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Transitioning into parenthood:

Family leisure and heterosexual couples in New Zealand.

David Lamb

Student Number 10203704

Thesis submitted for Doctor of Philosophy
Edith Cowan University, Western Australia.

Abstract

The key research question on which this study was based concerned the transition period from first time pregnancy through to first time parenthood for heterosexual couples in Christchurch, New Zealand. The particular focus on this study was on how this transition impacted upon access, opportunity and experiences of family leisure. As a result this study can claim to be longitudinal as it follows a number of couples from the stage of pregnancy into early parenthood. A number of subsidiary questions were developed to explore the different dimensions of the key research question in terms of: the impact of gender; the major constraints to couples' leisure; preparation, expectations and realities of parenthood; and perceptions and opinions on leisure facilities and programmes for families, from couples, and a number of providers employed as leisure managers, within the study area. To answer the key research question two focus group studies were undertaken, one with pre-birth couples and the other with post-birth couples, followed by a number of interviews with different pre-birth and post-birth couples, both individually and collectively. Interviews were also conducted with a number of leisure facility managers to ascertain the extent to which, the facility they managed provided for, and met the needs of, families in terms of leisure.

The findings from this study show that gender was important in explaining the nature and characteristics of men's and women's leisure. In terms of access and opportunity for leisure, women were more constrained than men, as the significant life event loomed and this became even more evident during the early stages of parenthood. In preparing for parenthood, couples used a range of strategies, which included reading parenting literature; watching instructional DVDs and videos on different aspects of parenting; talking with friends and family about parenting issues; attending antenatal class and reflection on their own experience of being parented. In addition, this study highlights that women undertook the primary role in parenting and men provided a supporting role and the majority of first-time parents described parenting as enjoyable and rewarding, but time pressured, challenging and stressful.

Couples reported that finding time for coupled leisure, solo leisure and other leisure such as time out with friends became more difficult during the latter stages of pregnancy, and was even more limited after their child was born. Much of their free-time was taken up with preparing for the birth of their child or in meeting the needs of their new born, with a discernible shift in their lifestyle, from an adult to a child centered focus.

The majority of couples described the range and choice of leisure facilities in Christchurch as adequate and most of them used leisure facilities that were local and easily accessible on foot or via public transport. Accessibility and affordability was important for couples and the most popular leisure facilities mentioned were local parks, libraries, swimming pools and walking tracks. Leisure managers' reported a number of constraints limiting their ability to provide opportunities for families and included, outdated management styles and philosophies that emphasized a facility oriented approach in meeting the needs of the 'whole' community, rather than specific communities, such as families.

This research study follows a number of couples from the stage of pregnancy into early parenthood and provides new insights for first time parents through this transition. These transitions impact upon family leisure and other types of leisure such as solo leisure, coupled leisure and other leisure such as time out with friends for heterosexual couples. As a result of this study, a number of recommendations are provided to enhance and improve leisure provision for families. Also, a number of research priorities for family leisure research in the future are identified to encourage research using a wider range of methods.

Previous studies of family leisure have tended to focus their analysis across all stages of the lifecycle. Such studies have had little or no specific reference to particular lifecycle stages. In this study men's stories are told which helps fill the gap in the literature concerning men's experience of family leisure and the voices of those responsible for providing family leisure opportunities are heard in relation to family leisure. Finally, this study contributes to the family leisure literature and the parenting/family based literature and helps fill an important gap in our knowledge about the transition period between pregnancy and first time parenthood.

USE OF THESIS

The Use of Thesis statement is not included in this version of the thesis.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

1. incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

2. containing material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made to the text; or

3. contain any defamatory material.

Signature

Date -7th November, 2012

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Also, I would like to acknowledge the library staff that helped during the research period of this PhD on family leisure and the following libraries: The National library of New Zealand in Wellington; Christchurch City Centre Library (New Zealand); Christchurch South Library (New Zealand); Lincoln University Library (New Zealand); Joondalup Library (Perth, Australia); Whitfords Library (Perth, Australia); Woodvale Library (Perth, Australia) and Edith Cowan University Library (Perth, Australia).

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Sharon Lamb and my daughter Imogen Fern Lamb for being there in providing encouragement and intellectual, spiritual and emotional support, throughout this long, yet enjoyable journey.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, my mother, Mrs Frances Lamb and my late father, Mr Norman Lamb without whom, this thesis would not have been possible.

List of Tables

2.1 Households in Christchurch and New Zealand in 2006 containing a family in private occupied dwellings (Adapted from NZ Statistics 2009 18

3.1 Ethnic composition of NZ and Christchurch in 2006 64

3.2 Christchurch estimated and projected population 2001-2026 (Adapted from NZ Statistics 2009) 65

3.3 Focus group questions 69

3.4 Checklist for focus groups 72

3.5. Pre Birth and Post birth interview schedule 75

3.6 Interview guide for leisure managers 79

4.1 Pre-birth focus group participants 84

4.2 Post-birth focus group participants 96

5.1 Reflections on antenatal class (Pre-birth interviewees) 127

5.2 Challenges and concerns of parenthood (Pre-birth interviewees) 130

5.3 Reflections on antenatal class (Post-birth interviewees) 174

5.4 Interview schedule for pre-birth now post-birth couples 200

List of Figures

1.1 Emergent conceptual framework 10

1.2 Organisation of the thesis 13

2.1 Core and balance model of family leisure 22

3.1 Research framework 66

3.2 Room set up for focus group studies 71

3.3 Seidel's model for analysing data (Seibel, 1998) 81

3.4 Analysis of data model (adapted from Miles and Huberman, 1994) 81

5.1 Improvements for antenatal class (pre-birth interviewees) 130

5.2 Improvements for antenatal class (post-birth interviewees) 176

7.1 Conceptual framework (post-findings) 227

CONTENTS

Title Page		I
Abstract		II
Use of thesis		IV
Declaration		V
Acknowledgements		VI
Dedication		VII
List of tables		VIII
List of figures		IX
Contents		X

Chapter 1 **- Introduction**

1.1	Background to the Study	1
1.2	The Research Questions	3
1.3	Research Design	4
1.4	Qualitative Methods	4
1.5	Research Ethics	6
1.6	The Research Process	7
1.7	Emergent Conceptual Framework	9
1.8	Organisation of the Thesis	11
1.9	Summary of Chapter	14

Chapter 2 – **Literature review**

2.1	Introduction	15
2.2	The Literature Review Process	15
2.3	Family Life in New Zealand	16
2.4	Theoretical Interpretations of Family Leisure	21
	2.4.1 Life cycle theory	21
	2.4.2 Systems theory (Core and balance model of family leisure)	22
	2.4.3 Social/Psychological paradigms	25
	2.4.4 The sociological paradigm	26
	2.4.5 Feminist theories	27
	2.4.6 Postmodernism	35
2.5	Key Themes in Family Leisure Research	37
	2.5.1 Defining leisure	37
	2.5.2 Evolution of family leisure studies	41
	2.5.3 The contradictions of family leisure	44
	2.5.4 Sex and gender	47
	2.5.5 Constraints on family leisure	48
	2.5.6 Work-life balance	51
	2.5.7 Parenting issues	56
2.6	The Limitations of New Zealand Family Leisure Research	59
2.7	The Research Gaps and Contribution of this Study	60
2.8	Summary of Chapter	62

Chapter 3- **Methodology**
3.1 Introduction 63
3.2 Study Area 63
3.3 Research Framework 66
3.4 Research Method Stages 68
3.4.1 Focus group studies 68
3.4.2 Pre-birth and post-birth interview study 74
3.4.3 The interview study of managers 78
3.5 Data Processing 80
3.6 Summary of Chapter 82

Chapter 4 **– Focus Group Studies** (pre-birth and post-birth couples)
4.1 Introduction 83
4.2 Pre-Birth Focus Group Participants 83
4.3 Pre-Birth Focus Group Findings 85
4.3.1 Conceptualising work and leisure 85
4.3.2 Couple leisure 87
4.3.3 Realities of pregnancy 90
4.3.4 Child friendly leisure 92
4.3.5 Summary of findings for pre-birth focus group 94
4.4 Post-Birth Focus Group Participants 95
4.5 Post-Birth Focus Group Findings 97
4.5.1 Parenting ideologies and realities 97
4.5.2 'New' demands on time 98
4.5.3 Couple leisure 100
4.5.4 Constraints on leisure 103
4.5.5 Summary of findings for post-birth focus group 104
4.6 Discussion of Pre-Birth and Post-Birth Findings 106
4.7 Implications of Focus Group Findings for the Interview Studies 108
4.8 Summary of Chapter 109

Chapter 5– **Interview Findings and Discussion** (pre-birth and post-birth)
5.1 Introduction 110
5.2 Pre-Birth Interview Study 110
5.2.1 The pre-birth interviewees 110
5.3 Key Findings of Interviews (pre-birth) 111
5.3.1 Ideologies of parenting 112
5.3.2 Familial roles 118
5.3.3 Expectations of parenthood 122
5.3.4 Preparation and planning for parenthood 125
5.3.5 Antenatal class 127
5.3.6 Change, challenge and parenthood 130
5.3.7 Planning for childcare 133
5.3.8 Solo leisure 138
5.3.9 Time for each other 142
5.3.10 Leisure and pregnancy 144
5.3.11 Planning for family leisure 149
5.3.12 Family leisure values and practicalities 153
5.3.13 Leisure facilities in Christchurch 155
5.3.14 Improving leisure provision for families 161

5.4 Post-Birth Interview Study 164
5.4.1 Post-birth interviewees 164
5.5 Key Findings of Interviews (post-birth) 165
5.5.1 Familial roles 165
5.5.2 Ideologies of parenting 170
5.5.3 Preparation and planning for parenthood 172
5.5.4 Preparing for the birth (antenatal class) 174
5.5.5 Realities of parenting (the experience) 176
5.5.6 Defining leisure 179
5.5.7 Provision of childcare 183
5.5.8 Constraints in leisure 184
5.5.9 Family leisure 190
5.5.10 Leisure facilities in Christchurch 194
5.5.11 Improving leisure provision for families 196
5.6 Pre-Birth, now Post-Birth Interview Study 199
5.6.1 Pre-Birth, now Post Birth Interviewees 199
5.7 Interview findings for Pre-Birth, now Post-Birth Interviewees 199
5.7.1 Expectations and realities of parenting 200
5.7.2 Time use/management 202
5.7.3 Childcare 204
5.7.4 Leisure pre/post birth 205
5.7.5 Family leisure 206
5.8 Summary of Chapter 209

Chapter 6 – **Interview Study of Leisure Managers**
6.1 Introduction 210
6.2 The Interviewees 210
6.3 Findings of Leisure Manager Interview Study 212
6.3.1 Philosophy of provision 213
6.3.2 Facility design 214
6.3.3 Customer focus 217
6.3.4 Meeting family needs 217
6.3.5 Facilitating family leisure 218
6.3.6 Improving family leisure provision 220
6.4 Summary of Chapter 222

Chapter 7**– Conclusions**
7.1 Introduction 223
7.2 Key Findings of this Study (in relation to research questions) 223
7.2.1 Conceptual framework (post-findings) 224
7.2.2 Transition to parenthood 228
7.2.3 Gendered leisure 232
7.2.4 Constraints 235
7.2.5 Parenting expectations 238
7.2.6 Family friendly leisure 240
7.2.7 Leisure manager perceptions 241

7.3 Reflections on the Research Study 243
7.3.1 Getting into the field 243
7.3.2 Rationale for mixed methods 244
7.3.3 Accessing research participants 244
7.3.4 Pre-birth and post-birth interviews 245
7.3.5 The manager interviews 247
7.4 Limitations of the Study 247
7.5 Recommendations of this Study 251
7.5.1 Parenting organizations and support groups 251
7.5.2 Employers (the workplace) 253
7.5.3 Leisure profession and providers 254
7.6 Suggestions for Future Research 257
7.6.1 Methods 257
7.6.2 Research priorities 259
7.7 Summary of Chapter 262

References 263

Appendices 282
Appendix 1 Research sheet for volunteers (Pre- birth and Post-birth 283
Appendix 2 Research information sheet for managers of leisure facilities 285
Appendix 3 Consent form for focus group participants/interviewees 287
Appendix 4 Parents Centre newsletter article 288
Appendix 5 Flyer to recruit pregnant females and their partner for interview 290
Appendix 6 Pre-birth interviewees 291
Appendix 7 Post-birth interviewees 296

Chapter 1- Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

The origins of this research developed mainly from my experience as a 'new' parent and the impact the transition from pregnancy to parenthood had on my life in general, and more specifically, on the type of leisure I now partake in. Involvement in my wife's pregnancy and early fatherhood has provided me with first-hand experience of preparing and becoming a member of a 'new' family. Moreover, this experience has been a useful insight into how the nature of leisure is shaped and determined by significant life events such as, pregnancy and parenthood. Also, the opportunity of being involved with an antenatal group expecting children provided a useful window into how their lives had changed since the news of their 'new' arrival. These key informants were helpful in gaining access to the research participants at the initial stage of this research study.

The antenatal group I was involved with met on a weekly basis where we were presented with the facts about childbirth and given advice on looking after the practical needs of a baby. The mode of delivery was very instructional and one-way, with no opportunity to discuss issues on parenting with the rest of the antenatal class. However, during the coffee break as a group we had the opportunity to relax and talk informally about the worries and concerns we shared about our future parenting roles. Frequent topics of discussion involved debates on how pregnancy and early parenthood might impact upon family life and time and access to leisure opportunities. These informal conversations during coffee breaks gave me the idea that a study focusing at a specific stage in the lifecycle and on a specific issue (leisure) would be worthy for further investigation. Furthermore, a review of family leisure research showed that there was a gap to be filled by such a study. Therefore, this thesis is based on the leisure experience of heterosexual couples who live together in a household during two key life stages identified as pregnancy and first-time parenthood with their own biological children.

This is a transitional lifestyle stage that is not well understood, as research in this area has been limited and we still lack valuable information on how couples manage the transition into parenthood. I was mindful that in many contemporary families other couples co-habit and do not marry, are no longer married or are re-married. All the couples recruited for the focus group studies were married, whereas all the interviewed, but it was not determined whether any of the interviewees were married or not. All the couples involved in the study were living together within the same household.

Due to my first-hand experience of the likely issues to impact upon family leisure, I wanted to follow the tradition outlined by Becker (1998, p.88) who argues that, "it is only by continuing to work on the same problem that workers in a discipline make any progress on anything". As a result, I was able to get "nearer the conditions in which they [the subjects of this study] actually attribute meanings to objects and events, the more accurate our descriptions of meanings will be"(Becker, 1998, p.14). This view is supported by Tolich and Davidson (1999, p.6) when they assert that, "fieldwork is about participating in the actual research setting as much as possible, dealing with the people who live in these settings…and describing people and events in that natural setting". In essence, my primary objective was to encourage those involved in the research to speak for themselves in order to give meaning to the research in what Lofland and Lofland (1995, p.170) describe as a "hard process of enquiry, with an open ended and open-minded desire to know a social situation". This approach gave me the opportunity to tell the reader what I had been doing, to make this study worthwhile (Schrodinger, 1951, cited in Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p.167). The study was undertaken within a defined area (Christchurch, New Zealand), utilising a range of qualitative methods, including focus groups and interviews, involving individuals and couples. My intention was that this study would contribute to the literature on family based leisure, and lead to a better understanding in terms of how first-time pregnancy and first-time parenthood impacts upon the dynamics of leisure for heterosexual couples, as individuals and collectively as a family over a period of time. As a result, this study can claim to be longitudinal as it follows a number of couples from the stage of pregnancy into early parenthood. The onset of parenthood is a significant life event for both men and women and according to Such (2009, p.81), "symbolises a significant shift in the form, structure, meaning and experience of leisure".

1.2 The Research Questions

This study was based upon couples involved in a heterosexual relationship residing in Christchurch, New Zealand during first-time pregnancy and first-time parenthood and on the impact this transition period had on their life and leisure. As a result, the key research question that was posed reflects this aim and is presented below.

Key research question

- How does first-time pregnancy and first-time parenthood, impact upon heterosexual couples in terms of their access, opportunity and experiences of leisure as individuals, as a couple and as a family?

Once, the key research question of this study was confirmed, a number of subsidiary questions were formed to explore the different dimensions that emerged and helped provide further direction and objectivity to this research study.

Subsidiary research questions

- How do couples prepare, and what are their expectations for parenting, and how do such expectations relate to the realities of parenting?

- What are some of the major challenges that first-time parents face in the early stages of parenthood?

- In what ways does gender impact upon and influence men's and women's access to personal leisure and family leisure opportunities during first-time pregnancy and first-time parenthood?

- Are there constraints that operate upon personal leisure and family leisure during pregnancy and once couples become parents, other than those imposed by gender relations?

- How 'family friendly' are facilities for leisure in Christchurch, as perceived by heterosexual couples in Christchurch?

- To what extent do leisure facility managers in Christchurch firstly, understand the leisure needs of families and secondly, provide for these needs in the facilities they manage and the programmes they offer?

1.3 Research Design

The research design for this study was based on phenomenology, where the experience of the subjects being studied was significant and involved developing an understanding of the lived experiences of pre-birth and post-birth couples, where the way they acted was dependent upon their understanding and meaning of their behaviour (Waters, 1994). This study focused on two key life stages, first-time pregnancy and first-time parenthood, which is an underdeveloped area of research in family leisure studies, as previous approaches have tended to concentrate on all phases of family life (New Zealand Families Commission, 2004).

Parenthood is a significant life event, recognised by the establishment in 2004 of the New Zealand Families Commission, as an advocate for New Zealand families. The Commission has argued that family life in New Zealand is a core component of social life and a very important social institution, which is critical for the well being of individuals and society in general. This view was supported by other research undertaken by Statistics NZ (2010) who related positive family functioning to the well being of adults and the child-parent relationship. Furthermore, research undertaken by Warner-Smith and Brown (2002) and Currie (2009) has recognised that new mothers are adopting a range of strategies to achieve this.

1.4 Qualitative Methods

The qualitative methods selected for this research study, reflected my epistemology and my previous training and research experience in qualitative methodologies. Qualitative research stresses the importance of the participant's viewpoints and use of this method encouraged participants in this study to describe and explain their experiences in their own words. As a result, the researcher is able to develop ideas about the data that are grounded in the experience of the participants (Minichello *et al.* (1992). Veal, (2006, p.193) confirms this assertion and has claimed that "qualitative research is generally based on the belief that the people personally involved in a particular....situation are best placed to describe and explain their experiences". By adopting a qualitative framework in this study, the voices of pre-birth and post-birth couples were able to be heard first hand, in what Flick *et al*. (2004) refers to as "capturing their point of view".

A study of the existing literature on methods used in family life and leisure research indicated that a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used. The quantitative studies, reviewed later in Chapter 2, were useful as they provided a framework to develop the study. For example, a number of researchers studying family leisure have used the 'family leisure inventory' (Zabriskie, 2001). This quantitative technique utilises time budget methods that have proved useful in understanding how family members spend their time and on what activities family members engaged in. Nevertheless, Mittelstaedt *et al.* (2001/2002, p.15) have recognised the limitations of quantitative research in leisure studies. They argue that, "significant advances in leisure research have been made, but there is still some concern that most studies have employed quantitative methods and have been more concerned with empiricism, rather than with the unique subjective quality of leisure". In this study, quantitative data provided a useful grounding and the qualitative methods employed sought to capture more in-depth understanding and detail (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

My methodological approach was associated with interpretive design involving cognitive and affective components to encourage the research respondent to be active in the research enquiry (Jones, 1997). The diversity of approaches, epistemologies and understanding associated with qualitative research offer a useful range of methods to research views and opinions (see Tesch, 1990). The qualitative methods adopted included focus groups and interviews with males and females involved in a heterosexual relationship, and a number of leisure facility managers employed in organizations, that provided a leisure service within the study area (see Chapter 3).

My focus was on in-depth analysis of a specific issue (family leisure) in a specific locality (Christchurch) in what Patton (2002) refers to as centering the research to secure what he refers to as 'rich qualitative data'. It is acknowledged that some researchers would argue that the downside to qualitative research is that closeness to the research participants could potentially lead to bias (Creswell, 1998). Nevertheless, in order to avoid research bias in this study, research participants were encouraged to speak freely for themselves, in their own words. A series of prompting questions were used with the purpose of encouraging them to talk and discuss issues and their words were recorded in full (Powell *et al.* 1996).

The data was analysed using the principles of grounded theory and involved firstly reading the data and then coding the data using the 'words' of the participants involved in the study or as Currie (2004, p.228) remarks "interpretations of their own social reality". The issues they raised formed the themes for the findings, as Almer *et al.* (1988) has described in his research. Once the data from the focus groups and interviews had been fully transcribed, participants were given the opportunity to read and check the feedback they gave. This is a useful strategy for participants to check the accuracy and validity of the data and is referred to as 'member checking' in the qualitative literature (Patton, 2002).

1.5 Research Ethics

The proposal for this research study was evaluated and scrutinized in some detail, before being accepted as an ethically appropriate study for research purposes by the Lincoln University Human Ethics Committee (HEC). This was a useful process and helped streamline the research plan to determine what was feasible and acceptable, as an ethical study. To maintain participant anonymity, pseudonyms were used, so that individuals would not be recognised in the research. In order to fully inform focus group participants and interviewees, they were provided with an information sheet about the purpose and aims of the research study (Appendix 1). Similarly, leisure managers were provided with an information sheet on this research study (Appendix 2). Furthermore, to acknowledge their involvement in the research study, all research participants were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix 3) which became what Tolich and Davidson (1999, p. 120) refer to as, "a de facto research contract covering what both have agreed to". The consent form was useful as it clearly outlined that anonymity would be preserved and that the opportunity to 'opt' out of the research at any time was available. Personal details of pre-birth and post-birth focus group participants and interviewees, including leisure manager details, were kept in a secure lockable filing cabinet. These details included information about their age, gender, income, marital status, working status and residence. Personal information was only accessible to individual research participants and the researcher.

