



ROY MCKENZIE CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF FAMILIES

Te Pūtahi Rangahau Whanau

Assessing the Impacts of Government Policies on Fertility decision-making and family size

Presentation to the seminar on 'Sub-replacement
Fertility: Is this an issue for New Zealand?'

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<http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/publications/index.php>

Outline

- The review task
- The nature of the review
- The method
- The results
- Conclusion

The Review Task

Research commissioned by the Families Commission in mid 2005.

The objectives of the review were:

- to assess the New Zealand and international evidence-base on the actual impacts of government policies on family formation, size, dissolution, reconstitution, and living arrangements, irrespective of the legal status of the family;
- to identify worthwhile areas for further empirical research on these issues in New Zealand; and
- to draw out implications for New Zealand policy.

Amongst other questions, the review aimed to address the following:

- What evidence is there on the key ways in which government legislation and policies influence private decisions over family formation, size, dissolution, reconstitution, and living arrangements?
- What is the state of New Zealand evidence in this area?
- To what extent is it possible to attribute impacts on family form to individual interventions or policy domains, as opposed to the combined effects of policies across multiple domains?
- Is there any evidence of differential impacts of government policies and services on family formation, size, dissolution, reconstitution and living arrangements amongst indigenous people living as minorities in their own countries?

The Nature of the review

- To identify 'what is known'.
- New Zealand and International empirical research, but judged relevant to the New Zealand context.
- Focus is on Empirical studies.
- Does not canvas the arguments for or against Government attempts to influence family form.
- Systematic review methodology.
- Considers families 'irrespective of the legal status of the family'.
- Time period – published since 1990.
- Language – published in English.

Review Method

General categories of Government Policy or Services –

- **Legislation**
- **Social security and Taxation**
- **Education**
- **Health**
- **Housing**
- **Social services**
- **Employment**
- **Other**

Sources searched

- Selected internet websites (Government, research organisations)
- Journal Databases
- Library catalogues, other databases

