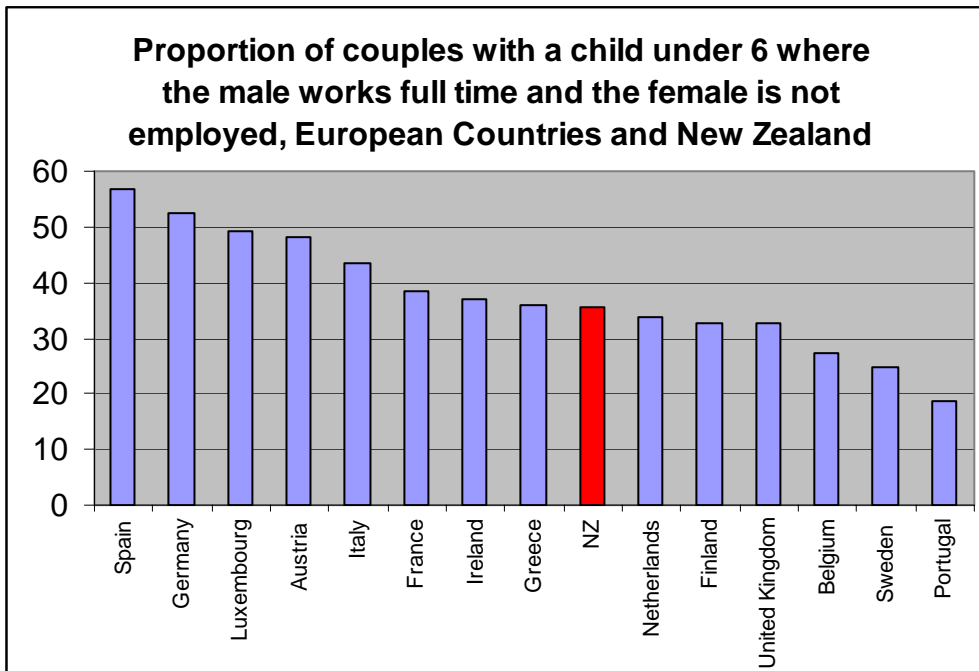
Source: European data from Table 2.1 OECD (2003), New Zealand data Census

Figure 6 –



Source: European data from Table 2.1 OECD (2003), New Zealand data Census

Figure 7 –



Source: European data from Table 2.1 OECD (2003), New Zealand data Census

4 “Overworked” New Zealand households and gender equity in paid work

Simple measures of employment rates, even when divided into full time and part time work, disguise some considerable variations in household working hours between countries. 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). When all couples are considered (that is, with and without children), international comparative data also suggest New Zealand is at the high end of the working hours spectrum (Appendix 3).⁷

Although New Zealand couples with young children tend to work shorter total hours than other couples, between 1986 and 2001 there was an increase in the total hours worked by couples with preschool children. Table 1 shows the proportion of child-rearing couples working a total of under 30 hours per week or, in terms of long hours, between 80 and 100 hours, and 100 or more hours per week between 1986 and 2001. While it shows an increase at both ends of the weekly working hours’ spectrum, the strongest growth was in longer hours.⁸ The increasing hours of work for couples primarily reflect three trends: 1) an increase in the proportion of fathers working long hours; 2) increasing employment rates for mothers; and 3) at the same time, a decline in the number of employed mothers working short hours. This illustrates the importance of considering both changes in employment and in hours worked.

Table 1 – Changes in weekly combined hours of paid work for employed couples with a child under five, 1986 and 2001

	% in each group of hours					
	< 30	30 < 40	40 < 50	50 < 80	80 < 100	100+
1986	2.3	5.5	40.7	36.4	10.1	5.0
2001	4.2	3.4	27.4	42.2	15.6	7.2
Δ 86--01	1.9	-2.1	-13.3	5.8	5.6	2.2

Source: Census in Callister (2004)

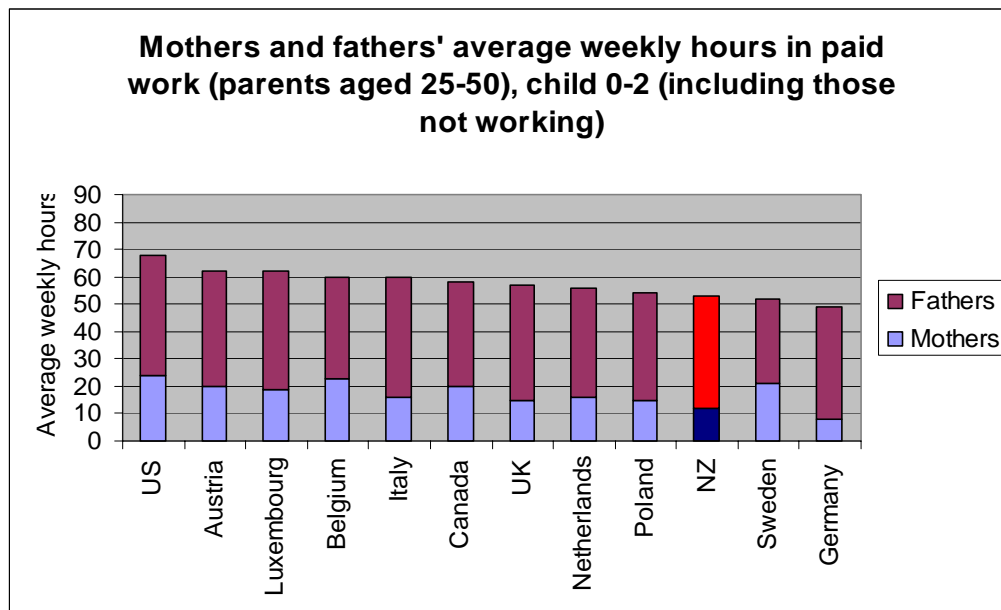
At an aggregate level, between 1986 and 2001, there was a rise in average combined hours worked by employed couples aged 25-34 from 56 hours to 62 hours per week. While the differences are not great, education levels of both parents play some part in couples’ working hours, with poorly educated couples more likely to work shorter hours than well-educated parents. Yet, this rise in total working hours for childrearing couples needs to be seen in an international context.

⁷ The OECD provides some estimates of total allocation of paid work, retirement and education across a lifecycle. While these data should be treated with considerable caution due to the nature of the estimates, they suggest that New Zealand men spend significantly more time in paid work than the OECD average, while for women the pattern is the opposite (OECD 2003: Table 1.2).