1.6 The Research Process

When researching the literature on family life it became clear that a significant body of research exist, but the research on family leisure is limited in relation to the potential significance of leisure within the family context. Shaw (2008b, p.689) has also claimed that a gap in the research literature on family life exists:

> One area of family life that has received relatively little attention in the academic literature is that of family life, including everyday leisure activities, as well as special events such as family vacations.

In addition, the literature on family life and leisure suggests that gender has a major impact upon the nature of male and female experience of leisure in the family and the extent to which individuals experience freedom, choice and opportunity within family leisure. Furthermore, the literature suggests that fathers/male partners experience much greater freedom, choice and less constraints when, compared to mothers/female partners (Wearing, 1990; Bialeschki, 1994; Bittman, 1999; Miller & Brown, 2005, Hilbrecht *et al.* 2008). In this study, as Allan (1980) notes, it was important to seek out the views and opinions of both partners in the family, a strategy suggested as fruitful in researching couples. This is important as, the experience of men and women is often different and "it is erroneous to assume, that men and women constitute a uniform population with uniform emotions and perceived experiences" (Davidson, 1996, p.92).

Moreover, men's voices in family leisure research have rarely been heard and as a result this study will help address the gap in the family based leisure literature, as relations between women and men have often been presented in the context of imbalanced gender relations (Such, 2006). This view is supported by Harrington (2009, p.51) when she identifies that:

> Fathers have not featured prominently in leisure studies, despite twenty five years of feminist scholarship that has found that women living with male partners and children tend to neglect their own needs for personal leisure.

So, rather than relying on one person's account this study seeks the views of both partners in an attempt to understand the nuanced understandings of gender relations (Forbat & Henderson, 2003) and provide a more comprehensive understanding of both individual and collective forms of leisure.

In this study, focus groups were undertaken during pregnancy (pre-birth) and during the early stages of parenthood (post-birth). The focus groups were used to explore a range of "different ideas ...as a result of people speaking off each other, rather than just holding a series of one-to-one meetings with the researcher" (Long, 2007, p.87). After the focus groups were completed, a number of different couples at both the pre-birth and post-birth stage were recruited and interviewed 'alone' and then together with their partner to ensure breadth in the research design, to seek out a wider range of responses. When interviewing partners separately confidentiality was crucial and required sensitive handling and management of the data to prevent disclosure to the other partner. The material gathered from one partner was not used in discussion with the other partner, ensuring good ethical practice (Forbat & Henderson, 2005). If the partners later chose to share information, that was their decision.

An interview schedule was developed as a result of the focus group findings and involved a series of questions in face-to-face interviews that could be adapted for the solo and couple interviews. This allowed for further probing where necessary and encouraged interviewees to give more detailed feedback and helped clarify statements and new aspects or points of view that were raised during the interviews (Babbie, 2004).

Furthermore, interviewing individuals and then couples together provided a useful strategy to compare both sets of data and to consider whether interviewees gave different perspectives or opinions on a range of issues, when interviewed as a couple or as an individual. So in effect, did individuals change their story, when interviewed with their partner or was there consistency in what they reported, when interviewed as a couple or alone?

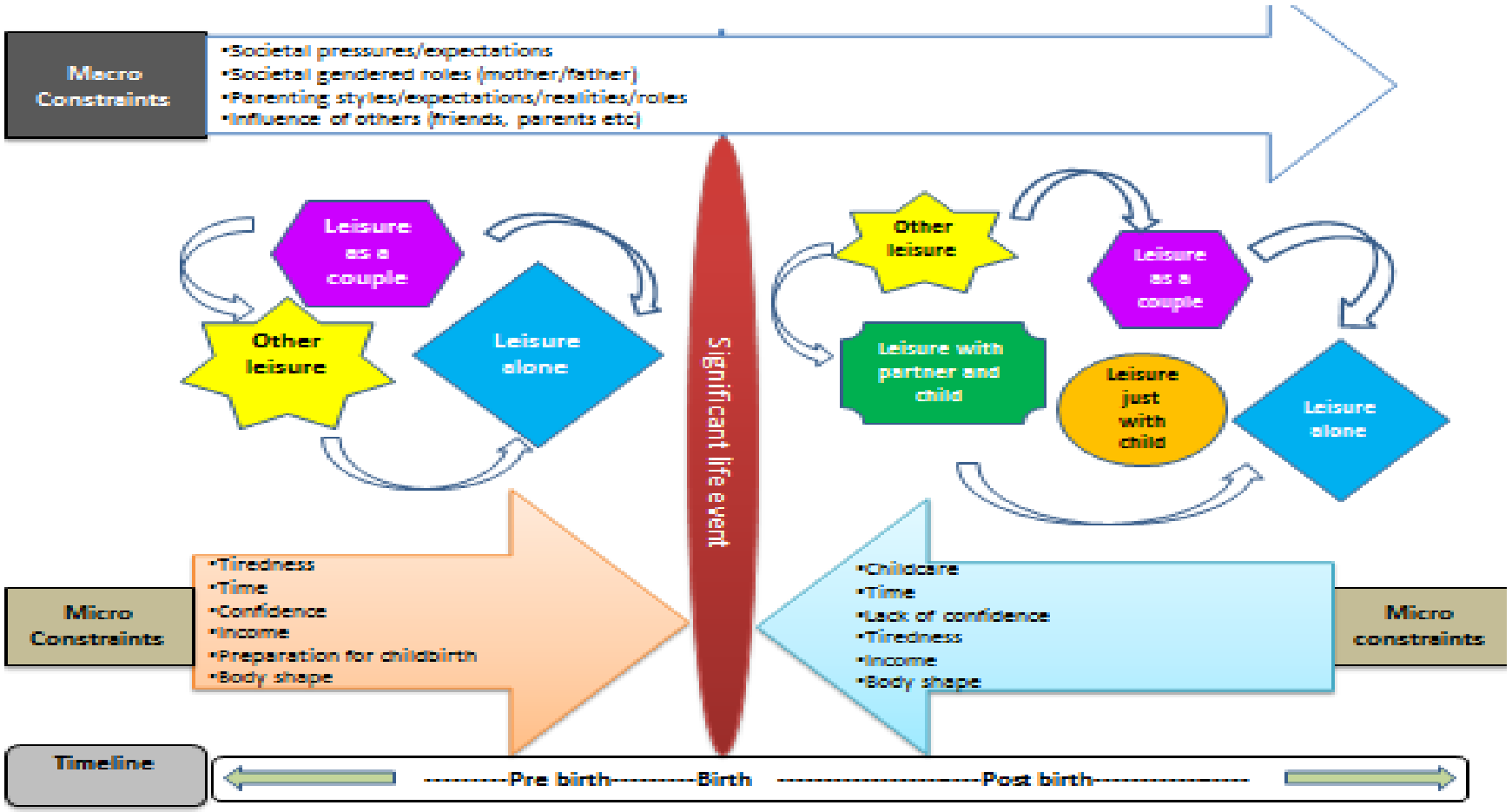
In reviewing the literature on leisure and parenting it became clear that gender differences with respect to the role of being a parent, plays a significant part in determining participation in leisure (Wearing, 1984; Green *et al.* 1986, 1990, 1995; Shaw, 1990; Miller & Brown, 2005). Men and women report positive experiences of family leisure, but women also encounter negative experiences, due to "obligatory family based activities…. mainly house work and childcare" (Larson *et al.* 1997, p. 110). In effect, women experienced "the traditional gendered division of household labour" (Hilbrecht *et al*. p. 454).

Early findings from the pre-birth and post–birth focus groups suggested that a number of key areas were worthy of further investigation during the interview stage. These areas included: factors impinging on family leisure; partnered leisure; couple time; pressures on time; conceptions and ideas about parenting; changing leisure contexts and patterns; forms of family leisure; family friendly facilities and processes concerning family leisure. The findings from the focus group and interview studies proved were helpful in compiling the interview schedule for leisure facility managers.

1.7 Emergent Conceptual Framework

The emergent conceptual framework of this study was based on a preliminary review of the research literature on family leisure and on my own position on the research problem, which recognised a 'gap' in the literature and gave direction and impetus to the study in more clearly understanding the key constraints that determine access, opportunity and experiences of leisure, during pregnancy and first-time parenthood. The framework proposes that during pregnancy and early parenthood, couples are subjected to both macro and micro constraints which both shape and are shaped by the nature of engagement in different types of leisure. During pregnancy this includes leisure alone, leisure as a couple, and other leisure, such as leisure with friends. In early parenthood the same types of leisure are evident, with the addition of leisure with a partner and child and leisure with a child, without the partner (Figure 1.1). Macro constraints are related to societal expectations surrounding parenthood, which are relatively stable and include issues surrounding the gendered nature of parenting and how couples' perceptions about parenthood are influenced by significant others, such as friends and their own parents. Micro constraints are less stable, more personable and different during pregnancy and early parenthood. Tiredness, lack of time and lack of confidence are influential micro constraints both during pregnancy and early parenthood. Preparing for the significant life event (birth) causes stress and anxiety for couples which affects their emotional state. For women, coping with changing body morphology, can be a major constraint to their participation in leisure. During the early stages of parenthood, the level of disposable family income, balancing the demands of work and life at home and the cost of leisure are some of the micro constraints that potentially constrain opportunities for all types of leisure. At the time when the emergent conceptual framework (Figure 1.1) was devised, the involvement of leisure managers in this study had not yet been considered.

Figure 1.1 Emergent conceptual framework for this study



1.8 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is organised into seven chapters, which are detailed below and are illustrated in Figure 1.2. In this first Chapter, information has been provided on the antecedents of this study and the key research questions are presented, after which the research methods, ethics and process are discussed. To conclude this chapter, the emergent conceptual framework on which this study was based is described.

In Chapter 2, the family as a concept is evaluated and then the key societal changes that have impacted upon New Zealand family life in the late 20th and early 21st centuries are identified. A number of theoretical approaches to the study of family leisure are then highlighted, which leads to the identification of a number of key and emerging research themes in family leisure.

In Chapter 3, Christchurch is introduced as the study location and its historical and demographic development are outlined to set the context for the study, and reference is made to the recent earthquakes, that caused extensive damage to the city centre and outlying areas. This leads to an explanation of the qualitative methods used and how the framework for this study was designed. The remaining sections of Chapter 3 then inform the reader how the participants for the pre-birth and post-birth focus group studies, the pre-birth and post-birth interview study and the leisure facility manager interview study, were recruited as research subjects. The final part of this chapter provides an explanation of how the data was processed, with regard to the research aims and objectives to form the basis of the research findings.

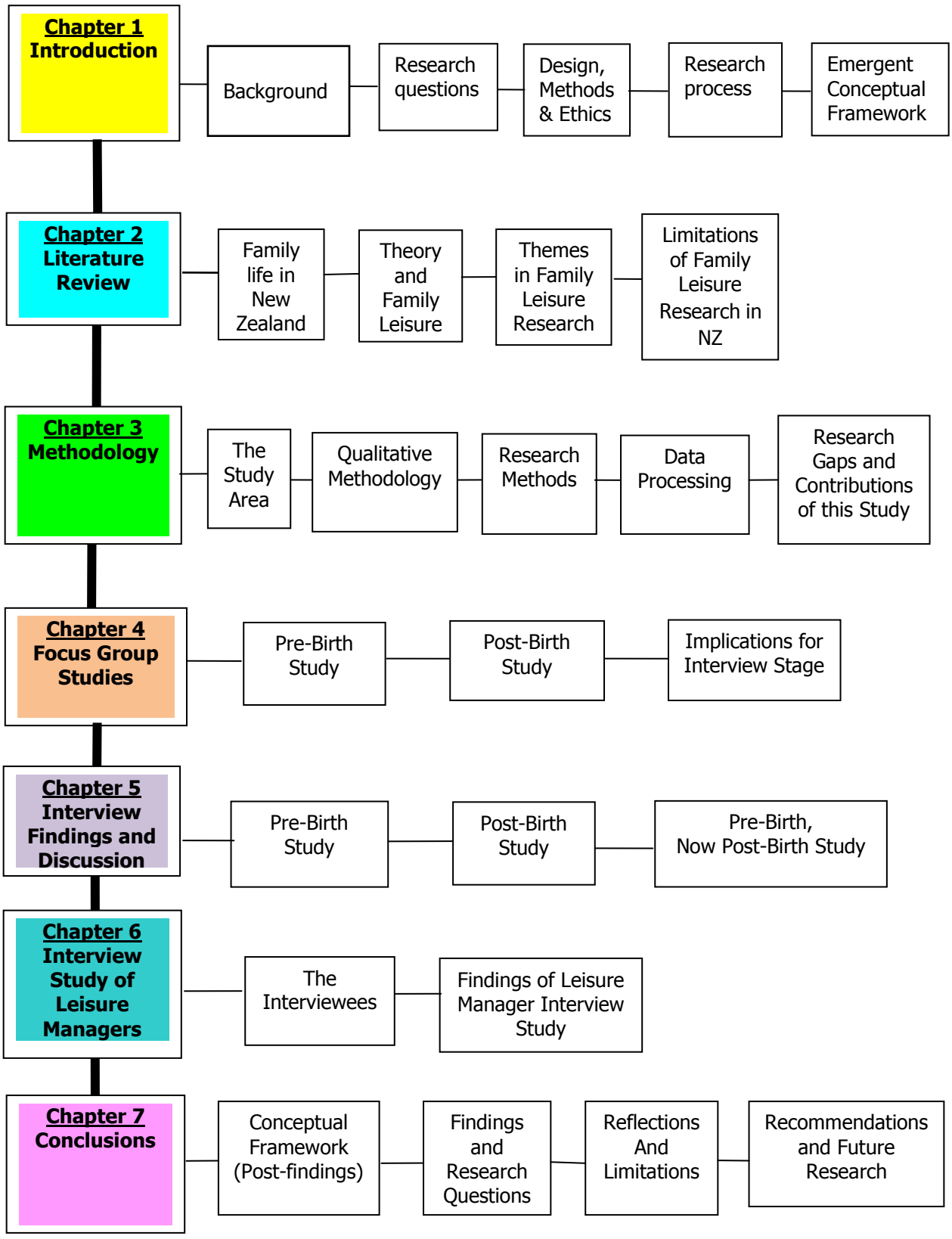
In Chapter 4, the discussion of the findings show how the themes emerged and in the pre-birth focus group study included partnered leisure, the realities of pregnancy and family friendly facilities. In the post-birth, focus group, a similar number of themes emerged, including the realities of pregnancy, increasing pressures on time, couple time, and changing leisure contexts and patterns. In the final section of this chapter, an explanation is provided of how the focus group findings were used in order to develop the methods for the interview stage of the study with pre-birth and post-birth couples.

In Chapter 5, the findings of the interviews conducted with twenty four pre-birth couples, and twenty six post-birth couples are discussed and evaluated. However, before the findings are reported for each set of interviews a brief resume of each interviewee identified by the use of a pseudonym is provided. The remaining sections of this chapter evaluate and then compare the data from each set of interviews. This is undertaken with reference to the implications of the findings from the focus group and interview studies and in relation to the development, design and structure of the interview study involving leisure facility managers.

In Chapter 6, the interviewees for the leisure facility manager study are introduced. The evolution of the interview guide for this aspect of the study is then explained, after which the data from the interviews with leisure facility managers is discussed in relation to the key themes that emerged.

In Chapter 7, the final version of the conceptual model (post-findings) is presented and then, all the data that resulted from this study is evaluated with reference to the research literature on family leisure and the research questions posed in Chapter 1. Next, a number of personal reflections on the challenges that arose during this research study are highlighted and discussed and the limitations of this study are described. In the final section of Chapter 7, a number of recommendations are given and suggestions are provided for areas of research that are worthy of further exploration in the future.

Figure 1.2 Organisation of the thesis



1.9 Summary of Chapter

In chapter 1, the background to this study was explained and the research questions and study design were presented. The research methods were then discussed in light of the research questions that were formed. The next section of this chapter provided the emerging conceptual framework on which this study was based, and then to conclude the chapter, the organisation of this study was outlined in Figure 1.2. Chapter 2 evaluates the concept of the family and discusses how the family has changed in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, with specific reference to New Zealand society, to set the study in context. A large section of this chapter is devoted to a critical analysis of the key research themes that emerged as a result of a review of the family based leisure research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter of this thesis the origins of this study were highlighted and the key research questions were stated. In this chapter a detailed overview of the family based literature and research is provided and organised into distinct sections. First, the literature review process is outlined and the concept of the family is evaluated, followed by a historical review of New Zealand family life, to set the context of the study. Next, a range of theoretical perspectives identified in the literature are outlined and then debated in terms of their relevance to family leisure. This discussion leads to a review of the historical antecedents of family leisure research, followed by a discussion of the emergent themes in family leisure research. A number of New Zealand based family leisure studies are then evaluated, followed by a discussion on the future of family leisure research. The next part of this chapter gives a number of suggestions for research priorities for family leisure research in the future, based upon the literature review undertaken as part of this thesis.

2.2 The Literature Review Process

The literature review process benefited this research study in a number of different ways. Firstly, it helped place the research problem in the context of family leisure and secondly, it was useful in identifying a number of significant overlaps and key research gaps in family leisure. Thirdly, undertaking the literature review helped define the outline and limitations of this study and refine the research questions. The process of reviewing the literature was also useful in determining the appropriate research methods relevant for this study. The main focus of this review was centred on literature that was used as evidence to explicate the key research questions of this study. In studying the appropriate literature applicable to the key research question, a firm foundation was formed on which to base this study on family leisure.

Given the voluminous nature of social scientific literature, as well as more general writings on the family, only information that was considered relevant to the field of family leisure was included. Therefore, the literature review focused on some of the key constraints to family leisure, such as gender issues, parenting and interpretations of concepts such as defining leisure for different family members.

2.3 Family Life in New Zealand

Defining the family is an onerous and complex task, especially if you consider different cultural concepts of family such as the concept of 'Whanau' in New Zealand (see Dumon, 1997). Families play a crucial role in a number of areas of life, including nurturing, rearing, socialization and protection of children. The family unit is also crucial in maintaining and improving wellbeing as well as providing emotional and material support. Being a member of a close-knit family can provide psychological 'anchorage' for both adults and children, through affection companionship, belonging and identity. Families provide synergy to people's lives and enable the transference of knowledge, values, attitudes, obligations and property between family members (New Zealand Families Commission, 2004). They also support and prepare children for future adult life (see Horna, 1993). The passing on of cultural beliefs and ideals from one generation to another is a recognised and important functional element of the family. Kelly (1995, p.55) provides a multi dimensional perspective of the family:

> It is a structure reflecting and absorbing influences from the social context. It is an ideology, a set of ideas about what could or should be achieved. It is a culture where individuals find their way through the family as a structure and ideology.

Over the last 50 years, the New Zealand family has witnessed unprecedented change, and as a result there is now greater diversity in different family forms including, "couples with children, sole parents, parents who don't live with their children but are still involved, same sex couples (some with children), and many families members who have ties of support across households and generations" (New Zealand Families Commission 2004, p. 4).

The word 'family' has a number of different meanings, beyond that of just parents and children. Many social scientists discuss the idea and importance of the extended family, which includes the couple and all their descendants. Others refer to the family as a descent group, including those who descended from an identified ancestor. Alternatively, a definition of family could include different kinds of groups who are not related to the family 'by blood', but still play a significant part in family life and see themselves as family. Copeland and White (1991) have usefully identified four key characteristics of a family, when compared to other groups in society. Families have 'biological' similarities, which are valued by the family.

They have a shared history, which may involve cultural or religious beliefs, and provide a supporting network. Often families have a shared understanding and expectations of their future due to their interaction, which could be described as either a positive or negative experience. Fourthly, families have a built in power hierarchy, which is often determined by a number of factors including: generational influence; cultural expectations; age difference and idiosyncratic family history. Hence, the concept of family has received some serious attention in the family research literature and is a complex concept worthy of further deliberation. Moreover, it comes as no surprise that since the inception of the New Zealand Families Commission in 2004, families have received a great deal more attention. The family clearly plays an important role in everyday life and in society in general, so much so that Orthner (1998) argues it is the most important institution in society. Kelly (1995, p.53) tends to agree. "In a mass society, we are connected first of all by our immediate communities….The family is the first primary connection for most of us". According to the Department for Children, Schools and Family in New Zealand, (2008, p.7), families are "the bedrock of our society….they nurture children, help build strength, resilience and moral values in young people and provide the love and encouragement that helps them lead fulfilling lives". These are rather 'grand' claims, but the family does have the potential to sustain itself and adapt to changing social, economic and political circumstances.

Typically, the family has been referred to as two legally married parents who provide emotional and practical support, who nurture and socialize their dependent children. In 1986, in New Zealand 40% of families were residing as two parent households with children compared to 24% of couples living without children. By 1996, couples with children accounted for 33% of households, compared to 26% of couples without children. More recent data has confirmed that two parent households with children had declined to 30%, compared to the growing number of households without children at 27% and one person households had increased from 19% in 1986 to 24% in 2007 (Ministry of Social Development, 2007). Table 2.1 indicates that in 2006, a one parent household with children was the commonest form of 'family type' in Christchurch and a couple with children the most common family type in New Zealand. However, by 2031 couple-without-children families are projected to be the most common family type in New Zealand with a projected increase from 468,000 in 2006 to 721,000 in 2031 (New Zealand Statistics, n.d.).