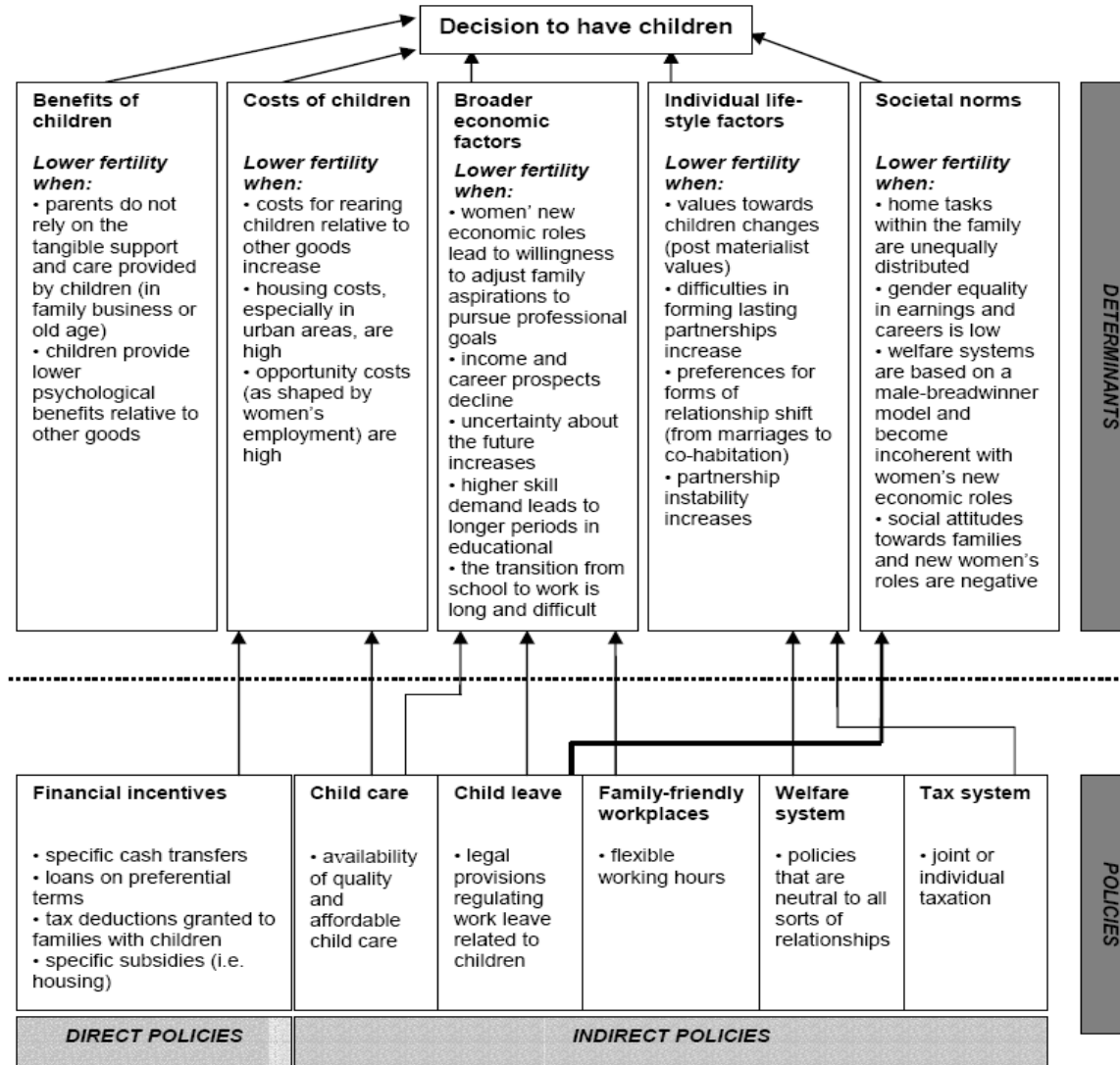
Key Informants

- Team consultants
- Government Departments
- Non-Government Organisations
- New Zealand Universities
- International Experts

The Results

- Levels of support to families
- Specific changes to tax or social assistance
- Child Support Enforcement
- Welfare benefits
- 'Family Caps' on benefits
- Programmes to reduce teenager pregnancy
- Funding of contraception and abortion

Model of Reproductive Decisions: Proximate Determinants and Policy measures



Authors (year)	sample	Country	Dep variable	Policy Variable	Results
Blanchet & Ekert-Jaffe (1994)	National data	Cross country comparison	Fertility	Range of family policies	More generous policies for families with dependent children associated with slightly higher fertility rates.
Bradshaw & Finch (2002)	National data	Cross country comparison	Fertility rates	Child benefit package	Countries with higher child benefit packages tend to have higher fertility rates. No controls for direction of causality.
d'Addio & d'Ercole (2005)	National data	Cross country comparison – OECD	Fertility rates	Range of family policies	Higher cash transfers for families with dependent children and higher replacement wages during maternity leave foster slightly higher fertility rates.
Gauthier & Hatzius (1997)	National data	Cross country comparison	Fertility rates	Cash benefits and maternity leave	Higher cash transfers for families with dependent children associated with small increases in fertility in most countries. NZ was an exception to the trend.
Gauthier (2001)	Review	International	Fertility	'Pro-natalist' policies	More generous policies for families with dependent children associated with slightly higher fertility rates. Impact possibly on timing rather than total fertility.
Grant, Hoorens et al (2004)	Review	International	Fertility	Range of family policies	More generous policies for families with dependent children associated with slightly higher fertility rates. Packages of policies may have more impact than individual policies.
Sleebos, (2003)	Review	International – OECD	Fertility	Generosity of family policies	Mixed findings. Small positive impact of more generous cash benefits on fertility.

Authors (year)	Sample	Country	Dependent variable	Policy Variable	Results
Buttner & Lutz (1990)	Official statistics	German Democratic Republic	Fertility rates	Policy changes 1972 and 1976 including Maternity leave	More generous maternity leave associated with rise in fertility.
Castles (2003)	National level	Cross country comparison	Fertility rates	Formal childcare provision	Small but significant positive relationship between childcare provision and fertility.
d'Addio & d'Ercole (2005)	National data	Cross country – OECD	Fertility rates	Paid parental leave	Higher replacement wages during maternity leave associated with higher fertility. Longer periods of maternity leave associated with slightly lower fertility.
Gauthier & Hatzius (1997)	National data	Cross country – International	Fertility	Maternity pay	Maternity pay was not related to fertility.
Hoem (1993)	Official statistics	Sweden	Parity-specific birth rate	Parental leave policy	Positive impact of more generous parental leave provisions on fertility rate.
Hyatt & Milne (1991)	National data	Canada	Fertility rates	Maternity benefits	Maternity benefits had a small but significant positive effect on fertility.

Authors (year)	Sample	Country	Dependent variable	Policy Variable	Results
Kravdal (1996)	Family and occupation survey	Norway	Probability 1 st , 2 nd and 3 rd birth	Day care facilities	Provision of day care facilities had weak positive effect on fertility.
Milligan (2005)	National data and micro data	Quebec – Canada	Fertility rates	Cash payments for children	Fertility increased in response to a baby bonus payment in Quebec.
Rindfuss and Brewster (1996)	County level	North Carolina US	Number of 1-2 year olds in county	Day care centres and homes	Limited evidence that child care provision increased fertility.
Whittington et al (1990)	Official aggregate data	United States	Fertility	Tax exemption for dependents	Significant positive relationship between the average tax value of the federal dependency exemption and the general fertility rate.
Whittington (1992, 1993)	Panel Survey of Income Dynamics	United States	Fertility	Tax exemption for dependents	Higher tax exemption for dependents associated with increased fertility.
Zhang, Quan & Meerbergen (1994)	National data	Canada	Fertility rates	Tax exemption, child tax credit, family allowances and maternity leave	Tax exemption, child tax credit, and family allowances all had a small positive effect on fertility. Maternity leave was unrelated to fertility.