⁸ These data indicate that in parallel to the polarisation of work across households (when measured simply by employment) there was also a polarisation of hours worked within households.

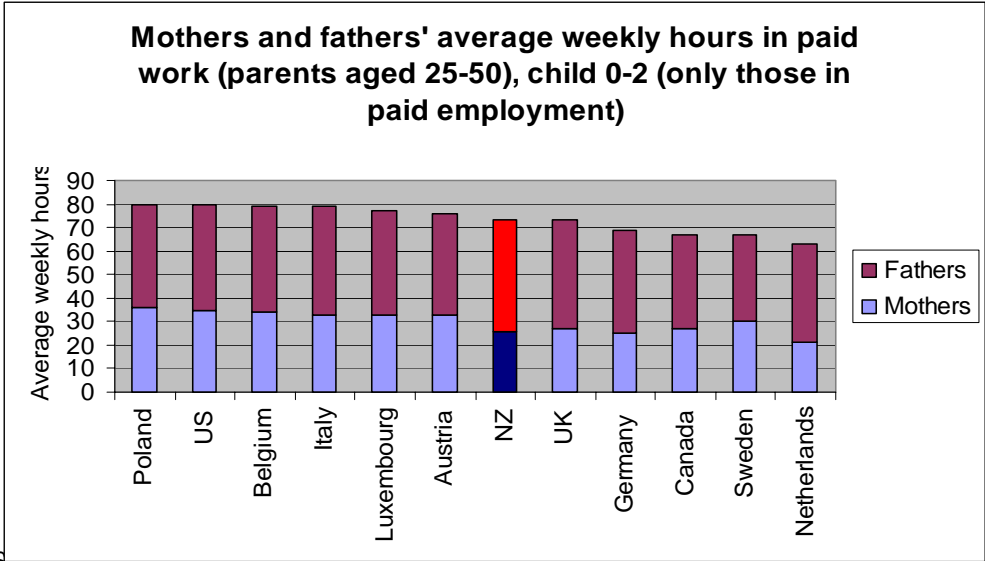
As Johnston (2005) has already demonstrated, New Zealand has relatively low employment rates for mothers with young children, but when total paid working hours are considered across the whole of society, New Zealand is near the top of the range. The following data support this view, even though couples raising children are the only group considered. However, the data also show some gendered dimensions of working hours among couples that Johnston does not highlight. The international data are drawn from an OECD comparison undertaken by Gornick (2005). The New Zealand data used in the comparison are from the 2001 census so already take into account the increase in working hours for parents of young children over recent decades. The data are all for partnered parents and constitute individual-level rather than couple-level data. However, other analyses by Gornick suggest that the true couple-level data are not all that different. Figures 8 and 9 show the combined working hours of couples with a young child (the full dataset is attached as Appendix 4). The averages in Figure 8 include those not in paid work (thus taking into account employment differences between countries), while in Figure 9 the averages only include employed parents. Figure 8 is particularly affected by the relatively low employment rates of mothers with a young child in New Zealand (Johnston 2005), but even when this group is removed total hours worked by New Zealand couples are still only in the mid range. Noteworthy is the position of Sweden in both figures. While a much higher proportion of Swedish mothers of young children are employed relative to New Zealand (or, at least in the first year of the child's life are on paid parental leave), total hours of Swedish couples are lower than those of New Zealand. These figures alone suggest that both employment rates and working hours need to be considered in discussions about families and work and that single measure comparisons with Nordic countries can be misleading.

Figure 8 –



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

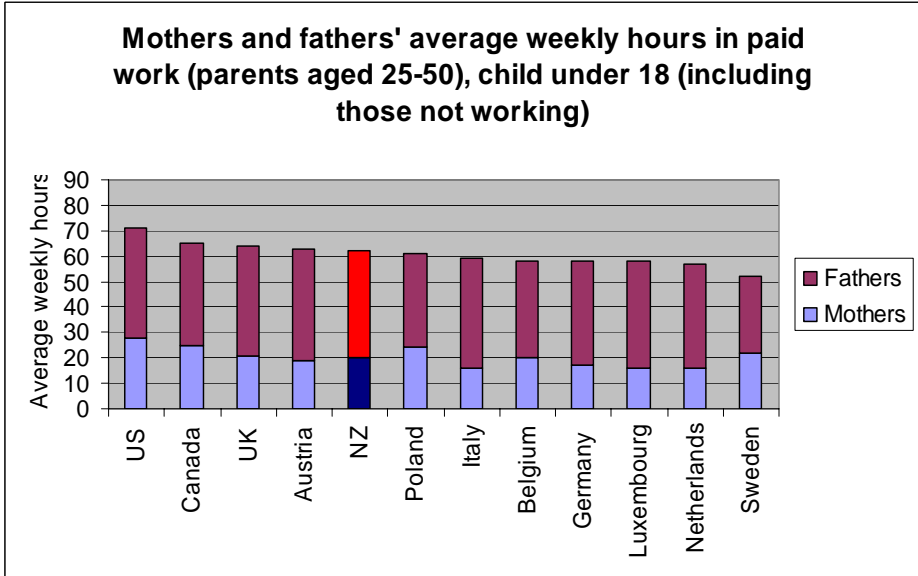
Figure 9 –



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

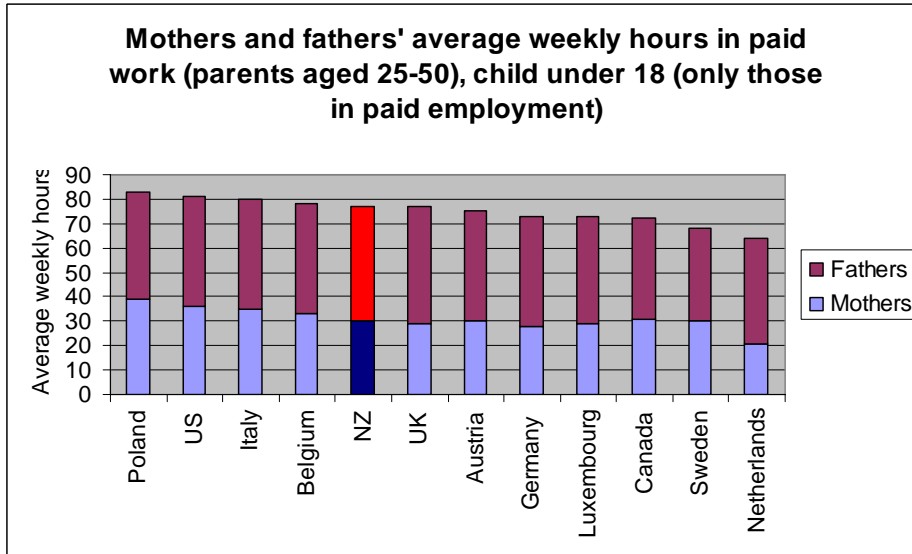
Figures 10 and 11 show patterns of work across the full age range of children 0-17. They confirm the pattern illustrated by both the OECD (2004) and Johnston (2005). That is, New Zealand mothers move steadily back into paid work, including full-time work, as their children get older. So when a childrearing lifecycle approach is taken, New Zealand couples are in the upper end of the OECD in terms of weekly working hours, although well short of countries like the United States.