Table 2.1 Households in Christchurch and New Zealand in 2006 containing a family (or families) in private occupied dwellings (Adapted from NZ Statistics 2009)

Family Type	**Christchurch** (69% of households)	**New Zealand** (73.4% of households)
One parent with children (One parent with child (children), with or without other people, usually living together in a household. Any children are not usually living with a partner or child of their own).	28.9 %	29.3%
Couple with child/ren (A couple with child (ren), with or without other people, usually living together in a household. Any children are not usually living with a partner or child of their own).	27.6 %	30.8 %
Couple only (A couple without child(ren), with or without other people, usually living together in a household).	12.5 %	13.3 %

Some of the key factors that led to a shift in household type over this 20 year period include: an increasing ageing population; declining infertility; delayed childbirth; delayed marriage and rising divorce rates (Ministry of Social Development, 2008). When attempting to arrive at a satisfactory definition of family, major shifts in demographics and lifestyles have compounded the problem. Consequently, the concept of family broadened to encompass many different family forms, other than the traditional model of a two parent family with children, where 'dad' was the economic provider and 'mum' the care giver. Definitions and conceptualizations of the family are constantly being changed and renewed. The idealized notion of family life portrayed in the media in the 1960s and 1970s has long gone, but a healthy family can still provide its members with a positive sense of well being, ego, worth and companionship. Orthner (1998) has argued that the role of the family in contemporary society is still important in human development and that leisure can play a positive role in family life. A number of other researchers have supported this view in claiming that leisure improves family cohesion and vitality (Holman & Epperson, 1984; Kay, 1996; Parry, 2003; Poff *et al.* 2010a). The nature of the modern day family in New Zealand and other Western societies is now characterised by higher divorce rates; delayed marriages and childbirth; decline of the extended family; solo parents; unmarried couples and dual career families (New Zealand Families Commission, 2004).

Kay (2003, p.4) adds to the debate and notes that "families are changing.... and will continue to change, with consequences for the nature, role and place of leisure in family life". This will impact upon the composition, form, function and diversity of families in the future. In fact children in New Zealand may be raised by one, or many parents who may or may not be married, the same sex or biologically related to them. Thus, the term 'family' is a difficult concept to fully determine and the idea of a 'typical' family can no longer be identified, due to the many different forms of family that now exist. In this study, it should be noted that no claim is made or suggested that heterosexual families are a 'typical' family form, from which wider generalisations could be made. For the purposes of this research study, the family was viewed as a cohabiting heterosexual couple (male and female partner, married or unmarried) and with/without children. The key to this study was on the impact of first-time pregnancy and first–time parenthood on family life and leisure experiences.

Greater diversity in family functioning and relationships in New Zealand has eventuated as a result of rapid change in the wider social and economic processes. The progression of the Women's Movement originating in the 1950s witnessed the emergence of a new feminist movement which led to a reorientation of the place of women in the family, as they challenged rigid sex roles and family structure (see Macdonald, 1993). Societal expectations in the 1950s often viewed marriage as essential and the nuclear family as the 'norm' which was, further substantiated and legitimized by the New Zealand Government and media agencies. The introduction of the contraceptive pill and the end of the baby boom in the 1960s led to smaller families and further questioning of assumed gendered roles (see Smyth, 2000). More women were now in full time paid employment and education and others began to question their role as homemakers (Davies & Jackson, 1993).

In the 1970s single mothers and divorce became more acceptable and some couples practiced communalism and open marriage as an alternative to traditional marriage (see Barratt, 1980). Also, during this period, we see the emergence of the women's liberation movement in New Zealand. During, the 1980s great divisions opened up between different factions of the women's movement, due to differences of opinion concerning racial identification, abortion and political support (Cook, 2011). As notions of gender roles slowly changed in the 1980s, 'house husbands' became more visible and took a more active role in parenting, albeit only a few men, who had very different ideas about parenting compared to their own parents.

A number of 'new' parents in New Zealand began to seek advice from family organisations such as Plunket (New Zealand's largest provider of support services for the development, health and wellbeing of children under 5). By the 1990s, parenting had become part of a system supported by institutions such as pre schools, play centres, kindergartens, parent centres and after school activity clubs. In more recent years, the composition of families has changed considerably resulting in more solo parents, more multi-generational living and more complex relationship patterns between partners and children (Allen *et al*. 2000). Other significant changes have included the delayed formation of families, which meant that people in New Zealand were having more children outside of marriage in de facto relationships. Family units became smaller in New Zealand with the average household size in 2001 at 2.4 people per household, compared to 3.7 people per household in 1951 (NZ Statistics, 2006). This trend continued into 2006 where the average household size was 2.6 people and is projected to decrease to 2.4 people by 2031. The main factor contributing to a decrease in household size is largely due to the increasing number of one person households and couples without children and a decrease in two-parent families, which contain about four people on average (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). Furthermore, family types present in New Zealand society included, " two biological married parent families, married step families, de facto unions, intergenerational single parent families and single parent families" (Lees, 2007 p.97). Family life for many has changed and is reflected in the quote below:

> Four common themes in family life can now be recognised in post industrial societies, such as New Zealand. These, themes include an increase in the instability of partnerships; a decline in the rate of marriage; a weakening in the link between marriage and childbearing and a fundamental change in women's economic role in the family.
>
> (New Zealand Families Commission, 2004, p.8)

In summary, New Zealand demographics are consistent with global trends in the rest of the western world with significant increases in co-habitation, delayed childbirth and longer life expectancy all of which have important implications and consequences for family life in New Zealand in the future (Thomson *et al*. 2002).

2.4 Theoretical Interpretations of Family Leisure

Within this section of the thesis the main schools of thought that have emerged and impinged upon family leisure research are highlighted, and then critically evaluated in light of their relevance and usefulness to this study of family leisure.

2.4.1 Life cycle theory

One of the earliest studies to investigate family leisure was the lifecycle approach, first proposed by Rapaport and Rapaport (1975) in the UK. Their ground breaking research into the family lifecycle identified a number of leisure roles within the family and as Skolnick (1991) has shown, the framework provided people with the subjective sense of self in the world. In their research, they identified a number of key life stages such as: seeking a partner; forming a union with adult intimacy; older adult intimacy; retirement and finally widowhood or a possible additional union in later life. Identification of these key stages in our lives, argued Rapaport and Rapaport (1975) served as a useful insight into the different life phases we pass through chronologically. Furthermore, these life stages act as a vehicle for comparing and contrasting leisure habits and lifestyles in different periods of our lives. In addition, this approach gives some indication of satisfaction in life being prominent in early and later family life stages, but low during the mid life stages (Keller *et al.* 1991). Rapaport and Rapaport (1975) identified that leisure, work, and family are central life domains which determine how we individually and collectively construct our lives. Tribe (1999) used the model to determine leisure shopping habits (money and time spent shopping) and was able to identify consumer buying patterns and match them, to each stage of the lifecycle.

However, their model is of limited use in modern contemporary life and their research was conducted over 35 years ago, when the concept of the family was relatively simple and based upon the idea of a nuclear family. Moreover, Oppermann (1995) suggests that changing family structures cast doubt over the validity of the family lifecycle model. Pryor (2006) acknowledges this when explaining that widespread economic and social changes in New Zealand over the past 50 years have, resulted in a more dynamic and complex understanding of families. Another limitation of their research, relates to the lifecycle model they propose, as their model is rather oversimplified as it assumes, that as individuals, we move smoothly through each life cycle in a linear fashion.

Nevertheless, future use of the lifecycle approach suggested by Rapaport and Rapaport (1975) in family leisure research is rather limited, due to the dynamic nature of family life and the impending, ongoing, change in family life and structure. Their approach, deals more with generalities concerning the stages in which people move through their lives and not with specific life events, such as pregnancy or the arrival of the first child, which is the focus of this study. For example, significant life events mentioned above, can result in major changes for new parents, many of which impact upon their leisure choices and opportunities (Horna, 1993; Hochschild, 1998) and their marital satisfaction (Holman & Jacquart, 1998).

2.4.2 Systems theory (Core and balance model of family leisure)

The Core and Balance model of family leisure uses Kelly's (1994) notion of leisure patterns, which consist of activities that are consistent and accessible (core) and secondly activities that offer variety, but are less accessible (balance) and are encapsulated in Figure 2.1.

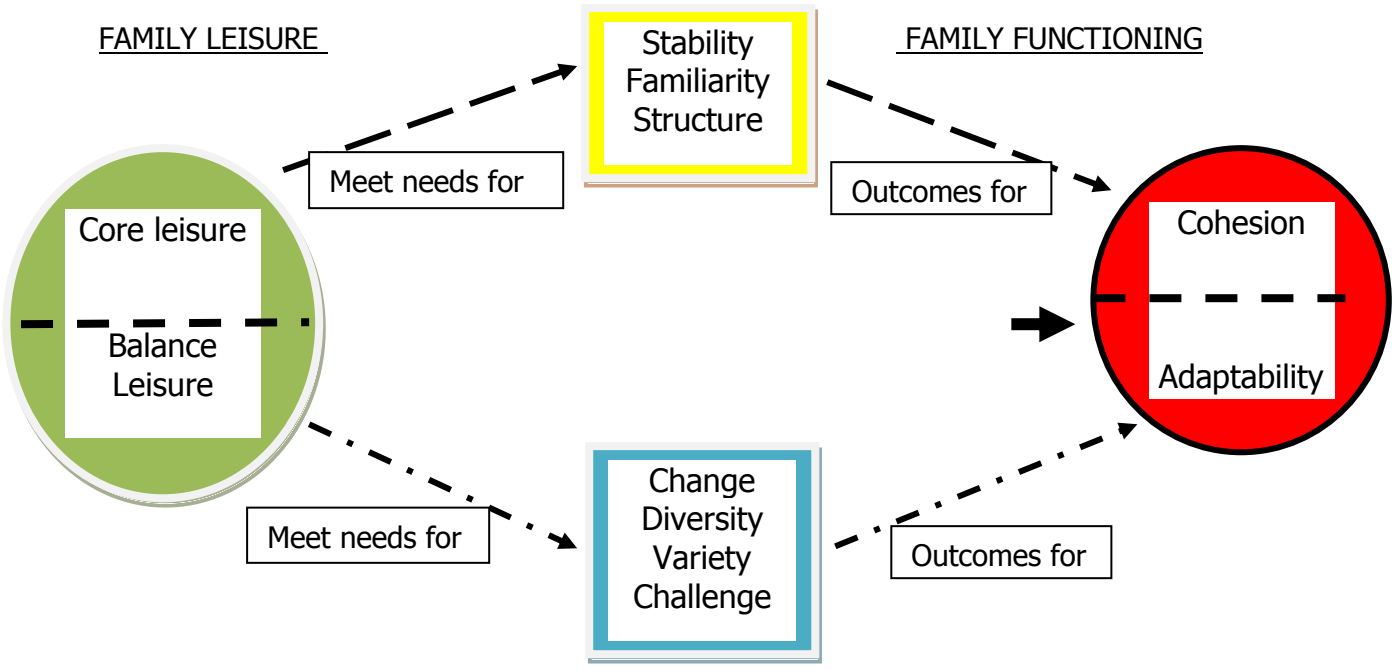


Figure 2.1 Core and Balance model of family leisure (Zabriskie, 2001)

The core and balance model of family leisure is based upon systems theory, which views the family as a system for stability, expressed through the need for consistency in terms of family structure relationship and interaction. Zabriskie and McCormick, (1997) argue that family leisure consists of a core (common, everyday, low cost, accessible and home based activities) that require minimal effort, planning and resources and are spontaneous and informal. In contrast, balance leisure patterns consist of activities that are less common and infrequent, thus inducing novelty. As a result, these activities generally require more resources and are based away from home and tend be less spontaneous, more formalised and involve activities such as family holidays, attending events and special outings. Balance activities help with family adaptability, as well as the challenges and demands that families face (Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001). In a later study, Zabriskie (2001) utilised the core and balance model of family leisure, and discovered a positive relationship between core and balance family leisure patterns in relation to family cohesion and adaptability. Nonetheless, Harrington (2006a, p.168) has demonstrated that, "these results should be considered tentatively, since 77% of the sample of parents was comprised of mothers". During his research, Zabriskie (2003) discovered that a positive relationship existed between the two factors, but indicated that parents and not children, considered family leisure important.

The study was limited in its scope, as it only sought the perception of females in the household and not the males. Also, core and balance leisure is open to many different interpretations and the perception of female respondents, while important, does not necessarily represent the perceptions of other family members, such as men. Agate *et al.* (2009) used the core-balance model to examine the contribution of family leisure to family life, which involved over 900 families in the U.S and concluded that family satisfaction with leisure together was the best indicator of satisfaction with family life. In particular, core family leisure involvement in and around the home had the most significant impact.

Kelly's (1994) ideas are consistent with Iso-Ahola's (1995) on the need for both stability and change in family leisure. Hence, patterns of family leisure (core and balance) meet the needs of stability and change within a family. Core leisure patterns include activities that are generic and can be undertaken on a regular basis and provide familiarity and stability. This could include relatively simple activities such as watching TV, or playing games which require little effort and pre-planning.

Within such activities families typically explore and clarify their roles, which in a positive sense, could lead to reward and rejuvenation (Zabriskie & McCormick, 1997). Core leisure activities potentially lead to family stability, closeness and cohesion, whereas balance leisure activities are infrequent, provide novelty, change and new experiences to challenge and develop the family. Zabriskie and McCormick (1997) hypothesize that family involvement in balance activities can lead to more effective adaptability with regards to new challenges and demands families often face, in a sense making families more adaptable and able to cope with a wider spectrum of events or eventualities.

For families to be considered healthy in their leisure and for them to positively contribute to family satisfaction, both balance and core leisure must be present in equal measure (Zabriskie, 2001). This has been recognised in later research undertaken by Harrington (2009) in that family leisure activities have a positive relationship with, and have an important role to play in, family stability and interaction. A number of other studies on family leisure have also used this model and remark that core leisure results in family adaptability and cohesion at all levels of family functioning (see Poff, Zabriskie & Townsend, 2010a). A similar study in Australia examined the "relationship between family leisure involvement, family functioning, family communication, family leisure satisfaction and satisfaction with family life" (Poff, Zabriskie & Townsend, 2010b, p.241). The study involved over 1,000 participants from a range of families including both youth and parent perspectives reporting similar findings to US based studies, establishing a direct link between leisure satisfaction and family satisfaction. In contrast, balance leisure is often ineffective in strengthening families, further emphasising the importance of core leisure in family life. Nevertheless, both core and balanced leisure is needed as involvement in one without the other, could lead to problems within the family (Kelly, 1993).

Viewed more simply, enjoyable family leisure tends to be simple, informal and impromptu in nature, although it could be argued that 'highly' organised forms of family leisure such as holidays are often enjoyable. This is the case for mothers who work, where time to bond and interact with the family is limited (Freysinger, 1994). Most working families now face a second shift when they arrive home, to deal with the housework and childcare, especially for women (Kay, 1996; Such, 2006).

Feminist theorists would argue that the majority of this extra work is undertaken by women, as the mother's role involves delegation and supervision of such chores (Shaw, 1992; Henderson, 1996; Larson *et al*. 1997; Hoshschild, 1998; Thompson 1998). In summary, the core and balance model of family leisure, suggest there are two general categories or patterns of family leisure, both 'core' and 'balance' and that different activities in which families engage have the potential to improve family life and functioning.

2.4.3 Social/Psychological paradigms

According to Shaw (2001, p.54) "a highly positive view of family leisure is typically portrayed through the research literature…. [and is] a reflection of the social psychological paradigm which dominates this area of study". This theoretical approach focuses on the individual as the unit of analysis and on the positive and beneficial effects of family leisure, where according to Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004, p. 181) "leisure is seen as beneficial, rather than idealized and is promoted as an important aspect of family life". The social psychological paradigm has not yet considered gender inequality in family leisure or the different points of view of family members. Within, this paradigm, Shaw (1997) has argued that research on the family and leisure has taken three major routes or primary concerns.

Firstly, the initial focus was on family influence through socialisation, lifestyle development and interests and behaviour. Secondly, family structure was the key issue where lifespan, childcare and family composition were considered. Thirdly, the focus on family role gained more importance where research highlighted how constraints and opportunities impacted upon family matters and leisure.

Shaw (1997) recognised the emergence of what she referred to as 'two distinct paradigms' in family leisure research. The most widely used paradigm, she refers to as the social psychological paradigm, which concentrates its analysis on interactions in the family and on the positive benefits of leisure for "improved relationships and communication among family members" (Shaw, 1997, p.101). In Holman and Jacquart's (1998) study involving 381 married couples, there was a positive connection between family and joint leisure activities and between joint leisure activities and marital satisfaction. Joint leisure activity led to more effective communication between couples and improvements in their relationship.

Social psychological paradigms associate experiences of family leisure with positive family interaction and marital satisfaction. However, most of these studies are limited to two-parent families and fail to identify the significance of gender relations in family life and the wider social context in which families operate. Much of the work in this area has led to only a partial understanding of family leisure, although some understanding has been gained of how "family leisure acts as a bond of mutual interests and expression" (Shaw, 1997, p. 104).

2.4.4 The sociological paradigm

The sociological paradigm in contrast to the social/psychological paradigm places, emphasis on "the broader patriarchal system [which impacts upon], how gender relations affect the expression and experience of leisure within the family [and on] the dominant hegemonic notions of masculinity and femininity" (Shaw, 1997, p.101-102). Approaches within the sociological paradigm, generally range from critical and cultural theory to Marxist and feminist theory, where gender has been identified as an important factor that impacts upon leisure behaviour (Wearing, 1998).

Compared to the social/psychological paradigm, emphasis in the sociological paradigm is often on the negative outcomes of family leisure in exposing and analyzing inequality and oppression within the family. This is evident in research undertaken by Thompson (1998) where she reported that women often put their partner's or children's needs first before their own. Later work by Pfister (2001, p.76) recognised that parental leisure is often highly fragmented and governed by the demands of "children's sleep patterns, feeding times, school structures, parents work demands, illnesses, children's leisure activities and so on". Daly's study (1996) showed similar trends where women were often caught between an increasingly 'hurried culture' and their own desire to protect family time, with little time for themselves. Kay's (1999) study explored women's leisure experience in professional and managerial occupations with pre-school children and highlighted that many of them were short of time due to 'time crunched households'.

Her study was useful, as it identified that women in high status occupations were able to use their employment status to challenge expected gender roles in relation to parenting and legitimise a reduction in the share of domestic and childcare duties with their partners. Nonetheless, this study was limited in that it did not involve men and only included a small sample of eleven women in full-time paid employment.

The sociological paradigm has paid little attention to men's and children's experiences of family leisure and, as a result there is a gap in the research, which this study will make a contribution to. This was first recognised by Shaw and Henderson (2005) when they became aware, that there was limited research evidence on men's leisure in family life. Furthermore, where data exist on men's leisure it is reported with reference to women's leisure and the variations of sub groups have yet to be explored. This apparent 'gap' in the literature has been partially filled by Kay (2009), with the publication of her book entitled 'Fathering through Sport and Leisure', which provides a useful account of men's experiences of family leisure through a range of different perspectives. Kay's book has improved our understanding of men's leisure and helped partially fill the 'gender gap' in family leisure research, which she first identified in an article entitled 'Where's dad - fatherhood in leisure studies' for the Leisure Studies Journal (Kay, 2006a). In this study, to gain a fuller understanding of men's role in family leisure, their voices will be heard, as they were in the work of Jenkins and Lyons (2006) on non-resident father's leisure with their children.

Shaw (1997) is critical of both the social/psychological paradigm and the sociological paradigm as she believes that both approaches fail to take into account 'non-traditional families', despite the fact that many different types of families exist and have done so for some time now. In addition, Shaw (1997, p.98) has identified that research in family leisure needs to fully consider the different family types that include, "single parent families, gay and lesbian families, blended and non custodial families, and families without children". Earlier work by Kelly (1994, p.252) seems to share Shaw's insights and adds that such an approach needs to be mindful of the fact that, "leisure and the family are just part of a regressive social system in which gender and social class determine values and symbolic meaning as well as opportunities".

2.4.5 Feminist theories

In essence, feminism is a framework of understanding and an ideology that supports the interest of women over men and is utilised as a political perspective directed at influencing and changing the balance of power between women and men in society (Birrell, 2000). Feminism could be described as a set of theoretical constructs focused on women's oppression and the constraints they face because of their social status (Corey, 2005).

Feminists view leisure as an integral part of social relations and life within a patriarchal structure and Wearing (1994) has shown that it can be an area for women's resistance to dominant discourses and their passive and subordinate positions in society. Henderson (1995, p.10) contributes to the debate when adding that a feminist perspective is useful in better understanding women's leisure. "These approaches have aimed at making the lives of women visible, examining how leisure can provide equity, dignity, and integrity".