Authors (year)	Sample	Country	Dependent variable	Policy Variable	Results
Aizer & McLanahan (2005)	National longitudinal data (Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study)	United States	Non-marital births	Child support enforcement (CSE)	Higher state spending in CSE lowers the chances of a single woman having a child.
Bloom et al (1996)	Survey of Income & Program Participation & National Longitudinal Survey of Youth)	United States	Fertility	CSE	Child support enforcement reduces non-marital births for low-income fathers, but has no effect on subsequent fertility of fathers who remarry.
Garfinkel et al (2003)	Sample of 867 observations across 50 states	United States	Non-marital birth rate	CSE	Strict child support enforcement associated with lower non-marital birth rate.

Authors (year)	Sample	Country	Dependent variable	Policy Variable	Results
Acs (1996)	National Longitudinal Survey of Youth	United States	Second births	Family caps and benefit levels	Welfare benefit levels and family caps had a negligible impact on fertility.
Duncan & Hoffman (1990)	National data	United States	Teenage ex-nuptial birth	Receipt of AFDC	Receipt of AFDC benefits not associated with probability of an ex-nuptial birth.
Levine (2002)	State level data	United States	Birth and pregnancy outcomes	Benefit levels, including family caps, welfare waivers and abortion policy	More generous benefits associated with increases in births, but no strong causal connection.
Robins & Fronstin (1996)	Current Population survey	United States	Non marital births	Benefit levels and differentials for extra children	No direct relationship between welfare benefit and fertility. Higher benefit levels associated with slight increases in family size for high school drop-outs, white and hispanic women.

Authors (year)	Sample	Country	Dependent variable	Policy Variable	Results
Camasso et al (1998)	Experimental evaluation	New Jersey – United States	Birth rate	Family caps	Birth rate was significantly lower among those subject to family caps.
Dyer & Fairlie (2004)	Current population survey	United States	Non-marital fertility	Family caps	No evidence that family caps reduced the incidence of out-of-wedlock births among single, less-educated women with children.
Fairlie & London (1997)	Panel of the Survey of Income and Program Participation	United States	Second births	Family caps and benefit levels	Family caps had negligible impact on fertility among sole mothers on benefit.
Fein (2001)	Experimental evaluation	Delaware – United States	Fertility	Family caps	No impact of family caps on fertility.
Horvath-Rose & Peters (2001)	State data	United States	Non marital to marital fertility ratio	Family caps	Family caps associated with a decrease in the ratio of non-marital to marital fertility.
Turturro, Benda & Turney (1997)	Experimental evaluation	Arkansas – United States	Fertility	Family caps	No impact of family caps on fertility.

Authors (year)	Sample	Country	Dependent variable	Policy Variable	Results
Kirby (2001)	Review	United States and Canada	Teen pregnancy	Education Programmes	Programmes have the potential to reduce teen pregnancy. Recommends education on both abstinence and contraception.
Loury (2000)	Review	United States	Subsequent Pregnancies for women on welfare	Nurse home visitation programme	Found home visitation programmes successful in lowering subsequent pregnancies.
Maynard et al (1998)	Review	United States	Repeat pregnancy among teenage mothers	Programmes to reduce repeat pregnancy	Mixed finding depending on the nature of the programme. Two programmes reduced teen pregnancy, in two they increased.
Swan, Bowe, McCormick, & Kosim (2003)	Review	International	Teen pregnancy	Programmes	Good evidence that programmes can reduce teen pregnancy.

Authors (year)	sample	Country	Dependent variable	Policy Variable	Results
Forrest and Samara (1996)	National Survey of Family Growth	United States	Births	Medicaid contraceptive funding	Estimated that Medicaid funding of contraceptives reduces teen births.
Klerman (1998)	Review	United States	Abortions	Medicaid abortion funding	Reduced funding associated with reduced abortions. Debate about direction of causality.
Levine (2002)	State and micro level	United States	Births	Abortion regulations	Parental involvement laws led to an increase in teenagers' use of contraception, resulting in fewer pregnancies and therefore fewer abortions. Overall no change in teenage births as a result of abortion law changes.
Lichter et al (1998)	County level Census data	United States	Female headed households	Access to abortion	Cutbacks in access to abortion associated with an increase in sole mother households.

Conclusion

- Difficulty of conducting research
- Results often mixed
- Importance of mixes of policy
- Country differences
- Impacts on sub-groups
- Timing vs. completed fertility
- Preferences