Figure 10 –



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

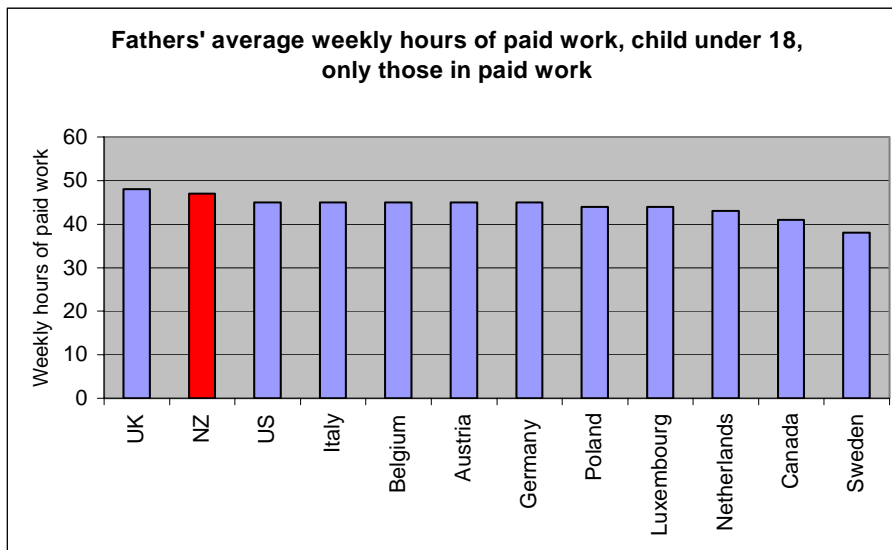
Figure 11 –



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

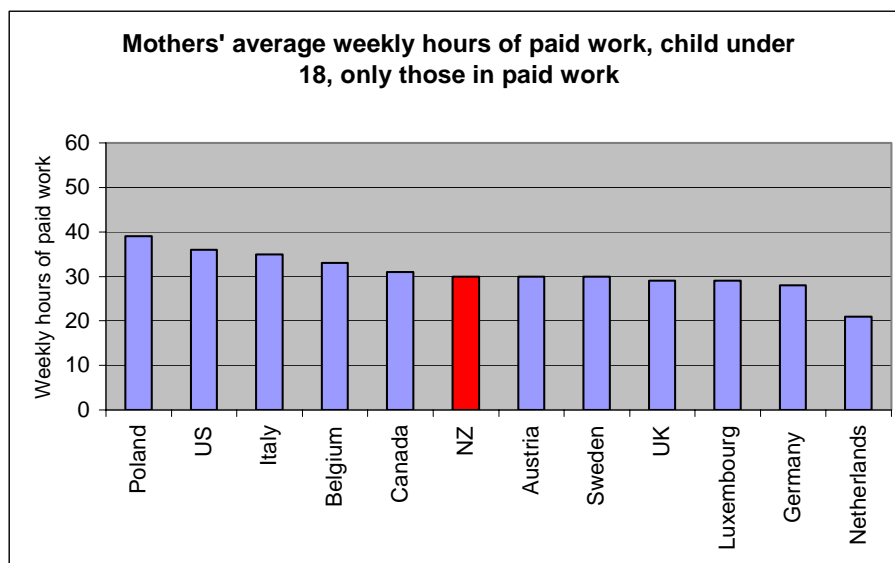
Yet, while mothers resume paid work as their child gets older, one of the factors that elevates the weekly working hours of New Zealand couples is the long average hours worked by fathers. Figure 12 shows that New Zealand is second only to the United Kingdom in terms of the average number of hours worked. Swedish fathers, on average, work the shortest hours. New Zealand mothers are more in the middle of the range, not dissimilar to Swedish mothers (Figure 13).

Figure 12 –



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

Figure 13 –



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

When the hours worked of mothers and fathers are directly compared within each country (Appendix 5), New Zealand is not high on the gender equity stakes for parents of dependent children.⁹ The long hours worked by New Zealand fathers are a factor in the imbalance. If fathers' hours remain high, in order to create equality in paid working hours mothers would have to work equally long hours. The three countries that stand out as having a relatively high level of gender equity in paid work are Poland, Sweden and the United States. Just comparing the two high-income countries of the United States and Sweden, there are two quite distinct models. In the United States the high level of gender equality is achieved by both partners in couples working relatively long hours. In contrast, both mothers and fathers working relatively short hours creates the greater gender balance in paid work in Sweden. Across all age groups, time use data suggest that, in Sweden, the balance between women's and men's paid working hours improved between 1990/91 and 2000/1, with the change coming about through a reduction of an average three hours per week worked by men (but with no change for women) (Statistics Sweden 2004). The data also indicate that both men and women increased their leisure time in this ten-year period.

In light of the Swedish model, it is possible that further increases in mothers' employment and/or the hours they work, might allow New Zealand fathers to reduce their hours of paid work. How likely is this? In recent times it appears the opposite trend has occurred, that is, on average, fathers' hours have increased as more women moved into the workforce. Yet, research carried out in Australia on the working preferences of partnered fathers suggests that, overall, fathers' satisfaction with their work hours

⁹ Overall, New Zealand census data for opposite-sex couples aged 25-59 (based on the women's age) suggest that there was a shift in the distribution of hours worked by men and women in couples. One measure of this change is where women worked half or more of the total hours worked by the couples. In 1986, just under 20 percent of women contributed half or more of the hours worked. By 2001, this has risen to 28 percent.

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 potentially unrepresentative on-line survey of fathers indicated that 80% of them wished they could spend more time with their children (EEO Trust 2003).¹⁰ It is difficult to know what prevents these fathers from reducing their hours of paid work. But it does raise the possibility that the effect on the New Zealand labour market brought about by an increase in mothers' paid employment could be slightly muted if there was a change in fathers' behaviour.