The term 'feminism' is based upon the viewpoints of women and encompasses a range of views and political positions (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002). As a result, many schools of thought exist within feminism which includes: liberal feminism; radical feminism; cultural feminism; socialist feminism; postmodern feminism and post-structural feminism (Weedon, 1987; 1999). Despite these differences in theoretical positioning, many feminists would agree that the family is a primary site in which gender differences are created and sustained (Weedon, 1997). Moreover, many feminist suggest that you cannot analyse women's leisure without first, considering women's role in society. Similarly, Aitchinson (2005, p.25) recognises that, "feminists have placed political significance on the different power relations that are seen to subordinate women". Much of this work has been "concentrated on the family and the workplace as sites of construction of gender and the sphere of leisure has been, largely ignored" (Wearing, 1990 p.38).

With regard to the field of leisure, many feminist writers have tended to adopt a critical approach to the study of family leisure in that they have mainly concerned themselves with "the ideological aspects of family life, and thus directed their attention to the negative aspects or outcomes of family activities" (Shaw & Dawson, 2003/2004, p.18).

Harrington (2006a) provides a similar account, as she argues that feminist researchers in leisure studies have made women's leisure their problematic, which has led to a more in-depth understanding of family leisure. However, in her review of family leisure in a compilation of writings for a book entitled, 'A Handbook of Leisure Studies', Harrington (2006, p.424) is critical of feminist contributions:

> Understanding women's leisure became the destination for feminist researchers, rather than gaining an understanding of the family context of leisure and how that may differ in meaning and experience for women, men and children.

Nonetheless, Kay (2006b) has been encouraged by the development of women's leisure studies, but is disturbed by the fact that women's commitment to their family has constrained women's involvement in leisure. Furthermore, Kay (2006b) realises that leisure has a role to play in family cohesion, but is aware that positive outcomes associated with family leisure, may not be equally experienced by all family members.

These ideas are based on feminist theory, described by Weedon (1987, p.1) "as ways of understanding social and cultural practice which throws light on how gender and power relations are constituted, reproduced and contested". The role of feminism is to challenge outdated conventional wisdom upon which theory is often based "about the way life is meant to be, to generate new theoretical perspectives" (Weedon, 1987, p.6). Craig (2007) has argued that the maternal instinct is simply an ideology, where motherhood is glorified to coerce them to be subservient. Whereas, Currie (2004, p.229) refers to the re-definition of motherhood in more positive terms as a useful outcome of feminist thought. "Mothers, become more creative and resilient in finding a variety of alternative strategies as resistance and a source of negotiation with men's power".

More radical feminists would argue that men and women are fundamentally different and view gender as being biologically determined and the cause of their oppression. Radical feminists have rejected the idea of developing theoretical perspectives within the power structure in which we live, due to what they see as a patriarchal society with an oppressive standpoint to women. They argue that this view is as a form of discourse which further maintains male dominance in society (Weedon, 1987). Their standpoint would be that theorising within a male dominated society is inherently oppressive to women and that society needs dismantling to be reconstructed from the standpoint of women (Birrell, 2000). More liberal feminists have noted that such a radical approach positioned on the basis of physiological difference is tantamount to biological determinism, where there is no empirical evidence to support this view (Connell, 1995). Such power relations identified above are evident in many areas of life including the family and leisure. Scholars adopting the feminist approach have "examined the ways in which the ideologies of gender and motherhood have influenced the notions of family and family life….and how ideologies have functioned to obscure the reality of the negative side of leisure" (Shaw & Dawson, 2003/2004, p.181).

Research undertaken by Deem (1986, 1992, 1995) has identified a range of theories appropriate to leisure, which are worthy of further elaboration in this section of the thesis. Firstly, the 'leisure studies perspective/theory', which she describes as 'atheoretical', and based upon large scale leisure surveys from a male perspective. Secondly, the 'leisure and capitalism perspective/theory' again centres its analysis on male leisure and concentrates solely on the relationship between leisure and capitalism, thereby neglecting those who are not part of the workforce (women) and contributing significantly to the economy (women). It should be noted at this point that the majority of individuals who undertook this work were men. Thirdly, the 'non feminist perspective/theory' focuses its analysis on women and does not at any point, according to Deem (1986), construct a valuable argument to improve the position of women in society.

Feminist perspectives also stress the importance of linking analysis and theory to political action and change, something which none of the other three perspectives put forward as their raison d'être. Since Deem (1986) coined the phrase 'feminist perspective of leisure', there has been an upsurge in the academic study of women and leisure, from a feminist perspective. This has increased our awareness and understanding of the social reality from the viewpoint and position of women and led to a better understanding of the experience of the female in the family (Wimbush, 1986; Henderson, 1994; Wearing, 1998).

One of the dominant themes in feminist leisure research has been to dismiss the compartmentalised approach to different life sectors, such as the work undertaken by Rapaport and Rapaport (1975) outlined earlier in the study, with a renewed focus on analysing life as a 'whole', on how leisure relates to the structure of women's lives. This theme is encapsulated in Clarke and Critcher's (1985, p.226) observation:

> The social context of leisure becomes the social context which defines its state regulation, market domination, the family as a social institution, the division of labour by class and gender, these are not the 'background' to the study they are inextricably embedded in the social organisation of leisure.

The social context of leisure for women is undermined by a 'leisure gap' at all stages of the lifecycle (Hochschild, 1989), where a number of feminist leisure scholars have reported that male partners are better able to access personal leisure arising out of a sense of entitlement to leisure (Kay, 1998).

This was later described by Kay (2009) as something which was personal, chosen, relatively free, highly valued and positively experienced. Furthermore, Craig (2007, p.60) recognises that a gender gap in leisure is evident and influential in that "women enjoy less leisure without children present (adult leisure) than men, and their leisure time is more often interrupted than men's leisure time". The bulk of feminists' comments have been very useful, in identifying the patriarchal system in which we live (Rojek, 1993).

In conceptualising patriarchy, Weedon (1987) refers to gendered power relations, where women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. However, both Kay (2003) and Rojek (1995) believe this analysis is limited, due to the primary focus of research work being on the experience of working class women. This group, are likely to be 'oppressed', but their experience may not be typical of other women. In contrast, more radical feminists have questioned whether women are indeed, allowed to experience the same kind of leisure as men enjoy, due to their expected role in the family as one of home maker and child carer (Henderson, 1991; Shaw, 1994; Deem, 1995). This is further compounded by:

> Ideologies of family life that have reinforced the notion of motherhood as primarily nurturing, giving and expressive or intensive and fatherhood as detached and based on providing for dependants (Such, 2009, p.75).

In Hoshschild's (1989) study, women were expected to undertake the majority of household duties, whilst the men's contribution was minimal. This led Hoshschild (1989) to assert that women were responsible not only for household duties, but also for childcare and sometimes their own paid jobs. This observation is consistent with the work of Thompson (1998, 1999) in studying family leisure in New Zealand and Shaw (2010) in Canada, where women's leisure has been mostly prescribed by domestic and caring duties and by the fact that many mothers provide a significant amount of their own time to service and entertain their children at leisure.

Many feminists argue that regardless of age, income and education, females participate less frequently and in fewer leisure activities than men (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991; Larson *et al*. 1997; Shaw, 1997). For positive change, feminists "would support the deconstruction of the traditional boundaries which have helped to reproduce male dominated structures in sport and leisure" (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994. p.177).

Also, Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004, p.181/182) indicate that research conducted by Henderson and Bialeschki, (1991) demonstrates that "beliefs about women's maternal and domestic roles within the family have led women to ignore their own leisure needs as they focus on servicing the needs of others instead". In their research, Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004) report similar evidence of child centred leisure where mothers were willing to compromise their own leisure time. Involvement in 'child leisure' meant that they participated in activities for the sake of their children, which often involved activities that they did not find personally enjoyable. These child centred activities according to Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004) were seen as a 'chore', rather than leisure.

Conversely, Rojek (1995) argues that the development of feminism in society has ironically led to a weakening of the fabric of society by undermining independence, motivation and self reliance, which he describes as essential qualities of leisure. Furthermore Rojek (1995) comments that, the development of feminism is closely linked to the decline and importance of the family and its associated values in society. With respect to leisure, he notes that the feminist tradition has taken a very negative and simplistic viewpoint in emphasising the submissiveness and inferiority of the home-making role of women, when the reality of family life for some couples, may be somewhat different. To some extent Wearing (1998) has supported Rojek's (1995) view when referring to the notion that leisure must be contextualised and related to norms and social formations and women must rise above stereotypical traditions.

As a consequence, we tend to perceive the world in which we live from a gendered perspective and Davies (2000) believes in doing this, we re-create the sexist world in which we live. A positive step forward would be to allow women the space to reconstruct their sense of self to reform their identity as an individual, rather than as a sexual object (Wearing, 1998). One of the major barriers to equality for women in leisure has been their lack of voice. Consequently, a number of feminist leisure commentators have argued that leisure research on women has often been neglected in favour of men (Henderson & Bialeschki 1991). This is evident because, we still know relatively little about the real extent of women's involvement in leisure, their perception of leisure and the problems they have in participating in leisure (Wimbush, 1986; Thompson, 1998; Shaw, 2001).

Such a view of the world is evident in other areas of research, where Tolich and Davidson (1999, p. 55) have discovered "that the male centred view is accepted uncritically as an accurate reflection of the world". Since then, other leisure researchers have recognised that it is still men who feature predominantly in mainstream leisure research, in regards to those who undertake the research (Deem, 1995; Kelly, 1995; Kay, 2009; Shaw, 2008b). Where women have been mentioned, it has been largely with reference to their subservient and servicing role in the family (Thompson, 1995, 1998; Larson, *et al.* 1997; Kay 1998; Zabriskie, 2003). These and other studies notably by: Deem (1992, 1986); Wearing (1984); Wimbush (1986); Green, Hebron and Woodward (1990); Henderson (1994); Aitchinson (2001) and Kay (2006c) have recognised that family leisure acts as a constraining context for women's leisure.

In addition, research conducted on women's leisure has discovered that once children arrive, women's leisure tends to be primarily based around the home, with infrequent visits out of the home for leisure purposes (Freysinger, 1994; Aitchinson, 2001). Interestingly, a number of studies of family leisure have also identified that men's leisure has been restricted within the confines of the family and home, once children are born (Horna, 1993; Orthner, 1998; Siegenthaler & O'Dell, 2000). So, in the context of family life, leisure can be constrained for both men and women. Nevertheless, many women who are married or with long term partners and in part time or full time work, are still expected to have responsibility for housework and child rearing (Hobson, 1981; Thompson, 1995; Larson, *et al.* 1997; Kay, 1999).

Disley and Willcox's (1994) research in New Zealand confirms this observation, in that women are still primarily responsible for those tasks associated with household and family maintenance, as well as being the primary provider of personal care for children. This same theme has also been reported in other work undertaken by a range of leisure researchers, when focusing on the problem of leisure for women (Hobson, 1981; Bialeschki 1994; Cooney, 1997; Siegenthaler & O' Dell, 2000; Brown *et al*. 2001; Kay, 2003; Parry, 2003; Hilbrecht *et al*. 2008; Currie, 2009). Many of these researchers discovered that women did not have any spare time for leisure, largely due to family commitments. Indeed, during Green *et al's.* (1986) study of women's leisure in the late 1980s, they asked women about their leisure, and many women could not relate to the concept of leisure at all, as many reported they had 'no' leisure.

Rojek (2005, p.128) believes this is due to many women suffering as 'chronic time famine', where there is no time to engage in leisure activity. "Women are under strong pressure of location and context to give more time to childcare. So it comes as no surprise, that women's experience of stress is more severe". In her research on women's lifestyles, Kay (2000) refers to this as 'time crunched households' and one of the commonest reported barriers to leisure. Put more simply, this meant that women in her study reported a 'lack of time to call their own' and unlike men, women were always conscious that they could be called upon at any time to get food for their husband or to look after children. As a result women, who work, then suffer the dual burden of household chores and employment (Craig, 2007).

Thompson (1995) and Larson *et al*. (1997) have noted that for mothers, family leisure is often intermixed with the role of caring for children and managing the home. Deem (1986) and later work by Parry (2003) and Shaw (2008b) demonstrated that this compromised women's freedom associated with their conception of leisure and women's experience and enjoyment of leisure was negatively affected. Such an observation has been confirmed by Wearing (1990) and later by Shaw (1997) in her discussion of the leisure family 'dilemma' and by Kay (2003) in her investigation of gender and self in the family setting.

One of the key challenges for feminists in the future is to, "balance the needs of children for nurture and the needs of women for independence without overloading women" (Craig, 2007, p.4). Feminist analysis has provided a useful insight on how ascribed gender roles within western contemporary societies presume innate characteristics related to their role in terms of wife/partner and mother. They analyse gender and leisure which sustain gender inequalities, with respect to the wider social processes and individual women's experiences. In terms of leisure, they help us understand how women's leisure has been constrained as a result of their gender. In an attempt to redress the imbalance and bias in much previous leisure research, there is always a danger of polarisation resulting in studies only of men and studies just about women. This study attempts to uncover both perspectives by seeking the opinions of men and women in relation to their experience of parenting and family leisure.

Clearly, single sex studies of parenting and the family only provide 'one' perspective and are limited and not the way forward for more fruitful and purposeful leisure research in the context of family life for both male and female partners. Similarly, empirical research on families needs to focus on both the male and female perspective. A critical perspective in undertaking research is needed, so we can better challenge and question the assumptions we have of what is known now. Jarvie and Maguire, (1994, p.179) recommend that further research in this area would need to consider the four key research themes they identify below:

> To consider the structures which have historically exploited, devalued and often oppressed women,… to adopt a critical perspective towards intellectual traditions and methods which have ignored or justified women's oppression,…to explain women's involvement in and alienation from different sport and leisure contexts and practice and….to highlight the endangered nature of sport and leisure organisation, bureaucracies and hierarchies.

In summary, feminism has been useful in uncovering and explaining the "subordination of women's lives including leisure as a result of male dominance and privileges in private and public life" (Harrington, 2009, p.51). In addition, feminist research has "contributed to a broader understanding of the epistemology and methodology used by leisure researchers" (Henderson, 1996, p.141). It is evident, that a research gap still remains in the literature in uncovering the meaning of family leisure for men, which this study attempts to help fill.

2.4.6 Postmodernism

Postmodernism refers to a broad aggregate of theoretical tendencies that involve social, political and cultural critique in a variety of disciplines (Ritzer, 1998). These tendencies are known in the literature as five different schools of thoughts or strands/discourses (Oord, 2003). These discourses are critical and seek to deconstruct modernist theories outlined above, "to distance us from and make us skeptical about beliefs, concerns, truth, knowledge, power, the self and language that are often taken for granted" (Aitchinson, 2005, p.30). Postmodernism developed from modernity, the third and final stage of capitalism (Schor, 1999). Some commentators have argued that postmodernism has already occurred, whilst others claim we are now living in the aftershock of postmodernism in a consumer oriented culture.

In his seminal book on 'Consumer Culture and Postmodernism', Featherstone, (1991) concurs with this observation and has explained in some detail that modern society is shaped and organised by consumption and the endless quest for material things, in a society dominated by consumerism.

Postmodernists reject the claims of more generic theorists or meta-narratives, such as Marxism and Functionalism, as they recognise 'one' theory alone cannot claim to be universal. Postmodernists would argue that society has become too fragmented and we need to think now in terms of individuals and the way in which individuals make choices in their lives. Postmodernists have argued that family life is characterized by diversity, variation and instability and that both men's and women's role in society has changed (Aitchinson, 2005). In terms of studying family leisure and to account for such change, a postmodern approach would study each member of the family and not the family as a collective unit to uncover how families live, work and make choices in their lives, for example in the use of their time for leisure. Postmodernists reject the notion of 'universal truths' and abandon the epistemological basis for any such claims to truth. Postmodernists would argue that "ambiguity, relativity, fragmentation, particularity and discontinuity" are critical to our understanding (Crotty, 1998, p.185).

This study adopts a similar strategy, in that both male and female perspectives are sought but, this study is limited in that it is not practically possible or ethically reasonable to seek the views of children under the age of two. In postmodernism we cannot generalise about what it is to be a woman or a man or indeed describe and define the role of leisure for all families. Nevertheless, the impact of gender on family leisure is still worthy of further investigation and the literature demonstrates that gender is a dominant theme in the research debate about family life and leisure.

Much of the literature in this area has been euro-centered, based on a western belief system which can often lead to a limited understanding of the role of leisure for family life (Jarvie & Macguire, 1994). In postmodern societies, the reality of the experience of being a man and being a woman have become less constrained, due to the blurring of male and female identities and the absence of the need to conform to culturally created conceptions of masculinity and femininity(Weedon, 1999).

Jarvie and Maguire (1994) have argued that such changes have altered the nature of participation in so called feminine and masculine sports. The postmodernist viewpoint seeks to deconstruct the ideology on which gender is socially constructed and biologically determined. Jarvie and Maguire, (1994, p.176) have gone even further when commenting that, "post-modern feminism has an uneasy relationship with feminism". It is also questionable whether postmodernism has served women well or given them a legitimate voice when, "skeptical postmodernists are likely to assume all versions of the truth are equal" (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994 p.177).

Clearly there is a need for more research in family leisure from a postmodern feminist perspective, but the postmodernist approach firstly needs to clarify its origins, to be more fully understood. One positive outcome of the postmodern feminist school of thought is a wider range of ideas and approaches to the study of family leisure, as it has seriously questioned widespread assumptions about the nature of leisure for both men and women in the family.

2.5 Key Themes in Family Leisure Research

In the following sub sections of 2.5 an extensive review of the research literature is undertaken, to highlight and identify a number of key themes in family leisure research.

2.5.1 Defining leisure

Within the context of this study, it is important to firstly discuss how the concept of leisure has evolved and secondly how different interpretations of leisure relate to both men and women and to our understanding of family leisure. In this study, the concept of leisure will be explored through a focus on the experience and interpretation of participant's leisure, from both a male and female viewpoint. As with other forms of social enquiry, mainstream leisure researchers have attempted to understand the meaning of leisure by searching for the supposed 'holy grail of leisure'. More than three decades have now passed since Roberts (1978) reported on the data mountain created as a result of the elusive search for a unified definition of leisure. Much of this research has taken a positivist viewpoint (natural science) of the world based on the notion that leisure is different and separate from work.

This approach has evolved largely from a legacy of male notions involving the working class experience of leisure and is therefore limited in its applicability to the rest of society and consequently all members of a family (Deem, 1992). Cartwright and Warner-Smith (2003, p.321) observed similar limitations:

> Traditional definitions of leisure [have] emphasised such features as freedom of choice, intrinsic motivation, enjoyment and relaxation and freedom from obligation….derived from male experiences of work and free time in industrial society.

Torkilsden (2005) devised a simple typology, based on three types of leisure, which included, leisure defined as time after work, leisure, leisure defined as a type of activity and leisure defined as a state of mind, 'how one feels/experiences leisure'. Time based definitions of leisure are limited in the analysis of family leisure, as it is difficult to determine and calculate discrete periods of time that could be called leisure for oneself. Even though leisure as time can be "easily quantifiable and measured, [it is a].... simplistic perspective and has provided a limited understanding of leisure behaviour" (Mittelstaedt, 2001/2002, p.149). Therefore, defining leisure as time may lead to an inadequate understanding of leisure for families.

For example, Shaw (1985, 1997) has commented that this is a limited concept of leisure as 'free time' fails to account for leisure that can be experienced in all activities, such as work or other obligatory activities. This view is further supported by both Henderson (1990) and Daly (2001) who argue that leisure can be experienced in activities that could be deemed as restrictive for leisure, such as home-based and domestic situations. Bitmann and Folbre (1991) agree as they argue that housework leisure is often defined as leisure, because it was seen as unpaid household labour. On the contrary, Parry and Long (1988) argue that a minimalist definition of leisure as free time that is unobligated and freely chosen is useful. To some extent, Wearing (1990, p.43) agrees as "time set aside solely for leisure for those who work at home is difficult to achieve". Deem (1986) has identified a number of additional conceptual difficulties for women, that are not mutually exclusive to women, as more recent literature demonstrates that both men and women have such difficulties in defining their leisure (Mannel & Kleiber, 1997; Orthner, 1998; Siegenhaler & O Dell, 2000; Kay, 2006a, 2006b). Essentially, leisure conceptualised in relation to work, fails to come to terms with work or the leisure experience for both men and women who are not in paid employment or are possibly in full or part time study (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999).

Moreover, Freysinger (1994) and Kay (1998) have shown in their research on dimensions of family leisure that many women do have a lot of work in the form of domestic obligations and childcare, which is unpaid and often just 'expected'. Henderson and Bialeschki (1991) and Aitchinson (2001) in their studies of working class mothers, report that most women in their studies had little or no paid employment and very little time they could truly call their own. Despite only working on a part-time basis, many of the mothers in Aitchinson's (2001) study were committed to full time work around the home to meet domestic obligations.

According to Kay's research (2006b) the modern family is characterized as being time stressed. In addition, Hochschild (1998) identified in her research that in many families there was a lack of shared responsibility for household duties between men and women, which resulted in women carrying the burden of such duties and experiencing the drudgery of housework. This is further supported by Kelly (1995, p.58):

> Doing the washing, hovering the floor, cleaning the windows, are jobs which simply have to be done. Therefore, an endless cycle in which, even as a job is being finished, the need to do it again re-appears.

Where there is evidence of shared household chores between men and women, it is still women who are left to delegate and organize other family responsibilities, such as organising family leisure (Kay, 1998). Nevertheless, earlier work by Kay (1996) has indicated that employment can contribute positively to women's sense of worth and entitlement to personal leisure which can give cause to challenge the patriarchal system in which they live.