5 Unpaid work

Looking at paid work only tells half the story. Total workload, both paid and unpaid, is important. This has been shown by a range of research, including cross-country research (Freeman and Schettkat 2001). Using a variety of data sources, including time-use data, Freeman and Schettkat compared the total working hours of women from Europe and the United States and showed that these are quite similar. However, time series show a major growth in women's employment in the United States with American women currently being at the high end internationally in terms of working hours. In contrast, in countries such as Germany, a considerable amount of women's working time is spent in unpaid work. The authors suggest various reasons for this. However, a main one is that unpaid work such as food preparation, childcare and cleaning houses tends to be marketised or professionalised in the United States. The importance of marketisation of unpaid work as a means of facilitating an increase in women's employment has been identified by a number of time use researchers (e.g. Bittman 1999). But, perhaps just as importantly, shifting from unpaid to paid work increases GDP per capita because the unpaid work is then captured in national accounts.

In New Zealand, there has only been one time-use survey carried out, and so changes in total working hours over time cannot be determined. Across the total population, the data show that men and women's total hours of work are very similar but, as found in all industrialised countries, men undertake more paid work and women more unpaid work (Gershuny 2001, Statistics New Zealand 2000).¹¹ Not surprisingly, the New Zealand data also show some tradeoffs between paid and unpaid work. Women who work full time undertake, on average, less unpaid work than those working part time, while employed women undertake less unpaid work, overall, than those not in paid work. When the New Zealand 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

¹⁰ While there are still few studies of the effects of paternal employment - particularly long hours of work -- on child outcomes, interviews with young Australians about work-life balance issues suggest that many young people wanted to spend more time with their fathers (Pocock 2004).

¹¹ In New Zealand, across the whole of society, women undertake slightly more total hours of work than men (Statistics New Zealand 2000).

children than for men and women without children.¹² Again, this is a pattern seen in all industrialised countries. Steven's data also show that the ratio of total hours of women's 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. These data indicated that 19 percent of women's total work was paid, while for men it was 64 percent. The total hours data suggest that, contrary to popular discourse, in New Zealand it is, on average, fathers who suffer more from the "double burden" than mothers. The OECD (2004) has also produced a ratio of total paid and unpaid time of women to men for couple families with a child under six years of age. This ratio again shows that, on average, men work longer total hours than women. The New Zealand ratio was 0.7, compared with ratios of 1.2 in Portugal (where the double burden falls more heavily on women), and 1.0 in Switzerland.¹³ The potential for New Zealand fathers, not just mothers, to suffer a "double burden" of paid and unpaid work should not be surprising. If New Zealand fathers work long hours of paid work, but are also now expected to be "good fathers", both in terms of providing "quality" and "quantity" time for their children, then total hours of work are likely to be high.¹⁴

However, these data are for all partnered men and women, not just couples where both are employed. They include the "traditional" couples where the father works full time and the mother stays at home, as well as "neotraditional" couples. It may be that in New Zealand it is the potential for a "double burden", whereby mothers' total hours of work are lifted above those of fathers, that prevents some mothers from entering the workforce or from moving from part-time to full-time employment. International time-use data restricted to couples where both partners work full-time suggest that there is a significant double burden in some countries but not in others. Table 2 shows the ratio of women to men's total work time (paid and unpaid) in couple households with a child under five where both partners work full time. New Zealand is not included in these data.¹⁵ The total work time for couples in Sweden (a country where, as already demonstrated, paid working hours are relatively short and where paid working hours are closer for women and men than in many other countries) is nearly equal. However, in the other countries shown, women working full-time have a higher total workload than men. It is likely that New Zealand's outcomes would be closer to that of the United States or the United Kingdom than Sweden.

¹² These data are calculated not by using couples as the unit of analysis but according to individuals who live in couples.

¹³ It is not clear why the OECD ratio and the ratio calculated by Stevens are so different.

¹⁴ There is the question as to why there is now an emphasis on fathers spending more time with their children. As research findings have moved us away from worrying about maternal deprivation they have suggested there can be some benefits in partnered fathers investing both "quality" and "quantity" time with their children. There is also a growing body of research on the benefits (or otherwise) of separated fathers spending time with either their biological children or step children (e.g. Marsiglio et al 2000)

¹⁵ Statistics New Zealand has not deposited the time use data at the international time use study centre at Essex University from where the data shown in Table 3 are drawn from. This calculation could be repeated using New Zealand time use data as there was couple level data collected in the survey.

Table 2 – Ratio of women to men’s total work time (paid and unpaid) in couple households with a child under 5 years and where both partners work full time

	Ratio
US (1995)	1.05
UK (1999)	1.16
Sweden (1991)	0.99
Italy (1989)	1.26

Source: OECD (2001)

So how can the “double burden” be reduced? Parents may have a number of options. They can possibly cut back on leisure time or they may be able to reduce unpaid work.¹⁶ Within the broad area of unpaid work, they may be able to reduce housework, childcare or eliminate volunteer work. It seems childcare time is one of the last areas to be reduced. Studies undertaken in the United States and Australia show that despite the rapid rise in mothers’ labour-force participation, their time with children has been quite stable (Bianchi 2000, Bond et al. 2002, Craig 2005). Bianchi notes that in the past, non-employed mothers’ time with children was reduced by the demands of unpaid family work and domestic chores and by the use of mother substitutes for childcare, especially in large families. Bianchi comments that employed mothers now try to find new ways to maximise time with children. For example, in all the years studied employed mothers undertook less housework than non-employed mothers, although total hours of housework were also declining among both groups. The reduction in housework hours can occur in a variety of ways. Standards may be lowered or housework time may be “intensified”; that is, more work is carried out in less time. For example, dishwashers or clothes driers may speed up housework, or individuals may simply work harder. For those who can afford it, “professionals” are increasingly cleaning houses, while other forms of household work, such as food preparation, are increasingly being “outsourced”.

However, just as importantly, Bianchi also found that within couples, fathers are spending more time with their children than in the past, potentially increasing the total time children spend with parents even as mothers work longer hours outside the home. Despite a lack of growth in time spent by men on other aspects of unpaid work (such as house cleaning), the trend of increasing paternal care has also been shown by other overseas time-use studies in a range of industrialised countries (e.g. Gershuny 2000, Yeung et al. 2001). But in countries where fathers work long hours (such as New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States), it is difficult to see how further advances in the sharing of childcare can occur without some reduction in either fathers’ paid working hours or, alternatively, in mothers time with children (that is through a further professionalisation of childcare). This latter model would reduce the total amount of parental childcare that would need to be shared.