Leisure defined in terms of activity can be problematic for researching family leisure, unless leisure is defined as set of discrete activities. In this sense, leisure activities could be differentiated from other activities, such as those activities which are work related or involve activities that maintain our life. Dumazedier (1967) was the chief proponent of this approach in describing leisure as distinct from work, family and other societal obligations. Leisure is this sense is defined as a set of activities, but many leisure activities have dual meaning and purposes. Defining leisure as a set of activities is rather limited in analysing family leisure as it would be virtually impossible to define a set of activities that could encompass all forms of family leisure that could be agreed upon by all families (Torkilsden, 2005).

Despite this, leisure defined as activity is still utilised by leisure researchers in investigating different forms of leisure, which has resulted in numerous classifications and systems which cluster together different leisure activities.

The experiential definition of leisure may be more relevant for both men and women, as this conceptual approach views leisure as an attitude or state of mind, which is personal to the participant and dependent upon how the individual perceives it. Meaning is central to this definition as part of a better understanding of the nature of family leisure experiences for the subjects under investigation (Shaw, 1994; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999). This concept of leisure suggests that leisure is subjective and concerned with one's state of mind and is highly personal and allows for different meanings of the same leisure activity experienced by different people. In effect, a typical family leisure activity such as a family day out could have different meanings for mum, dad and the child/children. Experiential definitions of leisure emphasise that leisure experiences are highly personalised and are subject to peoples previous leisure experience, values and feelings.

Nonetheless, the three key approaches in defining leisure identified above, fail to capture the full diversity of both men's and women's actual experience of family leisure. Also, it is now extremely difficult to identify such approaches as separate identifiable definitions of leisure for individuals, as holistic definitions of leisure have now emerged (Torkilsden, 2005). Any future definition of leisure needs to encompass all the elements of time, activity and experience in a holistic concept of leisure, which many leisure theorists have sought to discover. This ongoing work is likely to lead to a better understanding of how people perceive and give meaning to their leisure and the time in which they engage with other family members. A meaning of leisure for women may be emerging, through the work of feminist leisure theorists, discussed earlier. However, this work has been complicated by women's inequality in other domains of life, which further impact negatively on their opportunities for leisure. In order to better understand women's leisure, and ultimately family leisure, Henderson (1996) suggests that we need to explore both men's and women's leisure and realise that meanings associated with leisure are not the same for all women and men. One of the key objectives of this study is to determine what leisure means to both men and women individually and within the context of family leisure. The findings of these enquiries are reported in later chapters of this study.

2.5.2 Evolution of family leisure studies

The antecedents of family leisure research can be traced back to statistical data on constraints to participation and patterns of participation based on the individual (Horna, 1993). Harrington (2006, p.422) recognises that "leisure studies has not been very well equipped to study family leisure, primarily because leisure has been viewed essentially as an individual phenomenon". Consequently, leisure practioners and researchers are only just beginning to realise the important role of leisure in family life, (Shaw, 1992; Kelly, 1995; Kay, 1998). One of the first studies to focus indirectly on family life and leisure was the research undertaken by Rapaport and Rapaport in 1975, reported earlier in this study. Their critical study of the development of the family across the family life cycle was very important in recognising that different life stages exist as we move through life.

On the basis of their research they further claimed that choices of leisure activity and experience are largely determined by the life stages that we move through. According to Kay (2006b, p.109), the Rapaport's work on the family life cycle discovered that "leisure emerged alongside work as a central domain, through which family members individually and collectively structured their lives". There is still a substantial amount of work to be undertaken and progressed in focusing on all types of family forms and significant life events that impact upon family life and consequently upon the nature of family leisure, which the Rapaport's (1975) study did not accomplish.

Later work by Orthner (1994) recognised that many of our leisure experiences are defined within the context of the family, where relationships are established and developed. To further broaden our understanding of family leisure, Zabriskie and McCormick (1997) suggest that we need to look at different types of families such as lone parents, interracial families, families with disabled children and families with 'at risk' adolescents. This study focuses on a 'type' of family, namely heterosexual couples at a specific stage in their lifecycle. Central to this study, was the experience of leisure for 'new mums and dads', for the key stages before childbirth (pregnancy) and after childbirth (early parenthood), referred to by Kay (2000) as the intensive parenting stage.

Many previous studies on family leisure (Green *et al.* 1986, 1990, 1995) have been limited as they have concentrated on only women's experiences, and have neglected men's perceptions which potentially could have a crucial role to play in discovering and understanding family life and leisure. However, my approach in this study is consistent with the philosophy that supports the view that any study on family leisure needs to seek the views of both genders, to be considered worthwhile.

Hawkes (1991) conducted a review of recreation and the family over a sixty year period, between 1930 and 1990 and identified major weaknesses in the field of research and called for more theoretically informed work, use of a wider range of methods and interpretations of results for practice. One of the first books to focus exclusively on the issue of family leisure was edited by Samuel (1996). She brought together a wide range of research from different countries, providing the basis to compare findings. However, men's input and role in family leisure was not discussed, but the book did provide evidence to support women's role in facilitating family leisure and identified constraints that impinge on their own personal leisure.

Later, Kelly (1997) proposed that we had witnessed three significant periods of family leisure research. The first period in the 1960s and 1970s was judged as a time of neglect, where the family received scant attention and most research on leisure was quantitatively based and related more to the workplace. The second period in the 1980s, the 'affirmed period of consensus', overemphasized the positive aspects of family leisure, where the, "family was the focal example of social meanings and satisfactions of leisure for the individual, as yet undifferentiated by gender or social class" (Kelly, 1997, p.132). Kelly refers to the third period of the late 1980s and early 1990s, as more enlightening where serious attention was focused on gender, family variations and disruptions. In this period the emphasis was on different family forms, as in most of the previous research on family leisure there were taken for granted assumptions about family life and structure (Kelly, 1997).

During the 1980s, and 1990s, such assumptions were challenged by a number of other studies, principally in the United States of America and Canada. Kelly's (1997) analysis was instrumental in a number of leisure theorists taking up the challenge of family leisure research, with the production in 1997 of a special issue of the 'Journal of Leisure Research' focusing entirely on family life and leisure.

This resurgence of interest in the family by leisure researchers challenged the conventional wisdom upon which notions of family life and leisure were previously based. This approach has been facilitated by the use and adoption of more innovative research methods in family leisure research (Ellis & Witt, 1994; Kay, 2000; Shaw 2001). Likewise, this study used a range of methods to collect data from a number of sources to explore family leisure from a range of perspectives.

One of the key limitations of previous research in this area is the fact that work undertaken has rather marginalised men's and children's perspectives (Harrington, 2006b; Dyck & Daly, 2009). Shaw (2003, p. 10) points out that, "the inclusion of the male experience in future analysis of leisure and family [can be fruitful and lead to a] broader debate about family life, work-life balance and the nature of contemporary masculinity and fatherhood". Further research on the experience of all individual family members is needed, as well as the collective experience of family leisure. Family leisure researchers have tended to focus their attention on women, which has resulted in much less being known about the family leisure relationship and men (Kay, 2006, p.108). Furthermore, research on fathering and leisure has been limited when compared to research on mothering and leisure, yet:

> recent works…suggest that leisure is particularly prominent in men's parenting practices…. [and] offers a site of benefit for the father-child bond, the expectation that fathers will spend more time directly engaging with their children may limit men's own access to leisure.
>
> (Kay, 2006b, p.111)

This gap in the literature has been filled to some extent by a number of articles on fathering and leisure written by Kay (2006a, 2006c) and Such (2006) and the publication of an important book, 'Fathering Through Sport and Leisure' edited by Kay (2009). According to Zabriskie (2001) the rebirth of family centred studies in leisure over the last decade, has largely been due to the general interest shown in family life, which has emphasised the way in which the family as a social unit has changed. This has resulted in the family becoming a more dynamic and complex concept. However, some leisure commentators have argued that research on the family has had a tendency to be 'atheoretical' and ineffective in examining family leisure (Holman & Epperson, 1984). What this has shown is that family leisure is compromised by lack of time or is still seen as a vehicle for building family cohesion and togetherness (Shaw, 1997; Daly, 2001; Zabriskie, 2001).

Therefore, forms of shared or family leisure hold great promise and can be of direct benefit to parental and marital satisfaction (Freysinger, 1994; Orthner, 1998).

In summarizing this 'new' area of research, Kay (2006a, 2006b, 2006c) has argued that leisure is a primary site for father's interaction with their children, which is underpinned by ideologies of 'involved' fathering. As a consequence, male's personal time and access to personal leisure is then constrained by their parenting responsibilities. This claim is supported by the use of time diaries in her research which indicates this trend. In contemporary leisure research, family centred studies are now a significant area of enquiry, yet a complex area of research, which can be conceptualized, theorised and researched in an infinite number of ways (Shaw, 1997). Nonetheless, Harrington (2006a, 2006b) in her overview of family leisure asserts that, most family leisure takes place within and around the home with close knit family members. As a result, she argues that much of contemporary family leisure could be labelled home-centred and privatised (core leisure), with only a small amount of family leisure time dedicated to out of home activities in the public sphere (balance leisure).

2.5.3 The contradictions of family leisure

A number of researchers have highlighted that family leisure is often associated with both positive and negative aspects of family life. A study undertaken by Harrington and Bell (1999) provided support for this duality, in that family leisure had many positive outcomes, but also caused conflict within families. A number of other researchers have suggested a positive relationship exists between participation and joint family leisure and improved family life (Holman & Epperson, 1984). However, most of the family based leisure research has been restricted to married couples (Orthner, 1998; Zabriskie, 2003). This conceptualisation is problematic, as there is a tendency to associate family leisure with activities that occur within two-parent heterosexual families. In a study of women engaged in romantic relationships as leisure, Herridge *et al*. (2003) discovered a positive link with family life and leisure and recognised that shared leisure plays a significant role in facilitating meaningful relationships between partners. Unfortunately, this study was limited to women's perceptions, although Herridge *et al.* (2003) recognised this weakness and suggested future research could focus on understanding men's perspective on leisure in romantic relationships.

This view has been supported by Harrington (2001) who has demonstrated that family leisure and couple time has the capacity to improve and enhance marital satisfaction. Nonetheless, Harrington (2005) in her later work stresses caution, as she argues that parents in western societies are pressured by the culture of family togetherness, to put their children's needs first, which neglects couple and individual needs. Milkie *et al.* (2004) share this view and emphasise that this impacts more severely on parents with younger children compared to those parents with older children.

Many feminist writers on leisure and the family indicate that leisure researchers have tended to overemphasize the positive experience of leisure for many women. According to Kay (2006, p.112) research into heterosexual relationships and leisure suggests that:

> Women have particular difficulty in accessing personal leisure within a relationship [even though, they value leisure] they experience difficulty in expressing entitlement to leisure…men are better able to engage in personal leisure experiences [and more importantly possess] a stronger sense of entitlement to do so.

Also, for many women the reality of family leisure is bound up with childcare and management of the home (Freysinger, 1991; Thompson, 1995, 1998; Larson *et al*. 1997; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999; Zabriskie, 2003; Shaw, 2008a). Research undertaken by Larson *et al*. (1997) discovered a range of interesting findings on the experience of family leisure of 55 families in North America. In Larson *et al's*. (1997) study, women reported more negative experiences of family leisure than men, whose family role seemed based solely on the prime role of family provider. For many men involved in the research, the role of breadwinner superseded any family responsibilities. As a result, fathers took less responsibility for family life and household chores and had more time to relax and recuperate. Although it is often assumed that the modern family is more egalitarian, than in previous generations, LaRossa (1998) argues this is not the case. This is because the culture of fatherhood may have witnessed change, in that it has become socially acceptable for men to stay at home and share household and childcare duties with their partner. The reality is not that simple, as few men are taking on these 'new' social roles, and there is a lack of evidence of men sharing family responsibilities (Kay, 2006b). In effect, the culture and expectations of fatherhood may have changed, without the appropriate behavioural change.

So, there might be evidence of more shared parenting, but women still undertake the majority of parenting duties and responsibilities (Currie, 2004; Shaw, 2008b). Motherhood places tremendous demands on women, which limits their other roles and activities, such as leisure, even where mothers were employed they still found it difficult to evade parenting and were responsible for most household tasks and servicing the needs of significant others leisure, namely children and partners (Kay, 2006b).

It seems that, "women's full time employment seems to do little to equalise dual earner income responsibilities within the home" (Kay, 1999, p.439). In Larson *et al's*. (1997) study women reported negative experiences associated with family/home based leisure, when compared, to their male partners. In reality, family leisure for women meant constrained leisure, because of the assumed obligatory activities associated with childcare and home management. This was compounded by the fact that women enjoyed less personal leisure time than men. Ironically, Larson *et al*. (1997) discovered that in most cases when family leisure took place, women had planned, organised and arranged this, with little or no help from their male partners.

Larson *et al*. (1997) reported that most women played the role of caretaker and family manager in leisure and were never really free from obligation and experienced a range of barriers and constraints to their participation. This view is supported by later work by Beck *et al*. (2008) involving 32 dual earner families, where men enjoyed 1.4 times more leisure time than women. Moreover, women experienced more limitations on time available for leisure, which caused them stress in balancing a multiplicity of roles, such as carer, parent, housewife and worker. A number of other studies on family leisure have also reported similar findings (Wearing, 1984; Shaw 1994; Kay 1996, 1998; Miller & Brown, 2005).

Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004, p.182) studied the contradictory aspects of family leisure, with the aim of comparing "the ideals of leisure that parents hold about family leisure with their reports of actual family participation". Their study had two major objectives, firstly to investigate family activity participation, and secondly the quality of these experiences. The key findings from their study involving 31 families indicated that the most popular form of family leisure was social activities (6.78 hours/week). Home based activities accounted for 4.78 hours/week with physical and active forms of family leisure such as sports accounting for 3 hours per week.

Other forms of family leisure reported, included shopping and cooking (1.38 hours/week); out of home entertainment (1.13 hours/week); helping with kids reading (1.16 hours/week) and games and crafts (0.95 hours/week). The findings of their study highlight the romanticised view of family leisure which, they argue, "illustrate the power of societal ideologies, especially those associated with primary roles, such as parenting" (Shaw & Dawson, 2003/2004, p.198). Moreover, they assert that both the benefits and difficulties associated with family leisure need further recognition, if we are to fully understand the complexity and nature of family leisure in contemporary society.

2.5.4 Sex and gender?

Sex and gender are different concepts, as sex is determined by biological differences between male and female, whereas gender is based upon historical and sociological constructs and often determines our role in society (masculine or feminine). For example, it is still evident that in many families boys and girls are dressed differently by their parents and are given different types of toys to play with on their birthday and thus socialised into their expectant gendered roles (Weedon, 1999). Furthermore as Wearing (1994, p.4) explains, "in all our institutions of a gendered society men's and women's day to day life experiences will in some way reflect the social and structural constraints of gender". Yet, the two concepts are often confused and used by people to mean the same. "Unlike sex, gender is a more dynamic and malleable concept and is often subject to invention and re-creation" (Risman, 1998, p.157) and it could be argued is a dominant factor in family life and leisure. Historically assumed gender roles in the house have meant that traditionally men worked outside the home, whereas women were assigned to work in the home, recognised by Risman, (1998) as important gendered differences in production and consumption rituals within the household. These differentiated and perpetuated societal roles have now been challenged by leisure theorists and those working in the area of family life and leisure.

Leisure researchers have noted that all family members are constrained, but women more so, than men (Thompson, 1999; Milkie et al. 2004; Sayer & Mattingly, 2006). For many women, these constraints have their origin in the home and are connected with assumed family responsibilities based on their gender.

Such obligations further erode the possibility of enjoyment from leisure to the extent that some women report more enjoyment away from the home or even at paid work (Larson, *et al*. 1997). This claim is further substantiated by Hochschild (1998) who observed that women enjoyed time at paid work, more than time at home. Conversely, fathers report positive experiences from family leisure, as it is often an opportunity to interact with their children (Freysinger, 1994). The role of gender is therefore, critical to our experience of family leisure and the next step is to better "understand the dynamic and complex process of gender in relation to leisure and leisure and the family" (Freysinger, 1991, p.2). For too long dominant ideologies have merely reinforced attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that further disadvantage women and reinforce gender based inequalities and furthermore constrain women's leisure (Herridge, 2003). In a New Zealand context Magee (2001) provides evidence to claim that gender differences are still prevalent and shaped by socio-economic relationships and opportunities in New Zealand society.

2.5.5 Constraints on family leisure

The issue of constraints in family leisure research has been prominent with the result that the link between theory and practice has been well documented in seminal work on leisure constraints by Crawford *et al*. (1987), Crawford *et al*. (1991), Kay and Jackson (1991) and more recently by Shaw and Henderson's (2005) research on gender and leisure constraints . Most studies have been undertaken in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom where a strong body of leisure research has been established focusing on constraints that impact upon engagement in leisure. Research on leisure constraints has helped leisure scholars to:

> sharpen their thinking about leisure...assisted in generating new insights into aspects of leisure such as leisure participation, motivations, satisfactions and conflict....and provided a useful device for communication among researchers with diverse topical interest and methodological orientations. (Jackson, 2000, p.63)

Shaw (1994, p.11) has been more critical of early empirical studies of leisure constraints as they primarily focused on, "objective leisure constraints (e.g. time, money, facilities)….more recent research has revealed other types of constraints, which particularly affect women", such as the ethic of care, discussed earlier in this thesis. Also, much of the constraints research highlights that women's constrained opportunities in leisure are viewed as a consequence of their societal roles, determined largely by their gender.

Research on women's leisure has identified that women experience a range of constraints that shape their access and opportunity for leisure. Much of this research has emphasised the oppressive and negative aspects of women's leisure, often viewing women's position as a consequence of women's position in a patriarchal society. Furthermore, Bittman (1999) discovered that the most disadvantaged group of women in terms of time available for leisure, were those with very young children, the same group focused on in this study. Time for these mothers was further constrained if they worked full time and was even more limited if they had a partner that worked full time, as in most cases they undertook the role of primary caregiver. For example, in a study involving 543 mothers of young children in Australia, constraints to physical activity and lack of time and commitment to children were reported as the main constraints to engagement in leisure (Brown *et al*. 2001).

A variety of definitions describing constraint have been utilised, all of which tend to share the same notion. Henderson (1991, p.366) defines a constraint as, "any relative and/or factor that mitigates between a possible activity and one's opportunity for involvement in that experience". The literature on family leisure indicates that constraints to family leisure are gendered. Similarly, this study investigates how gender can act as both a constraint and facilitator to family leisure. The findings of studies so far in this area are limited, as they tend to confirm what we already know of women's leisure, in that they are more constrained than men in terms of access and opportunity to leisure. What we do not know is the extent to which different constraints play a part in shaping and determining access and opportunity to different forms of leisure and in particular the practice of family leisure. Nonetheless, what is often forgotten is that participatory and enjoyment of leisure activities are often constrained by our own perception of self as lacking confidence with feelings of inadequacy and incompetence (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997). As a result, a negative attitude can act as a leisure constraint.

Research undertaken by Raymore *et al*. (1994) has suggested that women perceive more intrapersonal constraints, such as shyness, self consciousness, skills and knowledge of the availability of the opportunities to participate, when compared to men. Furthermore, unequal pay and restricted promotional opportunities for women when compared to men emphasise inequalities in the workplace, which in turn may impact upon family life and ultimately leisure.

Researchers such as Henderson and Bialeschki (1991) have argued that future work on uncovering constraints in leisure must take into account the impact of gender role socialisation and meanings, which different members of the family ascribe to leisure. This work is essential, in order to gain a fuller insight into the nature of family life and leisure. To some extent, this call has been recognised as a significant number of studies which adopt a feminist perspective have focused their attention on constraints and family leisure (Green, Hebron & Woodward, 1990; Henderson, 1994; Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999). One of the first studies in this area was conducted by Henderson *et al.* (1988) who utilised a detailed questionnaire (fifty five items) and a factor analysis design, in an attempt to establish what they thought would be the underlying dimension of the concept of leisure constraints for women.

The research revealed ten constraint dimensions with time as the most important dimension, followed by money, then facilities and family concerns. Other dimensions mentioned included: unawareness of opportunities; decision making; body image; lack of interest; skills and social inappropriateness. Although, this research pinpointed the key constraints for women, the results have failed to determine how constraints operate on women personally and the extent to which they constrained their opportunity and participation in leisure on a personal basis. This research gives us no indication of how men perceive leisure constraints, how men and women rank constraints or how constraints differ according to gender.

Other research on constraints has revealed several aspects of leisure constraints which are important for both men and women and indicate the need for a deeper and more inclusive understanding of constraints. A constraint frequently cited in the literature is that of an 'ethic of care', which is directly related to women's role as the primary caregiver within the family and their obligation towards their family to place the needs of family before their own (Kay, 2003; Miller & Brown, 2005; Shaw 2008b). This 'sense of a lack of entitlement' and 'health and safety' are important dimensions in future reinterpretation, in expanding our understanding of leisure constraints for both men and women. The 'ethic of care' described by Henderson (1990) and Shaw (2001) is embodied in personal and family responsibilities which could be considered as both an intrapersonal constraint and a structural constraint on women's leisure. The 'ethic of care' acts as a structural constraint, by directly impacting upon actual participation in leisure and family activities.

Women are under pressure, due largely to a number of socialisation processes in early life and the resultant expectations that they must cater for the needs of others, often at the expense of their own needs (Herridge *et al*. 2003, p.275). The sense of 'lack of entitlement' is also perceived as an important constraint for many women (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1991; Thompson, 1995). Women often feel they have no 'right' to leisure as traditionally others' needs are put before theirs and in many cases women service the leisure needs of husbands, partners and children before their own (Wimbush, 1986; Thompson, 1998; Auster, 2002). Michener (1994) explored the relationship between motherhood and leisure and discovered that the ethic of care had both positive and negative influences on women's leisure.