¹⁶ Research by Bond et al. (2002) has supported the notion that working parents may be reducing leisure time. In the United States, in 2002 fathers spent 1.3 hours on themselves on workdays, down from 2.1 hours in 1977. But the study found mothers have even less time for themselves - 0.9 hours versus 1.6 hours in 1977.

6 Achieving gender equality in paid and unpaid work

If gender equality is a goal, what are possible models for achieving equality in paid and unpaid work in households? One, which focuses on horizontal equity between women and men, is the “professionalisation” route where unpaid work can be contracted out and the focus of parents, particularly well-educated parents, can be primarily on paid work. Within this model, one option is the low-income “professionalisation” route (Freeman and Schettkat 2001). In Europe and the United States, relatively low-skilled immigrants from countries such as the Philippines, Turkey or Mexico are often among those who are employed by high-earning families to provide personalised family services. Individuals from these countries are over-represented in occupations such as nannies, gardeners, and house cleaners (Momsen 1999, Parreñas 2001). This pattern is more likely to occur in countries with higher levels of income inequality such as the United States and the United Kingdom. If immigration rules were changed in New Zealand, it could also occur in this country to a greater degree than already takes place. This could be a high productivity option as it is likely to represent a high level of specialisation across the whole of society.

At another extreme, the Swedish model has, at its heart, both horizontal and vertical equality. Successive Swedish governments have long had an interest in the workings of households and, as such, have not considered the family and household sphere as entirely a “private”. In Sweden, government policies such as universal entitlements to paid parental leave (including special, non-transferable “pappa” months to encourage fathers to take leave)¹⁷, along with an aim to provide universal, high-quality subsidised childcare, as well as support for relatively low working hours have all assisted in parents achieving a very different work-life balance to that of many other countries (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, 1994). This has obviously been at considerable cost to taxpayers, particularly given that those workers undertaking jobs such as childcare are relatively well paid. Critics of the system also point to the extreme levels of gender-based, occupational segregation. In addition, the more equal income distribution in Sweden, along with the dominant notion that “each person should take care of her/his own dirt” has, in the past, made it harder for middle-class families to privately employ domestic labour even if they wanted to (Nyberg 2000: 12). Detractors of the Swedish model also suggest that “new” fathers are easier to find in theory than in practice. Often this is supported by anecdotal stories that interpret shifts in fathers’ behaviour as self centred, such as Swedish men only taking time off to look after their children when important soccer games are taking place (Adema 2004).¹⁸ However, some official data do point to change, even if not dramatic, in fathers’ behaviour. For example, in 1974,

¹⁷ In contrast, New Zealand fathers in opposite-sex couples have no independent right to take a period of paid parental leave (Father and Child Society 2004). In New Zealand, unlike Sweden, there has been almost no official promotion of increasing men’s share of childcare. For example, the Swedish Government appointed a *Working Party on the Role of Men* in 1983. This working party organised seminars, publications and projects (Ministry of Health and Social Affairs 1994). In 1992, another working group, called *Fathers, Children and Working Life*, replaced this. This had the task of analysing men’s use of parental benefits and the possible labour market factors preventing men from taking parental leave.

¹⁸ There is an assumption in such stories that fathers should not be enjoying themselves in the time they spend with children.

fathers took no days of paid parental leave. In contrast in 1995, they took 10 percent of days and, by 2003, this had risen to 17 percent of days (Statistics Sweden 2004). An increase in childcare time by fathers may not necessarily translate into an increase in total unpaid work time if other aspects of households work, such as food preparation are being marketised at the same time. Whatever the underlying cause, Swedish time use data would suggest that some shifts in the mix of unpaid work have taking place.¹⁹

Assuming, that New Zealand favours the on-going professionalisation of unpaid work, particularly housework, are there limits to such marketisation? Ironmonger (1996), using Australian data, notes that despite the professionalisation of unpaid work, there is still more unpaid than paid work undertaken in industrialised economies. This would suggest much scope for further shifts from unpaid to paid work. However, there is some debate about the impact of professionalisation of unpaid work. For example, Hochschild (1983) discusses the “commercialisation of human feelings” in areas such as retailing and childcare. Hochschild suggests that workers, particularly female workers, are required to sell their “emotional labour” often at a low price. This results in a sense of subservience, which is not associated with other jobs, and also results in low incomes.

Aside from possible ethical and emotional issues, there may be other factors that limit professionalisation. Ironmonger argues that a main reason for the continuation of household production is that the final products are superior in terms of quality, time and location of delivery of output. For example, “fast food” may be of poorer quality nutritionally and lead to obesity. Weiss (1997) also notes that household production continues because of lowering costs of search (for goods and services), transaction costs and monitoring of the production and quality of goods and services.

The various models of paid and unpaid work suggest new balances between paid work, unpaid work and leisure and, if it is a goal, gender equality in each area could, through a variety of tradeoffs, be achieved in a range of ways. One, which could be seen as a type of “South Seas” version of Sweden, could involve further increases in women’s participation in paid work; a reduction in men’s paid working hours; a further reduction in the childcare undertaken by women through both marketisation and an increase in that undertaken by men; and finally, through further outsourcing of housework, a reduction in housework time for both women and men. If also associated with productivity gains in paid work, this could move New Zealand closer to being a high-income, gender-equal society while also allowing a high level of parental time investment in children. Whether such a model could actually evolve in New Zealand is, however, debatable. First it depends on business finding new ways of increasing productivity. It also depends on potentially significant changes in the preferences of New Zealanders in terms of paid and unpaid work. This, in itself, may partly depend on how much government support given to achieving gender equality in both the home and the workplace. As yet, we still know very little about preferences and the potential barriers, cultural, biological and economic, which prevent people from fulfilling them. Preferred outcomes might be somewhat different from some idealised model of gender equality and work-life balance.

¹⁹ While Swedish women still undertake more unpaid work than men (on average around 28 hours per week compared with nearly 20 for men), between 1990/1 and 2000/1, women reduced the time they spent on unpaid work.

7 Conclusion

Since WW2, there have been major changes in patterns of paid work for women and men in New Zealand as in other industrialised countries. To a lesser extent, there have also been changes in the quantity and distribution of unpaid work. Many factors have been driving these shifts, including changes in household type; levels of educational attainment of women and men; transformations in the labour market; reductions in fertility; increased use of household technology; and outsourcing of unpaid work. Some of these drivers of change will continue to influence patterns of paid and unpaid work. In particular, through both changes in education and the development of a skills' shortage, there is the potential for women to increase both their employment rates and their hours of paid work.

Overall, the data on paid and unpaid work show a pattern that is universal in industrialised countries. Men undertake more paid work, while women undertake a greater share of unpaid work. This places women at an economic disadvantage. But there are differences between countries in the amount of paid and unpaid work undertaken by women and men. In particular, New Zealand stands out in terms of both the long hours worked by a group of men and the low employment rates of women with young children. Recent attention has focused on the potential impact associated with increasing maternal employment rates. However, less attention has been given to how this might change the distribution of paid and unpaid work both within households and across the whole of society. There are various possible scenarios.

If an increase in women's participation/hours is accompanied by a decrease in men's participation/hours, gender equity and men's involvement with their children might both be increased. Such a shift may not, however, increase labour supply. On the other hand, if an increase in women's participation/hours is not accompanied by a decrease in men's participation/hours, then the resultant increase in paid labour supply might not simultaneously lead to improved gender equity. Unless unpaid work continues to reduce through outsourcing and/or through men undertaking a greater share, the "double burden" is likely to continue to be greater for women than for men.

So why might we want to increase women's participation/hours? What is the public policy goal? Are we merely seeking to increase total paid labour supply or are we aiming to achieve gender equity in both paid and unpaid work or, in fact, to achieve both goals? Moreover, should we instead be aiming for a high-productivity, leisure society that is also gender equitable? This paper portrays the latter goal as a "South Seas" version of Sweden. It will no doubt appeal to some people, but there is a considerable price in trying to achieve it (as there is in Sweden itself). In recent times in New Zealand, parallel discussions have been occurring about: the impact of "overwork" on individuals, families and wider society; how best to increase women's employment; as well as ways of increasing business productivity. These discussions should no longer occur in parallel, but now need to be integrated as an important conversation for public policy. Overall, there needs to be a wider debate as to what our income and leisure goals might be; what goals we might have for gender equality in all spheres of life; and how we might best achieve these goals.

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Appendix 1

Changing demographics for those aged 25-34 in New Zealand

While in New Zealand traditionally in all age groups under 20 there are more men than women, in prime working age groups when census data is considered there has been a growing imbalance between the number of men and the number of women. For example, census data shows in 1981 there were 1% more women in the 25-29 age group, by 1991 this had risen to 5% and to 9% more women in 2001 (Appendix Table 1). In the 30-34 age group, the rise has been from an even balance in 1981, to 4% more women in 1991 and 11% more women in 2001. This imbalance is even more pronounced amongst those with higher levels of formal education. For example, in 2001 in the 25-29 age group there were 21% more women than men with a tertiary qualification, and 4% in the 30-34 age group before finally reversing in the 35-39 age group. This imbalance becomes even more extreme amongst those with degrees. For instance, in the 25-29 age group there were 36% more such qualified women than men.

Appendix Table 1 – Ratio of women to men in prime working age groups

	1976	1981	1986	1991	1996	2001
20-24	0.97	0.96	0.98	0.99	1.02	1.02
25-29	0.98	1.01	1.01	1.05	1.06	1.09
30-34	0.98	1.00	1.02	1.04	1.06	1.11
35-39	0.97	1.00	1.00	1.02	1.05	1.08
40-44	0.96	0.99	0.99	1.01	1.03	1.06
45-49	0.94	0.96	0.99	0.99	1.01	1.04
50-54	0.99	0.95	0.97	1.00	1.00	1.02

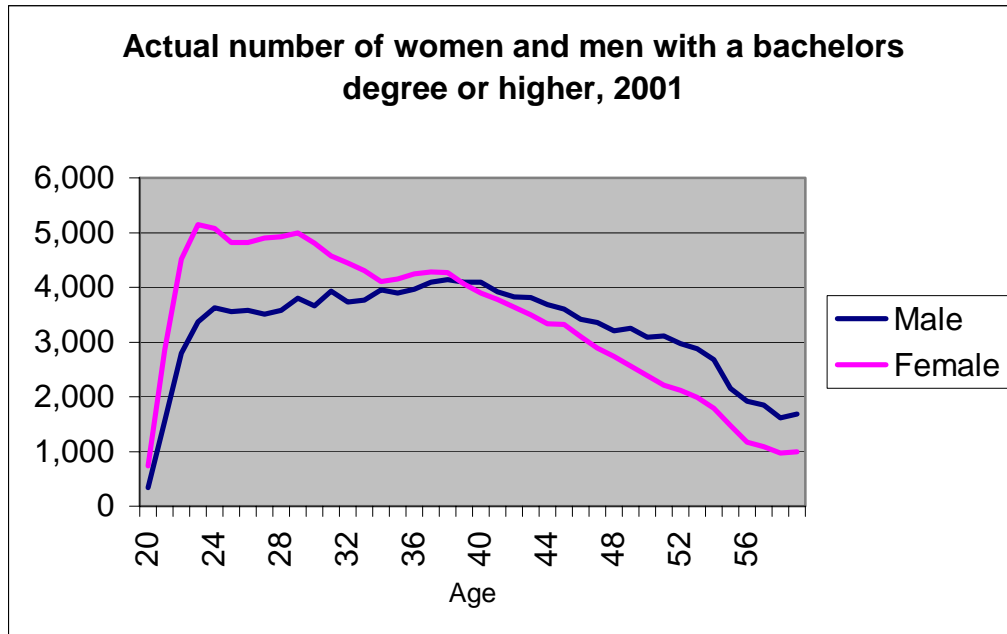
Source: Census of Population and Dwellings, Statistics New Zealand.

When international comparisons are made, New Zealand stands out as having the highest imbalance of women to men in the OECD in the prime working and couple forming age groups. The reasons for this imbalance in New Zealand are as yet unknown, but gendered migration must be a key factor.

The base numbers alone provide an indication as to why patterns of female employment could be more important than in the past. There are now more women than men in New Zealand, 53,000 more in the 20-49 age group if 2001 census data are used, or nearly 36,000 if 2004 population estimates are used. But the “excess of women” becomes even stronger when younger age groups are considered and university type qualifications are measured. Appendix Figure 1 shows the actual number in numbers of well-qualified women to men in each age group in 2001. In 2001, there were 46,686 women in the 25-34 age group with a degree or higher qualification but only 37,059 men with a similar

qualification. Again this may reflect gendered migration patterns but, in addition, in recent years participation rates of women in tertiary education have been higher for women than for men.