However, in most cases the ethic of care impacted negatively in constraining women's leisure due to familial expectations of the mother role. Caring for self through leisure was a powerful theme reported by many women in Michener's (1994) study, furthering their emancipation in overcoming gender role expectations. These findings were supported over a decade later, by the work undertaken by Miller and Brown (2005). Nonetheless, one could argue here that men also have an important ethical role in providing for the family, with its many associated responsibilities.

'Health and safety' is a third constraint, where a number of women in different studies identified fear for one's physical and psychological safety as overt intrapersonal constraints (Wimbush, 1986; Green *et al*. 1995; Auster, 2002). The fears of sexual assault, while participating in activities and the psychological safety women seek, are real concerns causing intrapersonal and intervening constraints. Health concerns are important constraints to engagement in leisure for both men and women, especially for women before, during and after pregnancy, often extending through the early years of childcare.

2.5.6 Work-life balance

A review of the work/life balance debate is important in this study, as working parents must strive to balance the demands of work and life in order to make time for family leisure. How parents manage to meet the demands of both work and life will have a significant impact upon both parenting and the family's time together at leisure. Kay (2003) also reminds us that men and women hold very different views and ideas about what constitutes work-life balance. As a result, we need to be fully aware of the possible gendered connotations of this debate.

This debate becomes much clearer in the evidence presented in the findings in Chapter 4 and 5. The antecedents of work-life balance can be found in many work based studies and more recently, the term has been associated with work undertaken in labour markets, demographic research and family based policy research (Craig, 2007). A healthy work-life balance could simply be described as a lack of conflict between work and non work demands. Work and life have competing expectations, which involve activities you must do (work) and activities that you might want to do (life, family leisure etc). It is an issue that affects us all and increasingly a number of government policies and initiatives have sought to support families in helping them achieve a more effective and better work-life balance.

Sennet (2004) has argued that attaining a work-life balance is principally based upon: a mixture of state policies; individual circumstances; cultural factors; gender factors and the division of labour within the home. Yet, a study by Larson *et al*. (2007) uncovered that more mothers are working more and consequently were not spending enough time with their children. This impacted upon the quality and quantity of family time and relationships between partners and their child/children. Balancing work and family time poses many problems for such families as many suffer in 'time crunched households' (Kay, 1998), where time for oneself or each other rarely materialises. Davidson's (1996) study involving the holiday experiences of women with young children would concur with this, as for many women with young children work was often required, 24 hours a day, even when on holiday.

Work-life balance initiatives continue to receive significant attention in government, business and union agendas at national and international levels. Work-life balance initiatives at both government and organisational levels are mainly concerned with countering rising unemployment rates. They are also designed to counter inequality between men and women in employment and parenting roles, in both dual earner and single parent families (Taylor, 2001). For those women who attempt to combine paid work and unpaid family work, there is great difficulty in achieving a work-life balance, especially for women from low income families where choices of whether to work or not, are simply not available. Establishing a work-life balance for these women is very difficult, due to financial hardship which results in many working longer hours for less pay, than men (Fursman, 2008). Also, their partners often have to supplement the household income by working longer hours or seeking another job (Kay, 2003).

Yet, parenting takes up a significant amount of time and there is a lack of adequate social provision for this time, especially for parents that work. Moreover, parenting is an important public service that is poorly supported and not fully understood or evaluated (Craig, 2007). Parenting time is rarely quantified and the extent of it is unknown, and "becoming a parent is not only one of the most significant rites of passage in the human life course, but also a contribution to the perpetuation of the human race" (Craig, 2007, p.1). Much of the research in this area has focused on the value of unpaid housework and the way in which men and women share domestic duties.

More recently the trend has shifted to investigate how parental employment impacts upon child development and fertility (NZ Statistics, 2005, 2006), but not on their time together in what could be referred to as family leisure. Within the local context of Christchurch, 47% of residents were in full time work (30 hours or more a week), 23% were involved in part work and 27.5% were not involved in employment (Statistics New Zealand, 2010). In New Zealand, in 2001 over 40% of men worked 50 hours a week, compared to only 36% in 1986 (Lees, 2007). So, work hours are generally getting longer, putting increasing pressure on achieving a satisfactory work-life balance and adequate time for family leisure. However, what is striking is that paid work for males equated to 63% and unpaid work for females equated to 65%. Also, females spend double the amount of time on unpaid work when, compared to men thereby, indicating a strong gender bias in the statistics for paid and non paid work (Statistics New Zealand, 2011).

For those in work, longer working hours have significantly impacted upon parental relationships with children detrimentally affected, argues Callister (2005). Fursman's (2008) research has indicated that those in coupled relationships worked longer hours than other families, especially those with younger children who accounted for 43% of the sample reviewed, as part of her analysis of the 2006 New Zealand Census. For New Zealand fathers, Callister (2005) reports that work commitments continue to increase and like working mums, they are under pressure from the 'double burden' of work and involvement in childcare. However, Callister's (2005) study only involved a small sample and it is debatable whether his findings could be attributed to most men.

A New Zealand Department of Labour Study in 2008 involving 600 participants from over 100 different organizations (Work, Life Balance Project) was designed with the purpose of improving decision making and strengthening policies and plans, in relation to work-life balance. The key findings of this study reported that many employees were working long hours, where opportunities for flexible working were limited and where social and personal time was compromised. As a consequence, leisure opportunities for many were restricted even further (Department of Labour, 2008). Findings from such studies encouraged the New Zealand government to establish a work-life balance programme to promote better balance between paid work, life and outside work.

A Ministry of Social Development study in 2006 sought to better understand how participation in paid work impacted upon family life and children in New Zealand (Gomez & Castillon, 2006). The study surveyed 1,128 parents with a young child less than 16 years of age, and found a number of interesting, negative spill over impacts from work to home which included: parents being too tired to parent; work time pressures made family life less enjoyable; parents were distracted by worries at work; work schedules conflicted with parenting duties; work stress impacted negatively on family life; insufficient time to maintain and develop family relationships and lack of time with partner. In addition, Fursman's (2006) study of work-life balance involving two national surveys of 1,100 employers and 2,000 employees in New Zealand, who were working families with children under 5 years of age, reported that it was extremely difficult for them to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance. They suggested that more time away from work, rather than arrangements to do with work in improving work-life balance, would be preferential and more practical. Strandins *et al's*. (2006) study of work schedules and children's well being uncovered that people with standard work schedules compared to non-standard (unpredictable) work schedules spent more time with their families, as they were better able to separate work time from non work time and allocate specific time with their family.

Australian studies indicate that research on work-life balance has been undertaken in the workplace and cannot really determine the extent to which work and life impact on parenting and leisure (Brown *et al*. 2005). They argue that such studies are limited in analysing family leisure, but have produced useful data on flexible working practices that may help working parents achieve a better work-life balance.

Nevertheless, these practices have failed to recognise the important relationship between child care arrangements, hours of employment, patterns and hours of paid employment and the time pressure this creates for many families (Craig, 2007). Future investigations on work-life balance research need to focus more on how time pressures affect work-family strain and the resulting implications for health, satisfaction, parenting and leisure. For example, how does employment status, parental care responsibilities and family support (or lack of it) determine your work life-balance and access and opportunity to leisure?

Balance, between work and leisure has the potential to reduce stress in life, avoid burnout in the workplace and lead to improved health and wellbeing (Taylor, 2001). The lack of time, it seems is a restrictive factor in reaching a healthy work-life balance and devoting more time to parenting and time together as a family. Similarly, Craig (2007, p.11) argues that the "problem of balancing work and family time is arguably more about time constraints than the scarcity of money itself". This problem is further exacerbated with the arrival of children and the resulting financial hardship, which in many families means that the male has to seek out extra work hours to bring in extra money to the household, which puts more pressure on them. Studies undertaken by Hochschild (1997) and by Carlson and Perrewe (1999) support this view and propose that families need social support from their workplace, to be more flexible and better manage their time. More research focusing on work-life balance is needed and it is encouraging to note that in 2004, the New Zealand Families Commission (2004) had a number of research projects planned to identify the struggles that families encounter in balancing the demands of work with family commitments. This flexible work project had four key goals.

- To provide information for families to access flexible working conditions
- To identify the barriers to taking up quality flexible work
- To improve access to quality flexible work for families
- To identify quality flexible work that families want.

Also, the New Zealand Families Commission are supporting change in the workplace, which could improve work-life balance for New Zealand families by promoting improvements in parental leave provisions, and by providing quality childcare options. Clearly work-life balance is a serious issue, when only 40% of New Zealanders workers were happy with their work-life balance, because of time shortage and a hurried lifestyle (Department of Labour, 2006).

In their statement of intent document for the future, the New Zealand Families Commission intend to focus on this issue by, "increasing families knowledge and skills on how to balance engagement into the workforce and caring responsibilities" (New Zealand Families Commission, 2010, p.13). This could be accomplished by giving families support in balancing their family responsibilities and paid work and future research needs to explore a range of flexible work patterns that could support families.

In summary, the key factors impinging on achieving an effective work-life balance essential to family well-being in New Zealand, include government policies around flexible work arrangements (Pool *et al*. 2007), valuing the importance of parenting and childcare (Pryor, 2006). This will require the New Zealand Families Commission to consult with families and interested stakeholders to reach the objective of becoming "a centre of excellence for knowledge about families" (New Zealand Families Commission, 2010, p.3). However, the future realities of the workplace might mean that more parents will have to work to sustain the household (Cook. 2007). As a result, both mums and dads will experience work-family conflict, due to changing societal expectations and the pressures of society against the pressures of parenting (McPherson, 2006). Effective work-life balance will only be possible where all employees are able to choose employment arrangements to suit their needs and allow them to take part in paid employment, family, social and cultural life (see Lawson *et al*. 2006).

2.5.7 Parenting issues

Two of the most important issues to arise from a review of the literature on family leisure were identified as intensive styles of mothering and the ethic of care. Both these issues feature predominantly in much of the research literature where family leisure is the key focus. Intensive mothering is seen by many as the dominant mothering ideology in western societies (Hays, 1996; Hadfield *et al*. 2007). This ideology involves a set of beliefs and assumptions about what it means to be a good mother in relation to behavioral and emotional aspects of childbearing that reflect these beliefs. Intensive mothering was first described by Hays (1996) in research she conducted with 38 mothers, where she identified three domains that embodied intensive mothering.

The first domain 'sacred children and sacred mothering' assumes all children are inherently good and innocent, whereas the second domain, 'responsibility of motherhood' assumes mothers are naturally nurturing and have the prime responsibility for care giving of the child. The third domain, 'intensive methods' describes good mothering as child-centred, labour intensive and financially expensive. As a result intensive mothering takes up a lot of time, energy and resources and Hays (1996) argues, is often the privilege of white middle class women. Intensive mothering is then deemed as the 'gold-standard' all good mothers must aspire to and recognised as the 'good-mother'. The downside however, is that intensive mothering requires self sacrifice and can take a toll on the health and quality of women's lives (Dilliway & Pare, 2008). Full time employment for mothers challenges intensive mothering as Brescoll & Uhlmann (2005) have recognised that working mums often feel a sense of guilt to be selfless and fully committed to childrearing, when working. Hattery (2001) acknowledges this as employment specific guilt which can impact negatively on women's mental and physical health (Pineles *et al*. 2006).

Feminist scholars argue that intensive mothering is a popular conception of motherhood that has perpetuated gender role stereotyping (Baber & Allen, 1992) and is structured and organized within the prevailing gender system (O'Reilly, 2004). Moreover feminist assert that intensive mothering gives further credibility to a patriarchal system and limits women's choice as mothers (Johnson & Swanson, 2006). Intensive mothering assumes women are biologically equipped with the skills to attend to children and are naturally nurturing (Arendell, 2000). Furthermore, Arendell's (2000) review of the literature on motherhood and mothering led her to conclude that there are still many questions left unanswered and posed a number of research questions for the future, concerning how women identify themselves with different styles of motherhood and how motherhood impacts on their lives.

In reviewing the literature on intensive mothering, it is evident that this approach to motherhood regulates families and family life. However, there are still gaps in the literature in the methods adopted and the understanding of concepts. Previous studies are limited and tend to replicate each other as most are based on small samples within heterosexual couples, which have tended to focus on employed mums from middle class backgrounds.

The ethic of care is a family issue that is directly linked to how a woman feels about whether she is entitled to take part in leisure activities due to overwhelming social expectations and family obligations. The antecedents to this idea can be traced back to Gilligan (1982) who has argued that women place primacy on attachment, sustaining relationships and avoiding harm, rather than on an ethic of justice or fairness. The ethic of care as a theory emerged from feminist psychology in a discussion concerning the difference in the psychological development of women compared to men, in understanding women's experiences in a context that is different to men's experiences (Henderson & Allen 1991). Gilligan (1982) suggested that women are more concerned with commitment and responsibility and tend to be selfless, experiencing moral conflict when they respond to their own needs rather than others, such as their child or partner. However, a number of feminist researchers argue that this notion is over simplistic and cannot account for every woman (Biasleschki, 1994) even though society is organized in a such a way that it places care-giving as the primary domain for women (Henderson, 1996).

As a framework to understand women's leisure experiences, the ethic of care has been recognized as a major constraint for women as caring for others takes precedence over their own leisure (Henderson & Allen, 1991; Brown *et al*, 2001)). The ethic of care is also prominent where women's care giving continues in shared leisure experiences, such as family leisure (Daly, 2000) and during family holidays and vacations (Henderson & Allen, 1991). As a result women do not experience the freedom or opportunity to engage fully in family leisure, compared to their male partner (Larson *et al*. 1997). Similarly, in Daly's (2000) study involving interviews with women from different ethnic groups and racial backgrounds, women placed the interests of others before their own and reported limited time and resources to engage in leisure due primarily to their child caring roles. Nevertheless, a number of women in Daly's (2000) study mentioned providing care as a positive experience as it helped them nurture their relationship with their child and helps us understand that the balancing of work, leisure and significant relationships is a way that the ethic of care can empower women within their leisure. This view is consistent with Miller and Brown's (2005) work where the ethic of care enriched rather than constrained women, and leisure became a site to challenge and change assumed familial gendered roles.

2.6 The Limitations of New Zealand Family Leisure Research

In New Zealand, studies of family leisure have been relatively scarce. Although, the traditional role of sport and its importance in New Zealand culture in the last century has helped reinforce hegemonic masculinity, providing New Zealand with an identity (Thompson, 1999). Indeed, there seems to be a general lack of knowledge on how New Zealanders generally spend their leisure time (Veal *et al*. 1998).

A number of studies by Thompson (1995, 1998, 1999) a New Zealand researcher uncovered that women faced similar difficulties and problems with gaining time and opportunity for leisure, as more euro-centred studies of family leisure had indicated (see Green *et al*. 1990). However, these studies were conducted in Australia.

As a result there is a lack of research from a qualitative perspective on the role and importance of family leisure in New Zealand. Many of the studies on family leisure participation in New Zealand have been policy-oriented, government funded, and reliant on statistical analysis, which has utilized a quantitative approach (see SPARC 2002, 2003, 2004). Such studies have provided us with useful data on participation rates based on classifications of age and gender, but are limited as they do not fully determine or explain why individual members of families engage in leisure or what barriers and constraints impinge on their participation.

Moreover, these studies have failed to give us any indication of activities that families engage in collectively or the amount of time they spend together in collective forms of leisure, such as family leisure. As a consequence, results from such surveys are limited in being able to develop a more thorough understanding, with regard to the role and importance of family leisure in New Zealand society. Research undertaken by SPARC (2004) did attempt to focus on some of the underlying causes of disengagement with physical activity as a form of leisure, but was limited as it did not take into account the many other forms of leisure, such as family leisure. Quantitative based studies tend to rely on peoples' memories and recollection of events and consequently, problems can arise with the accurate recording of participation, due largely to problems of recall (Veal *et al*. 1998). Quantitative evidence also tends to be over descriptive and based on national participation rates in out-of home and formalised activities, when the reality of leisure participation is that much of it takes place within the home and is informal in nature.

This study seeks to deepen our understanding of leisure in New Zealand (Veal *et al.* 1998), in terms of how key life stages, such as pregnancy and parenthood, impact upon family leisure and attempts to fill the gap in family based leisure research in New Zealand, using a range of qualitative methods, such as focus groups and interviews.

2.7 The Research Gaps and Contribution of this Study

From a review of the literature it seemed that adoption of qualitative methods in mainstream leisure research had been scarce, yet such methods are better suited to this area of research in uncovering meanings and perceptions associated with family leisure.

It is apparent, that present family leisure research has failed to link the wider context of the family to leisure and few researchers have considered the importance of leisure as a social activity or indeed at different stages of the lifecycle. The satisfactions, outcomes and benefits of leisure for different family members, also require further investigation. More importantly, over the last few decades there has been significant change in the way many families are formed, dissolved and reformed. Such change has resulted in a number of significant consequences:

> Marriage has become less central in organizing and controlling life-course transitions, individual identities, intimate living arrangements and childbearing. Families have become more fluid and family boundaries are becoming more ambiguous. There has been an increase in the number of unions entered during an individual's lifetime and more children are spending more time in more than one family type.
>
> (NZ Statistics, 2006, p.15).

Shaw (2001, p.60/61) recognised that the ideology associated with families has further restricted our gaze and understanding of family life and leisure. "This ideology represents a belief system that values and promotes the traditional patriarchal family". As leisure researchers, we need to be mindful of family trends and consider how the increasing fluidity and diversity of family forms impacts upon the leisure experiences of those members within the family. There are numerous dimensions of family leisure to study which include "marital style; family life stages; family decision making and their inter relationships; more sophisticated conceptualisations and methodological approaches" (Keller *et al*. 1991, p.98).

Research undertaken on family life has demonstrated the important role that leisure can play in family life. However, in order to better understand family life, research needs to firstly seek an explanation for the differences and similarities between men and women at the individual, inter-actional (relationships) and institutional (reward and sanctions) levels. The limited perspective we have on the family has led to a lack of understanding of gendered roles in particular with respect to the role that men and women play in parenting and the impact of that role on their own leisure. Most studies have centred their analysis on the female role in the family, which is further compounded by a lack of research on male perspectives of parenting, family life and leisure in terms of their role, attitude and behaviour (Wearing, 1984, 1990; Green *et al.* 1990, 1995; Thompson, 1995, 1998; Brown *et al.* 2001; Cartwright & Warner-Smith, 2003; Currie, 2004, 2009; Miller & Brown, 2005; Namaguchi, 2006). It seems there is still a large gap between what is known and what we need to know about different aspects of family leisure. As a result, the family leisure literature has been dominated by challenges faced by mothers as workers and providers of childcare and the positive contributions of family leisure cohesion, interaction and satisfaction (Orthner & Mancini, 1990; Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001).

New avenues of family leisure research are vital to produce knowledge on which to base future leisure provision for families. A suggestion to help plug this gap in the research is to encourage further study at particular key life stages we experience and around significant life events, such as pregnancy and childbirth (Kelly 1994). This study is concerned with particular life stages (pregnancy and childbirth) and with significant life events (becoming pregnant and becoming a parent) and focuses on the topic of leisure and seeks both male and female perspectives. Clearly, there is still a need for more research to understand the nuances of family leisure as Shaw (2001, p.57) indicates that family leisure is, "a complex and sometimes contradictory component of family life". This study makes a worthwhile contribution in filling the gap in family leisure research as few studies have fully addressed the issue of how becoming pregnant and having children affects the lives of couples and their leisure.

Shaw (1997) argues that family leisure researchers have been guilty of over emphasising the notion that parents and children spend free time together and often make uninformed assumptions about the family and gender in society. This approach is short-sighted as individual family members often interpret the same leisure activity differently and may pursue different, not shared activities (Larson *et al*. 1997).

Furthermore, parents can greatly influence their children's conception of leisure by the nature and type of leisure they engage in. Researchers have come to realise that 'typical' family leisure can take many forms and is constructed and enacted in many different ways (Freysinger, 1994; Larson, *et al*. 1997; Siegenthaler, 1998). In this study, the focus is on both men's and women's leisure experience, with the objective of comparing partner's ideals and experiences of leisure. It is clear from previous research on family leisure that activity type descriptions of leisure are limited, as they do not fully capture the meanings and experiences of the individual (Shaw, 1992; Horna, 1993; Henderson, 1994; Kay, 2006b). Research has been limited due to its focus on the family, rather than on the individual perspectives and on the key life stages, to gain a broader perspective of leisure.

2.8 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented a number of theoretical perspectives related to family leisure and identified and discussed a number of key research studies in the area. The next chapter of the thesis focuses on the methodology adopted and the methods used in this study. Initially, Chapter 3 describes the location of the study area and gives an account of how participants were selected and recruited for the pre-birth and post-birth focus group studies, and for the interview studies involving pre-birth and post-birth couples and leisure facility managers.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, the concept of the 'family' was discussed and a range of theoretical perspectives was identified, followed by a review of the literature on family leisure. In this chapter, Christchurch is introduced as the study location, outlining how the city was developed in the last century with regards to population growth and a more divergent ethnic mix. More recently, the impact of two major earthquakes and the resulting aftershocks in 2010 and 2011 is described. This is followed by an explanation of how this study was designed and how the participants were selected and recruited for the focus groups and the interviews. In the final section of this chapter, an explanation is provided of how the data was analysed and interpreted into themes.

3.2 Study Area

The city of Christchurch provided a suitable location in which to base this study as I was resident in Christchurch and was enrolled as a PhD student at Lincoln University, within close proximity of the study area. Christchurch became a city by royal charter in 1856 and is one of the oldest European settlements in New Zealand and later developed into a thriving modern and cosmopolitan city. This is primarily due to its many notable buildings, monuments of historical significance, and its many parks and beautiful gardens.

Just after the data was collected for this study, on 4th September, 2010, Canterbury suffered an earthquake 40 kilometres west of Christchurch which caused structural damage to homes and several power outages in Christchurch. A more damaging 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck Christchurch on February 22nd, 2011, resulting in 181 deaths and the closure of the city centre due to widespread damage to buildings and infrastructure (Booker, 2011). On the 13th June 2011, Christchurch encountered a further blow with two aftershocks one measuring 5.5 magnitude and the other 6.0, which further weakened buildings (Manhire, 2011). As a result of the earthquakes cited above, it is now estimated that the re-build of Christchurch could take 10 years and cost $7.45NZ billion dollars (English, n.d.).

During the period the study was conducted, Christchurch had a vibrant café and restaurant scene, with a wide selection of art, theatre and music venues. Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island of New Zealand, with a resident population of 384,485 people reported in March 2006 (NZ Statistics, 2009) within an island country of four million people in the south west of the Pacific Ocean. The 2011 Census was not completed because of the earthquake in Christchurch on 22 February 2011, given the national state of emergency at the time and the next Census in Christchurch will not be until 2013. In New Zealand over 85% of the population resides in urban areas such as Auckland with 1,223,300 people and Wellington, with 367,600 people and Christchurch with 384,485 people.

In terms of ethnic mix, Christchurch is described as multi-cultural as indicated in Table 3.1 which shows ethnic populations in both Christchurch and New Zealand. Furthermore, Table 3.1 illustrates that, Christchurch has a higher percentage of NZ Europeans with a relatively large number of people of British descent and New Zealanders and a lower percentage of Maori, Pacific Islanders and Asians, compared to national averages, which indicates that it is less of a diverse cultural mix of people. However, a significant rise in migration resulted in a more ethnically and culturally diverse society in the North Island of New Zealand (New Zealand Families Commission, 2010).

Table 3.1 Ethnic composition of New Zealand and Christchurch in 2006
(Adapted from New Zealand Statistics, 2009)

Ethnic Group	% Population **(NZ)**	% Population in **(Christchurch)**
NZ European (NZ Europeans refers to NZ 'Pakeha' of European descent. Most are of British and Irish ancestry. A smaller number are from other European countries, such as Germany, France, Holland and Scandinavian countries)	70	81
Maori (Maori are the indigenous Polynesian people of New Zealand who speak their own language and practice their own culture)	14	8
Asian (Asians include people of Chinese, Indian, Korean, Filipino, Japanese, Vietnamese, Sri Lankan, Cambodian and Thai ancestries)	9	8
Pacific Islanders (These are people of Fiji, Tonga, Samoa, Niue and the Cook Islands who reside in New Zealand)	6	3

The general trend in Christchurch is that the population is growing, due largely to the excess of births over deaths (Table 3.2). There are higher densities of residents in inner suburban locations in Christchurch and the number of people per hectare tends to decrease as you move away from the city centre, which suggests that the majority of the population in the Canterbury region is urban based. However, according to Robertson (2006) we should be mindful of the fact that population measures are only estimations, as they are based on people that normally reside in a given area at a given time. Also, we need to be aware of the fact, that the census count does not include residents who are temporarily overseas.

Table 3.2 Christchurch estimated and projected population 2001-2026
(Adapted from New Zealand Statistics, 2009)

Year	**Population**
2001 (March Census)	324,057
2006 (March Census)	348,435
2011 (projection)	365,100
2016 (projection)	374,000
2021 (projection)	381,800
2026 (projected)	388,800

3.3 Research Framework

The research framework in Figure 3.1 identifies the three key stages of this research study and the methods used, which are discussed in more detail in this chapter of the thesis.

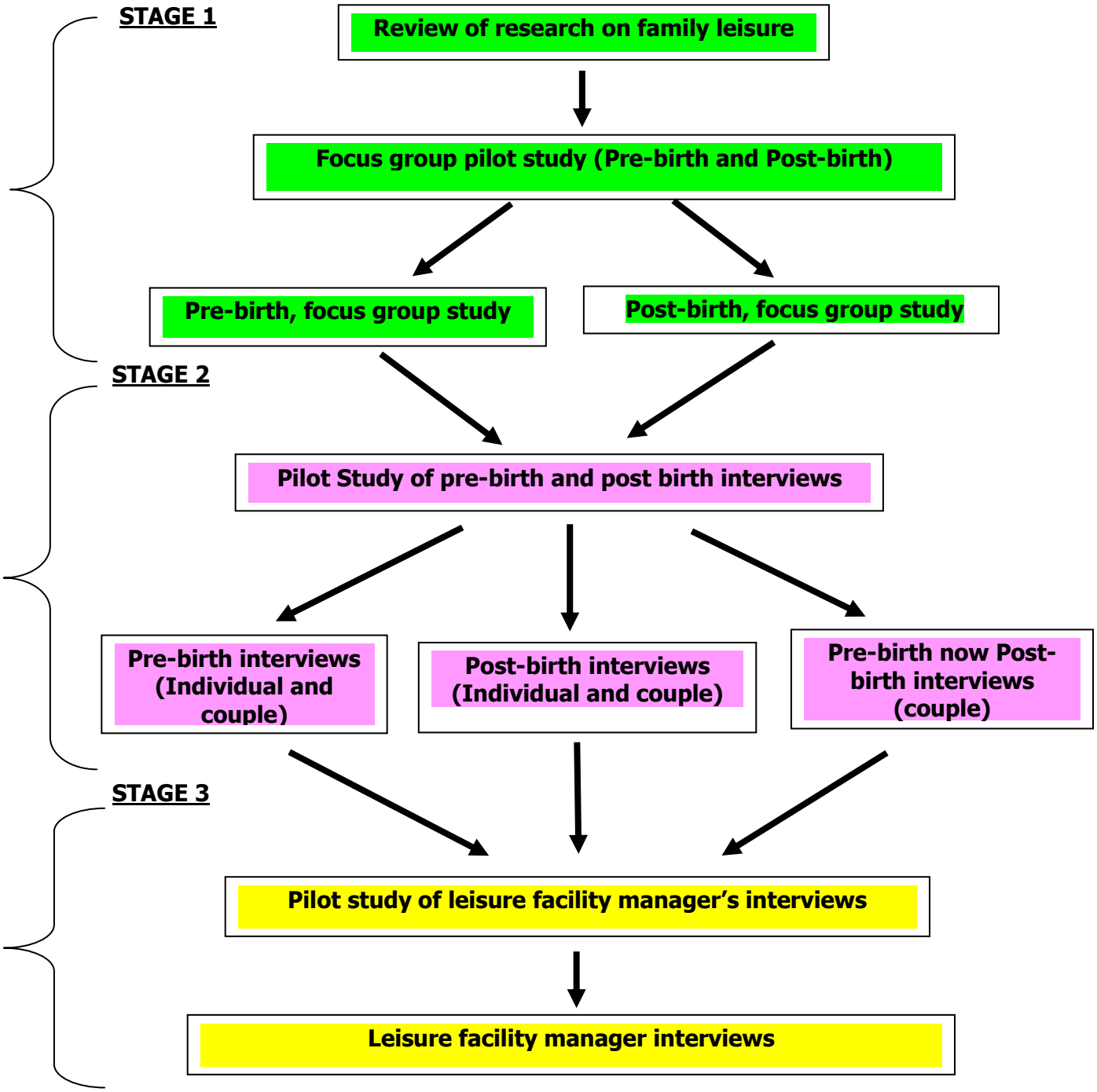


Figure 3.1 Research Framework

The epistemology supporting this study adopted the constructivist perspective, where the purpose of the researcher is to understand complex human phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the case of this study, the 'phenomenon' was family leisure. My role as researcher was to interpret where the relation between the researcher and participant was the key to develop knowledge that is co-constructed through interaction. As Fuss (1989) has noted, the constructivist perspective essentially seeks to understand how people interpret and make sense of a phenomenon. In addition, he comments that, "constructivists are concerned above all with the production and organisation of differences…. therefore, they reject the idea that any essential or natural givens precede the process of social determination" (Fuss, 1989, p.4). Utilising, the ethnographic techniques of focus groups and interviews, allowed this to happen (Lofland & Lofland, 1995).

This style of enquiry has been described by (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p.34) as 'triangulation' where, "essentially if different sources of information are saying the same things, then the social researcher can have some more confidence that the findings are valid". In using triangulation it was possible to provide "a rich description of the activity adoption process and assisted in identifying and correcting bias that may occur when a researcher is the sole observer of a phenomenon understudy" (Howe, 1988, p.312). Triangulation occurred through the adoption of a range of methods in this study and included focus groups, interviews and involved the use of a variety of methods to validate the findings (Reinhartz, 1994).

My primary motive within this study was to understand and see the world through the eyes of those being studied, working primarily in a qualitative style, interpreting and defining everyday issues and settings in novel ways utilising an ethnographic context and approach. One of the key objectives of this study was to understand and experience the more subjective viewpoint of the actor in the social situation/research (Morrison 1986), that is, the participants involved in the focus group studies and interviews. This involved working with "small samples of people set in the detail of content and studied in depth" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.22). Essentially, my priority was for the research to be justifiable and valid, to follow specific lines of enquiry, as suggested by Sapsford and Evans (1981, p.46) "where the questions require study in great depth before they can be answered".

A qualitative approach differs in a number of ways from quantitative methods, as it is concerned with the social world from the 'eyes' of the actor/actress or in the case of this study, the focus group participant and interviewee. The approach in this study was to be active and involved in the research in order to "get under the skin" of the research participants (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p.20). Close involvement with the research participants was necessary as this study was inherently explorative, placing emphasis on describing the 'local' world from the point of view of the research participants or as Bryman (1984, p.86) remarks:

> The qualitative researcher embarks on a voyage of discovery rather than one of verification, so that his or her research is likely to stimulate new leads or avenues of research that the quantitative researcher is unlikely to hit upon, but which may be used as a basis for further research.

This approach was useful in helping decipher meaning and context in relation to family life and leisure and had less fixed parameters, when compared to quantitative methods. Although, it could be argued that a qualitative approach has to be more rigorous in terms of managing and collecting the data which is likely to an ongoing process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.4 Research Method Stages

In this section, the methods used in this study are described and evaluated in terms of the planning, organization and management of the focus groups, interviews with pre-birth and post-birth couples and leisure managers.

3.4.1 Focus group studies

The first stage of this study involved two focus groups (see Figure 3.1). The rationale for my approach was to use the focus group method to explore a range of issues that had emerged from a number of sources and helped shape the final version of the focus group questions (see Table 3.3). These sources included a literature review of family leisure (Chapter 2), the research questions on which this study was based (Chapter 1), several meetings held with my research supervisors and a pilot study involving two pre-birth couples and two post-birth couples.

Table 3.3 Focus group questions (pre-birth and post-birth)

Question 1	Can you tell me about your leisure? (Probe for detailed feedback, reasoning and understanding of concept)
Question 2	As a couple and an individual is there a difference between your leisure now and before you had children? (Probe how and in what ways?)
Question 3	As a couple and an individual how has having children impacted upon your leisure? (Probe how and in what ways)
Question 4	Are there any important factors that restrict and constrain your leisure? (Probe, why? Or why not? Some factors may be more important than others?)

The focus group study was extremely useful in uncovering lines of enquiry and helped determine specific themes that would require further investigation at the interview stage with pre-birth and post-birth couples and with leisure managers. In addition, as Krueger (1988) and Kitzinger (1995) have both noted, the focus group method is a useful vehicle to explore a range of ideas that become apparent during the literature review. Also, focus groups allowed participants to be involved in a manner they don't commonly experience, to uncover and create knowledge unique to this experience.

The focus group method was selected to gain a different perspective, compared to previous research conducted on family leisure using other methodological techniques (Horna, 1993; Siegenthaler, 1998; Brown *et al*. 2001; Kay, 2003). Focus groups involving women and their partners at the pre-birth and post-birth stages were used at the initial stages of this study. Using this method ensured familiarity with the research audience and helped establish rapport and avoid superficiality, which often exists between the researcher and his/her participants (Powell & Single, 1996). The main priority was to understand attitudes, opinions and beliefs about family leisure. The approach taken in this study was to encourage research participants to answer questions in their own way, to limit the influence of research bias (see Lankshear 1993; Gross & Leinbach, 1996).

Focus group participants were recruited through a number of personal contacts, antenatal classes and parental coffee groups and people involved in these groups encouraged their friends to take part, referred to by Kruger (1988) as the 'snowballing' technique. The November/December, bi-monthly issue of the Parents Centre Newsletter also included an article (Appendix 4), explaining the purpose of the research and inviting individuals to take part. The key priority was to recruit couples at the pre-birth stage as first-time parents, but this was not possible, due to time constraints and the lack of suitable first-time parents that were available to take part. In the pre-birth focus group study two couples had one child and were not first time parents. This limitation did not detract from the purpose of this study as all couples involved in the pre-birth focus group study were undergoing a similar experience as 'expectant parents', during the stage of pregnancy.

At stage two of this research study, the pre-birth interviewee study (Chapter 5), it was possible to recruit just 'first-time' parents, because of more contacts and time. The same questions were put to both the pre-birth focus group and the post-birth group with the exception of one question, which asked the pre-birth group to discuss their leisure pre-pregnancy and during pregnancy, whereas the post-birth group were asked about their leisure before and after they became parents. They were also asked about their expectations and experiences of pregnancy and early parenthood (just post-birth). Also, they were asked about factors that may constrain and restrict their leisure and their opinion on leisure facilities for pregnant couples and parents with young children in Christchurch. The questions were open ended and were influenced by informal discussions with pre-birth and post-birth couples and the literature review in Chapter 2.

Before attending the focus group meeting, participants were sent a research information sheet explaining the purpose and objectives of the research, the nature of their expected involvement and information detailing how the data would be firstly collected, then analysed and utilised for research purposes only. The focus group questions were designed to allow for flexibility, to encourage people to reply to the questions asked in some detail. The first question was used to encourage informal conversation within the group, acting as an 'ice breaker' to encourage people to talk with each other (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This led to a number of more focused questions and transition questions to introduce each topic of the focus group study.

These questions were facilitated by the use of probes and pauses. In the qualitative literature, this is referred to as 'open questioning' (Morgan, 1997; Creswell, 1998) which provides an opportunity for participants to respond, with less restriction (Gubrium & Holstein, 2006). For example, the question, "Can you tell me about your leisure?" was an exploratory question that elicited a wide range of responses, but was also useful to introduce the research topic and encouraged people to talk freely during the rest of the focus group meeting. The questions acted as probes to stimulate discussion, where the key role of the researcher was, one of facilitator. The objective of this method was to encourage informality and talking with purpose (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Grbich, 2007). To record the conversation, a digital recorder was placed in the middle of the group and seating was arranged in a circle, to encourage participation by all (Figure 3.2).

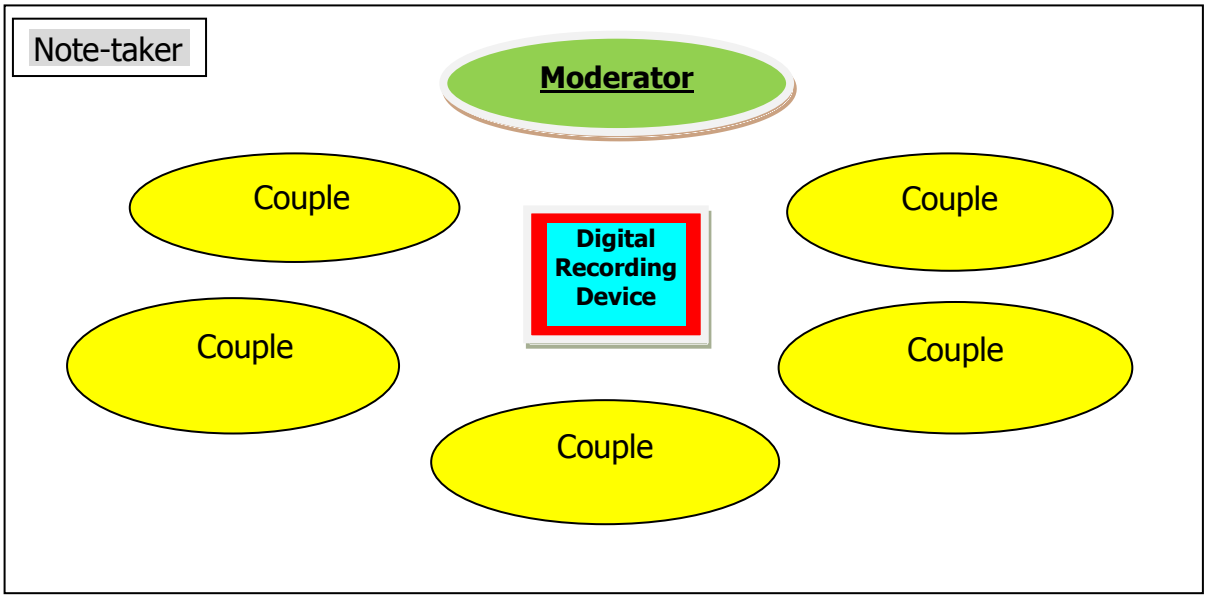


Figure 3.2 Room set up for focus groups

In addition, a checklist was designed in Table 3.4 to plan and monitor the focus group research study. Also, an experienced note taker was assigned to take detailed notes, just in case of any technical problems with the recording equipment and to allow the facilitator to focus on stimulating discussion within the group.

Table 3.4 Checklist for focus group studies, adapted from Krueger & Casey (2000)

CHECKLIST	ITEM
1	Contact participants by phone two weeks before focus group
2	Send each 'likely' participant research information sheet
3	Once acceptance to engage is confirmed, send details of focus group location and time process
4	Give participant reminder phone call the day before the session
5	Questions should flow in a logical order
6	Key questions should focus on the critical issue (family leisure)
7	Limit the use of 'why' questions
8	Use think back questions if needed and probe and clarify if necessary
9	Logistics - The room should be appropriate for the group size and comfortable with seats and tables
11	Check background noise, is not an issue when recording
12	Have name labels for each participant
13	Site digital audio recorder in a suitable location (in the middle of group)
14	Do not give comments to signify approval and avoid giving your personal opinions
15	Practice questions and know them 'off by heart'
16	Seat experts and talkative participants next to moderator
17	Seat shy and quiet participants directly across from moderator

As a result of the feedback from the pilot study, the number of questions was reduced from eight to five questions to avoid duplication and to keep the number of questions to a minimum. Also, a number of minor alterations were made to two of the five questions to provide a clearer understanding of what was being asked. A week after the focus group discussions had been completed, an email was sent to thank all couples for their involvement in the focus group studies. The email advised them, that they would receive another email one week later, with an attachment providing a summary of the focus group discussions they were involved in. A number of interesting and positive responses to this second email were received, one of which is cited below:

> Thanks for the earlier email and attachment last week. I meant to write to you earlier, as I was mulling over my absence of responsibility and realized that the whole definition of leisure changes once you have a child. A leisurely shower is a luxury and now feels like a leisure activity, whereas a trip to town with the baby does not. (Ally)

A number of focus group participants were worried about the confidentiality of their input, but reminding them of how the data would be managed and accessed, served to put their minds at rest and helped re-confirm their continued involvement in the study. Also, a number of individuals questioned the benefits of their involvement, but a number of key informants used their influence to secure their involvement in the focus group study.

During the focus group meetings, the main concern was to put people at ease, to make them feel comfortable and provide a welcoming environment to stimulate conversation and encourage discussion (Stewart & Shamdasin, 1990), by asking them a limited number of questions (Table 3.3). The role adopted encouraged conversation to flow and at the same time allowed participants to contribute answers to the questions raised. This required effective listening skills and direction of the discussions and at the same time, avoiding pre-judgment of feedback or indication of gestured agreement (Morgan, 1988). This was a difficult and challenging role to play and took great powers of concentration. The role of the moderator within the focus group studies was to stimulate and manage the discussions, so that participants could re-evaluate and re-consider their own attitudes, understandings and specific experiences of the issues being discussed (Krueger, 1988).

The note taker was discreetly located behind the moderator to observe and take notes using shorthand, detailing the contributions that people made to the meeting. This enabled the moderator to focus attention on asking key questions in encouraging all participants to contribute what Krueger & Casey (2000) refer to as 'good conversation'. A number of key themes emerged during the focus group discussions that were further explored at stage two of this study, the interviews with pre-birth and post-birth couples and a number of pre-birth couples that were re-interviewed at the post-birth stage.

3.4.2 Pre-birth and post-birth interview study

The second stage of this study highlighted in Figure 3.1, involved interviews which were undertaken with both male and female partners at the pre-birth and post-birth stages, individually and then together as a couple. This strategy was employed to encourage partners to speak independently (Morrison, 1986) which is important as individuals often have their own unique realities of family leisure (Dyck & Daly, 2009). Individual interviews allowed couples to speak independently without being influenced by their partner, which could have been the case in joint interviews. In joint interviews Becker (1998) notes that couples, often give more cautious answers and have a tendency to agree with each other. In joint interviews there is a danger of joint narrative (Daly, 2001) and it might be difficult to fully appreciate different personal realities. In separate interviews, the gendered power dynamics are more likely to be revealed where the shared narrative is avoided and the researcher is better able to uncover the different perceptions of men and women (Such, 2006).