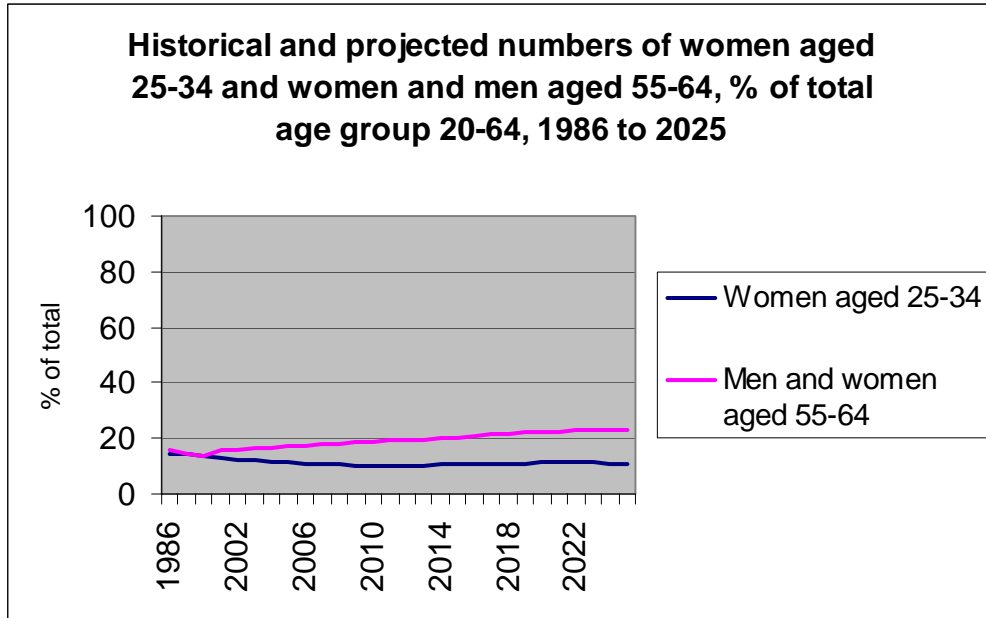
Appendix Figure 1 –



The changes may affect marriage markets, labour markets and patterns of unpaid work in New Zealand. For example, well-educated women are more likely to be employed. The excess of well-educated women also means that when they do form couples, more of them are “marrying down” educationally than in the past. This may change comparative advantage in the home relative to decisions about paid and unpaid work. It may also be that more educated women remain single and potentially childless than in the past. But if they do have children, whether in a couple situation or living alone, well-educated women are also more likely to have more liberal views about out-of-home childcare and the “professionalisation” of housework.

Yet, when considering basic demographic change it is worth noting that overall women in the 25-34 age group will become a less important group as the population ages (Appendix Figure 2). If there are to be on-going labour shortages, then finding ways for increasing employment rates of older workers will become more important. It is also worth keeping in mind that the women aged 25-34 in 2001, will be in the 55-64 age group in 2031. This group is likely to be under more pressure to be employed across their whole lifecycle than previous cohorts.

Appendix Figure 2 –



Appendix 2

Attitudes towards mothers' employment

Appendix Table 2 – Actual and preferred employment patterns by full-time and part-time working, 1998, Based on mothers responses

	Both full time		Mother part time		Mother not employed	
	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred	Actual	Preferred
Austria	19.1	35.6	28.2	39.9	48.1	3.9
Belgium	46.0	54.8	19.4	28.8	27.3	13.4
Finland	49.3	80.3	6.4	8.6	32.8	10.2
France	38.8	54.4	14.4	21.9	38.3	14.1
Germany	15.7	32.0	23.1	42.9	52.3	5.7
Greece	42.2	65.6	7.9	10.6	36.1	9.4
Ireland	30.8	31.1	18.7	42.3	37.0	8.1
Italy	34.9	50.4	11.8	27.7	43.3	10.7
Luxembourg	23.5	27.5	27.0	29.9	49.1	12.4
Netherlands	4.8	5.6	54.8	69.9	33.7	10.7
Portugal	74.5	84.4	4.7	8.0	18.7	4.0
Spain	25.6	59.7	6.3	11.6	56.9	19.7
Sweden	51.1	66.8	13.3	22.2	24.9	6.6
United Kingdom	24.9	21.3	31.9	41.8	32.8	13.3

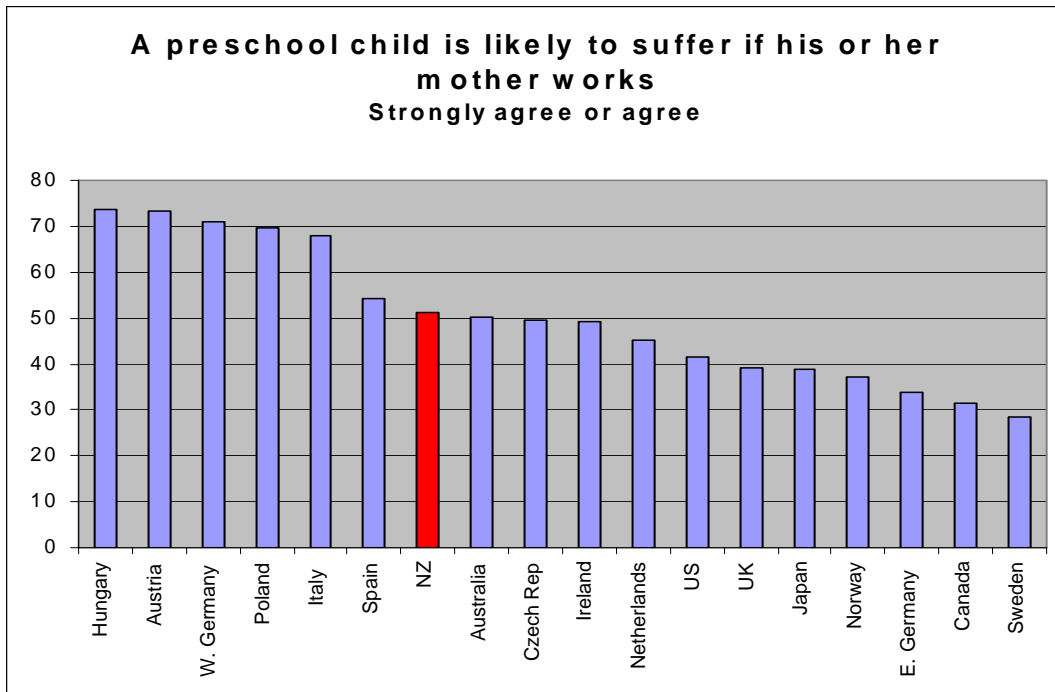
Source: Table 2.1 OECD (2003)

Appendix Figure 3 –



Source: International Social Survey Programme 1994 as reported in OECD (2003)

Appendix Figure 4 –



Source: International Social Survey Programme 1994 as reported in OECD (2003)

Appendix Table 3 – Attitudes about whether mothers ought to work when they have preschool children and ideal mean hours of work for mothers, 1994-1995 (selected countries)

	Percentage preferring to be at home	Ideal hours of work if working (mean)
Sweden	27	15.8
Netherlands	40	14.8
Canada	45	14.4
Norway	44	12.0
Ireland	52	11.4
United States	54	11.2
United Kingdom	62	8.7
Australia	64	7.8
New Zealand	71	6.3

Source: International Social Survey Programme Family-2 Survey, 1994-1995 as reported in Evans and Kelley (2002)

Note: When the full set of countries is considered, only Poland has a higher proportion of mothers preferring to be at home (74%). New Zealand has the lowest ideal hours for women of all the countries.

Appendix 3

Appendix Table 4 – Joint average hours of paid work for non-agricultural employed married couples aged 25-59, selected industrial nations

Country and year	Average hours worked per week- All couples where one or both partners work	% dual earners	Average hours for dual earners
US (1997)	72	76	81
New Zealand (2001 & 1996)	71 (70)	74 (72)	81 (80)
Finland (1991)	70	81	77
Canada (1994)	65	66	77
Sweden (1995)	64	85	69
Belgium (1996)	64	58	79
France (1994)	62	61	76
Germany (1994)	60	56	75
Italy (1995)	59	46	78
UK (1995)	57	55	74
Netherlands (1994)	52	52	64

Note: The source of all non-New Zealand data is Jacobs and Gornick (2001). There are some differences in how the data were calculated between countries. The main one is that in some countries, including New Zealand, both defacto and married couples are included. In all countries the couples included are those where at least one partner was in paid work. In New Zealand, agricultural workers -ANZSIC Industry - Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing - were removed from the calculation to make the data internationally comparable. In addition, both partners needed to be in the 25-59 age group. Finally, the New Zealand and international data is rounded to the nearest hour or percentage.

Appendix 4

Appendix Table 5 – Mothers and Fathers' Average Weekly Hours in Paid Work, OECD countries, approximately 2000, (parents age 25-50, married/cohabiting)

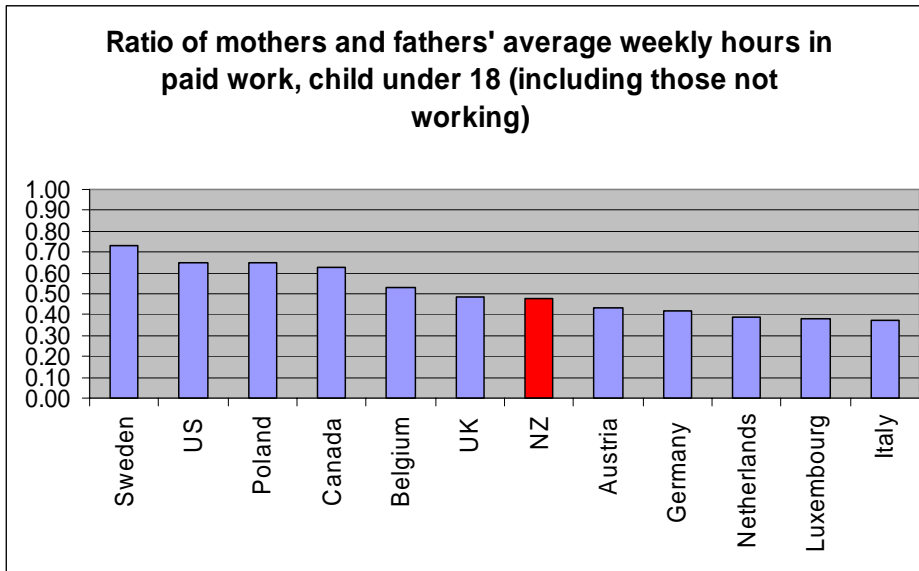
		including those with zero hours					excluding those with zero hours				
	age of youngest child	0-2	3-5	6-12	13-17	all	0-2	3-5	6-12	13-17	all
New Zealand 2001	Mothers	12	18	24	29	20	26	28	31	35	30
	Fathers	41	41	43	44	42	47	47	48	48	47
Austria 1997	mothers	20	17	17	24	19	33	29	27	33	30
	fathers	42	43	46	42	44	43	45	47	44	45
Belgium 1997	mothers	23	19	20	20	20	34	31	32	34	33
	fathers	37	38	39	38	38	45	43	46	46	45
Canada 2000	mothers	20	22	25	28	25	27	30	31	33	31
	fathers	38	39	41	39	40	40	41	42	41	41
Germany 2000	mothers	8	12	18	25	17	25	24	27	32	28
	fathers	41	41	41	42	41	44	45	45	45	45
Italy 2000	mothers	16	16	16	17	16	33	33	35	36	35

		including those with zero hours					excluding those with zero hours				
Luxembourg 2000	fathers	44	44	42	42	43	46	45	44	44	45
	mothers	19	15	15	16	16	33	30	27	27	29
	fathers	43	43	44	38	42	44	45	44	43	44
Netherlands 1999	mothers	16	14	15	17	16	21	21	20	23	21
	fathers	40	40	41	41	41	42	41	43	43	43
Poland 1999	mothers	15	23	26	28	24	36	39	39	40	39
	fathers	39	38	37	35	37	44	45	44	43	44
Sweden 1995	mothers	21	21	22	24	22	30	29	30	31	30
	fathers	31	31	29	31	30	37	38	39	38	38
UK 1999	mothers	15	17	22	27	21	27	26	29	33	29
	fathers	42	43	43	43	43	46	48	48	48	48
US 2000	mothers	24	24	28	31	28	35	35	35	37	36
	fathers	44	43	43	43	43	45	45	45	45	45

Source: International data Gornick (2005), New Zealand data special tabulations Statistics New Zealand.

Appendix 5

Appendix Figure 5



Appendix Figure 6 –