The interviews were used to explore the motives; meanings; perceptions and reflections of research participants on family leisure. Themes that emerged during the focus group studies were used as the basis of the subject matter of the interviews, so as this study developed, the key areas of investigation emerged. The draft interview guide was put together after the focus group research had been undertaken and could best be described as a semi-structured guide, to guide conversations, which produced rich, qualitative, data whilst maintaining a structured approach (Lofland *et al.* 2006). Moreover, at this stage of the research, it was also possible to explore emergent areas in some depth (Howe, 1988).

The pilot interview guide was tested on several men and women involved at the focus group stage and once the interview guide was finalised, none of the focus group participants took any further part in the study. Throughout the piloting of the interview guide, the contents and format was continually revised, with regard to the purpose of the research and the research questions posed in Chapter 1. After analyzing the pilot interviews the final version of the interview schedule was decided upon (Table 3.5).

Table 3.5 Pre-Birth and Post-Birth interview schedule

Themes	**Questions**
PARENTING	Significant factors that have or will influence your role as a parent? Give examples - upbringing, your parents, family, friends, role models, legacy, organizations - Plunket and Parents Centre, reading etc. How have you/or will you prepare for your role as a parent? In what ways has/or do you think being a parent has/will affect your life? As an expectant/new parent what has/ or will be some of the major demands pressures and responsibilities of parenthood?,
MOTHERHOOD and FATHERHOOD	What has/or will it be like being a new mother/father? Could you describe to me, what you believe to be a good father/mother? How have your formed your own opinion, ideas and values about, what it is to be good mother or a good father? What are/or do you think will be, some of the challenges, demands of being a mother/father? Are there/or will there be any barriers/constraints to your role in being a good mother/father? Is there anything in particular you enjoyed about being a father?
CHILDCARE and PREGNANCY	What was/is it like being pregnant? As a mother or father what is/or will be your major role with your child/children? Who does/will do what with children and how often etc What childcare tasks/duties are/or will be associated with your present/new role as a parent and do you receive any childcare support? In terms of your role/expectant role as a parent, how is/or will your time be divided up into the roles of care giving, play and outings? (ask for time spent on each, percentage) Does the role of parenting include more than just care-giving, play and outings?
PERSONAL LEISURE	What meaning/value does the term, leisure have for you personally? Did /or has your access and opportunity to leisure change/changed before, during and post pregnancy? How satisfied are you, about your access and opportunity to personal leisure? Tell me about your leisure before/during and post pregnancy? (during the first two years of your child's birth) As a new or expectant parent, how has/or will your leisure be/been affected? (ask for details, re; negotiation and organisation of leisure)

FAMILY LEISURE	Do you think key life events such as childbirth or pregnancy impact upon the nature of leisure, for mothers and fathers? What does the term 'family leisure' mean to you? Is there a difference between your own leisure and your family leisure? Has the meaning of this term (leisure) changed since you were pregnant or since the birth of your child? How valuable/important is leisure for you as family/expectant family? How is time spent on family leisure compared to other areas of life? Is the experience of family leisure different for you as a mother/father? What do you think are some of the 'supposed' benefits and rewards? How and in what ways does leisure positively and negatively impact upon your family life? Who is responsible for and who organises/negotiates your family leisure? How satisfied are you about your access and opportunity to family leisure? How will you/or do you choose to spend time together as a family? Is there anything that has/or will affect you spending time together as a family?
LEISURE PROVISION	Are facilities for leisure in Christchurch sufficient for your own needs? Are facilities for leisure in Christchurch sufficient for the needs of families? As a family what use do you/or will you make of existing facilities for leisure in Christchurch? What do you understand by the term, family friendly leisure facilities? (ask to think of any examples of good or bad practice) Are there/or will there be any barriers/ constraints that have/will impact upon you as a family in using leisure facilities in Christchurch? Are there any ways in which leisure facilities for families could be improved? Do you have any particular suggestions to improve leisure provision in Christchurch for pregnant mums? In what ways could leisure provision in Christchurch for families with very young children, be improved? (under two years of age) Do you have any observations about facilities for leisure within Christchurch?

The first stage of recruiting potential interviewees involved sending flyers (Appendix 5) to a number of antenatal and postnatal classes in Christchurch managed by Christchurch South Parents Centre, Shirley Parents Centre and Plunket (Canterbury Branch). As a result of the flyers, a number of visits were arranged to meet with the groups mentioned above to explain the purpose of the research study in more detail.

At the end of these visits, potential interviewees were asked for their contact details and sent a research information sheet (Appendix 2) and later contacted, to arrange a suitable interview date and time. Before the interviews took place, each individual was sent a consent form (Appendix 4) to sign and return or bring with them to the interview.

The interviews were recorded using a digital device and within a short period of time, the audio files were transcribed verbatim in full, into a word document file for further analysis. Once printed, the transcripts were read several times, in order to firstly identify and then check categories or key themes which arose from the data within the context of this study. NVivo, a qualitative software package was used to manage the coding and save time. In order to time manage the interviews, a minimum of one hour and a maximum of two hours duration was allocated (Tolich & Davidson, 1998). Although in reality, one individual interview lasted only one hour and the longest interview took over two hours to complete. In total, 50 individual (solo) interviews were undertaken with participants in the pre-birth and post-birth groups. 24 individuals were interviewed from the pre-birth group and 26 individuals were interviewed from the post-birth group. Also, 12 'couple' interviews were conducted with the pre-birth group and 13 'couple' interviews were undertaken with the post-birth group.

The time taken to conduct interviews with couples was more consistent, when compared to the individual interviews, as most of them lasted for approximately one hour. The focus of these interviews was determined in general, by the outcome and discussions of the individual interviews. The number of total interviews conducted, was determined by a 'point' at which it was felt that, the participants were saying the 'same things'. In qualitative methodology this is referred to as 'saturation' (Bannister et al, 1994). The rationale for conducting individual interviewees was to represent the views of both partners:

> One can argue that in studying 'couples' via the males only, the researcher will be handicapped by the possibility that the men are not aware of the emotional intimacy needs of their partners (Duncombe & Marsden, 1993, p.237).

Equally, this could apply to the case of just interviewing women, so to evaluate whether there was any discernible differences between the two 'sets' of individual interviews, a second interview was conducted with both partners to discuss themes that arose in the individual interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Four couples interviewed at the pre-birth stage were later re-interviewed at the post-birth stage, to determine whether their reported leisure preferences and behaviour had changed, now they were parents. This strategy was useful in comparing the expectations of parenthood with the realities of parenthood.

3.4.3 The interview study of managers

The third and last stage of this study (Figure 3.1) involved a number of interviews with leisure facility managers working in the private and public sector in the study area. A range of organisations throughout Christchurch were selected for this purpose to reflect the different sectors of leisure provision in Christchurch. This 'balanced' sample was achieved by recruiting one manager for each of the leisure facilities detailed below. These included: a voluntary sports organisation; a large recreation complex (public organisation); a private gym/health club; a major shopping mall; a large cinema complex; a heritage park; a major tourist attraction; a regional library and a childcare/activity centre.

Leisure managers were firstly contacted by email and then by phone to encourage their involvement in the study. Over 20 managers showed interest in the study and were sent further details in the form of a letter regarding the purpose of the study. This letter was then followed up with an email contact to arrange a suitable time and date for the interview. Before the interviews took place each manager completed a research consent form which they signed and returned via external post or signed and returned the consent form by hand at interview (Appendix 3).

The draft interview guide for the leisure facility managers was compiled using a three stage process. Firstly, the digital recordings from the pre-birth and post-birth focus group studies and interviews were listened to again and secondly the transcripts were read again and thirdly a number of leisure managers were contacted, to ascertain their opinion on possible areas of investigation. The draft interview guide was discussed with the research supervisors for this study and later piloted on two managers. The participants for the pilot interview involved a manager from a public sector leisure organization and a manager from a commercial sector leisure organisation. After the two pilot interviews were completed, the contents and format of the guide was revised with regard to the key research question on which this study was based. The final version of the interview guide is shown in Table 3.6 on the next page.

Table 3.6 Interview guide for leisure managers

Question 1	Understanding and thoughts on general needs of pregnant women/partner?
Question 2	Understanding and thoughts on general needs of parents with young child?
Question 3	Ideas on leisure needs of pregnant women/partner?
Question 4	Ideas on leisure needs of parents with young child (under 2)?
Question 5	Policies for provision and impact on such groups? (Facilitation of provision for specific groups)
Question 6	Management philosophy and relevance to such groups? (Problems/challenges catering for such groups)
Question 7	Existing provision for above groups? (Why do these groups use your facility?)
Question 1	Existing programmes for above groups? (Are there discounts/concessions)
Question 8	Awareness of constraints on such groups? (What are they and how might you overcome such constraints)
Question 9	How does your centre plan/provide for such groups?
Question 10	Marketing/Promotion for such groups? (Niche market, providing for specific needs, promotion etc)
Question 11	Specialists provision for such groups (e.g. baby changing rooms, crèche)
Question 12	Suggestions on future developments for such groups? (short term and long term)
Question 13	Would you consider yourself a friendly family facility? (If so, why? If not, why not?, If unsure-debate)

A total of 12 managers were interviewed and at the time of the study were employed at a variety of leisure facilities, and included four male managers and eight female managers. Each manager had overall management responsibilities for the facility in which they worked, and most had specific responsibility for the marketing and promotion of the facility and in all cases, managers had direct responsibility for the management of staff. At the time of the interviews, the average age of the managers was 42 and the age range was from late 20s to mid-50s. Ten of the managers had children and two had no children. Of those managers with children, two had three children, five had two children, and three had one child.

The two eldest managers had children over 20 years of age and only one of the younger managers had a child less than two years of age. Most of the other managers had children who were attending school at primary or intermediate levels. In terms of their ethnic origin, five of the managers were New Zealand European (white); three described themselves as UK European; two as Eastern Europeans; one manager described herself as a New Zealand Maori; and the remaining manager described himself as a Pacific Islander, from Tonga. More specific details on each manager are given in Chapter 6.

Each manager was interviewed using a digital audio recording device and each interview was loaded onto a computer in order to transcribe the discussions in full, for further analysis. All the interviews were undertaken at the place of work of the manager in a suitable venue, where only the manager and researcher were present. The printed transcripts were read on several occasions for the purpose of familiarisation with the data and to analyse the data in identifying the key themes, where the principles of grounded theory were used (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

3.5 Data Processing

The first task in analysing the data was as Long (2007, p.146) suggested, "to read everything you have and then read it again, in order to familiarise yourself with the data". In reality, this meant that the digital audio recordings were listened to several times, before being downloaded onto a computer. Once the files had been saved and checked, the audio files were then transcribed in full, into a word document file and read in full to gain a general impression of what was said. This part of the process was undertaken 'naturally' without any reference to structure. The next stage involved a more detailed reading of the transcripts to establish the key themes with the use of NVIvO (a computer software package) to save time. The first stage of this process involved 'open coding' where the dominant themes were highlighted within the text (transcript) and given a title. This stage of analysis is also referred to as 'cluster coding' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The second stage involved 'axial coding' or 'pattern coding', where the themes from stage one were collapsed into a smaller number of themes. This was an interpretive process, where the themes or patterns of data were matched together. The third and final stage of analysis involved selective coding, which meant that a smaller number of themes identified at stage two were selected for analytic purposes.

The selective codes (themes) then formed the basis for structuring the findings, which are reported in the findings/discussion chapters (Chapters 4-6). In reality, the analytical strategy utilised for this study involved three key stages, similar to Seidel's model (1998) which includes noticing the data, collecting the data and then making sense of the data by thinking about, how best to present the data (Figure 3.3).

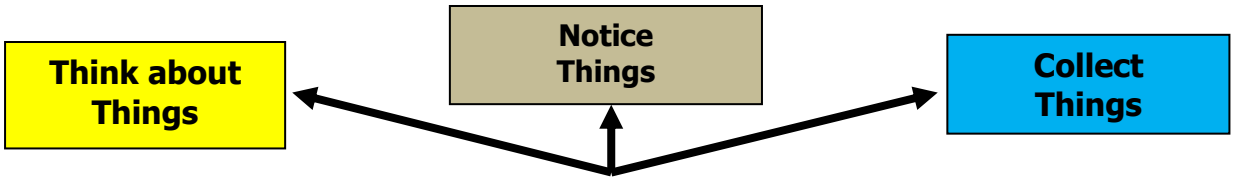


Figure 3.3 Seidel's model for analysing data (Seidel, 1998)

A similar strategy is evident in the model of analysis proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) who refer to the three stages as data reduction, data display and data interpretation (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Analysis of data model (Adapted from Miles & Huberman, 1994)

During the analysis stage of this study the primary concern was to systematically sort and reduce the data, which Richardson and Pierre (2005, p.34) describes as the "stuff you work with, and includes the records of what you are studying. The researcher makes them data by selecting and using them as evidence in an analysis". It was important to find a system to record the data as qualitative data is often messy and potentially could become unworkable and over saturated. The strategy for analysis could best be described as 'thematic analysis', which is a creative process undertaken throughout the research in a rigorous manner (Dey, 2003). Once the themes were established they were checked out with a sample of participants, a process known as 'member checking' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Kvale 1995, 1998). These participants were asked to check whether the transcript was a fair reflection of what they had said, during the interview to confirm the validity of the data.

The feedback from the participants involved was used to check the accuracy and legitimacy of their transcripts, according to the interpretation of the data and was useful in validating the interpretation of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking took some time to organize and some interviewees were initially unwilling or reluctant to take part, when initially approached. However, after further contact with them, supported by a more detailed explanation of the process of member checking, a viable number of potential interviewees agreed to take part. A representative sample of participants from the pre-birth and post-birth interview study and a number of leisure managers took part in reading through and checking their transcripts as part of the member checking process.

In developing and confirming themes (Patton, 2002), the researcher was made fully aware of the limitations of reporting data, given that the researcher was writing on behalf of the participants. In reality, this process involved close readings of the text and consideration of multiple meanings in the text. The primary objective during the analysis stage was to interpret the text and tell a story of the participants experience at their stage of life with the focus on their leisure and the family (Dey, 1993). In order to encapsulate the essence of what was said in both the focus groups and in the interviews, the words of the participants in the text were utilised as direct quotes. Here, the emphasis was on gathering 'rich data' to bring the research 'alive' (Krueger & Casey, 2000; Patton, 2002; Lofland *et al*. 2006).

3.6 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter the historical development of Christchurch, the study location was described and then the qualitative methods and framework upon which this study was based are explained. The recruitment of the participants for the pre-birth and post-birth focus group studies, the pre-birth and post-birth interview study and the leisure facility, manager interview study was then discussed. In the final section of this chapter, the important tasks of data processing and member checking are given to explain how these research techniques were conducted. The next chapter of this thesis highlights the key findings of the pre-birth, focus group study and the post-birth, focus group study, which are presented as themes that emerged in the data. Also, in Chapter 4, the link is identified between the focus group findings and the development of the interviews.

CHAPTER 4 – Focus Group Studies

(Pre-birth and post-birth couples)

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, Christchurch was introduced as the study location which led to description of the methodological framework and methods used for the focus group and interview studies. The remaining sections of chapter three, then discussed how research participants were contacted and then recruited and how the data was managed, processed and analysed. In this chapter the findings of the pre-birth, focus group study and the post-birth, focus group study are reported, discussed and evaluated according to the themes that emerged from the data. Three key themes emerged in the pre-birth, focus group study which included; partnered leisure, realities of pregnancy and family friendly facilities. In the post-birth, focus group, the key themes were; conceptions and realities of pregnancy, increasing pressures on time, couple time, changing leisure contexts and patterns. The last section of this chapter highlights the implications of the focus group findings for the development of the interview stage of this study. As noted in Chapter 3, the participants were mainly recruited through personal contacts and through the meetings attended with parent interest groups and organisations. The intention was to recruit couples at the pre-birth stage as 'first-time' parents but, this was not possible, due to time constraints and the lack of suitable 'first time' parents. The key objective of the focus group studies was directly linked to the research purpose and the key research questions stated in Chapter 1 and to the themes identified as a result of the literature review in Chapter 2. These themes included how couples define the different forms of leisure, negative and positive experiences associated with family leisure, and how a number of factors such as maintain a work life balance impact upon family leisure. All those involved in the pre-birth focus group study were undergoing a similar experience as 'expectant parents' and likewise in the 'post-birth study, as 'parents', for the first time.

4.2 Pre-Birth Focus Group Participants

At the time of the pre-birth focus group study, two out of the five heterosexual couples involved already had one child, one couple with a child of 14 months (Ella and Eugene), the other with a child of 18 months (Nicky and Yoshi). All couples were married and lived within the geographical boundaries of Christchurch.

Table 4.1 Pre-birth focus group participants

Couples	Age	Ethnicity	Time until birth	Working status	Home
Aimee Damien	Mid 30s Mid 40s	NZ European NZ European	5 months	Public relations (part-time) Self employed (logistics)	Bought in desirable suburb, south of Christchurch
Nicky Yoshi Already have one child aged 18 months	Late 20s Late 20s	NZ European Asian	3 months	Part-time (secretarial) Full time-self employed (media)	Bought in low price property area in north part of Christchurch
Ella Eugene Already have one child aged 14 months	Mid 20s Mid 20s	NZ European NZ European	6 months	Self employed (baby ware) Full time (public sports ground maintenance)	Bought in low price property area in east part of Christchurch
Yvette Nate	Mid 20s Mid 20s	NZ European NZ European	4 months	Part-time (admin) Full time-self employed (building business)	Bought in desirable suburb, south of Christchurch
Hannah Evan	Mid 20s Early 30s	NZ European NZ European	1 month	Not working at time of focus group Full time religious group community leader	Renting in central Christchurch

4.3 Pre-Birth Focus Group Findings

In this section, the key themes from the pre-birth focus group study are outlined and then evaluated using the words of the participants that were involved in this study.

4.3.1 Conceptualizing work and leisure

When asked about their leisure, all respondents indicated that they had witnessed significant change in their access, time and opportunity for leisure since the onset of pregnancy. A clear separation had now emerged between what was considered as leisure and as work. For all respondents, leisure needed an element of free choice, where time was free from obligations such as work commitments and for many women, household chores. Indeed, most of the men in the group openly admitted that most of these tasks were undertaken by their partners as this was what they expected. Damien described these tasks as "social roles and expected gender roles". Such societal expectations concerning the qualitative and quantitative segregation of household work between the sexes resulted in less time being available for women in the group to call their own, when compared to the men. This finding is consistent with the work of Frohlick (2006) who identified the constraints encountered by pregnant females due to their ideological beliefs about the maternal role.

Housework was described by women in the group as 'work-like' and mostly boring, and an activity in which their male partners were rarely involved. On occasions, some males in the group took responsibility for preparing and cooking meals, but this was due to personal choice and an interest in the activity. There was less enthusiasm for the multitude of other household tasks amongst the men, referred to by Rojek, (2005, p.154) as "housing, transport, nutrition, clothing, laundry and unpaid care". Within the group, it was evident that there was a strong tendency for women to undertake a larger proportion of the housework as many saw this as their ultimate responsibility. Where leisure took women out of the home, they were more likely to feel guilty as it took them away from their domestic duties and in the case of Ella and Nicky from childcare duties. Since her pregnancy, Ella had noticed that she rarely got out of the house or had any free time for herself as most of her spare time was spent looking after her child or resting. Ella described her leisure as "getting out of the house and spending time together with her partner and child, out of the usual routine". Her partner, Eugene agreed. "It's important to have leisure with our child, even though it may be something simple like walking".

Nicky's free time was very different as she liked going out, just with her friends who were single. "It keeps me young, and I don't have to talk about or deal with our child, it's definitely my time that I feel in control, to call my own". Yvette also mentioned that time with friends was important, "too often, we get so caught up in life, that we forget our friends, so time out with friends is leisure for me, without my partner". For many females in the group, freely chosen leisure in the home did not exist at all and if it did, it was not described as leisure. The nature of spare time around the home for women was of short duration, unpredictable and opportunistic. As a result, this meant any time available was spent recuperating from the daily chores watching TV, once domestic duties had been accomplished for the day.

TV also provided a useful distraction to entertain children during the day for Ella and Nicky and gave them opportunity to talk with friends with young children, but they always felt on duty. Research by Shaw (2001, p.59) confirms this, "TV does not have to be planned ahead of time….most importantly for stressed out parents TV can promote relaxation and requires little or no energy". Aimee and Nicky had organized tasks around the home so as not interfere with time allocated to watch '*Coronation Street'* with friends. For Aimee and Nicky, 'Corro' as they called it, helped them relax and it was time blocked out with no obligations. Essentially, it was time where they had some control and choice to engage with friends in a shared social activity. Eugene had no choice, he watched Coronation Street in sufferance with his partner Ella who enjoyed what she described as "quality time together". It became apparent during the pre-birth focus group, that time together as partners in the same activity could have quite different meanings for men and women. For example, some couples used the same space to relax at home which, they called leisure, but men and women were often involved in very different activities in the same location.

For most of the women in this group, the only time leisure was acknowledged outside the home, was on rare excursions with their partner, which normally centred on the needs of the male. This wasn't a concern shared by males in the focus group, as they still managed to secure and maintain their leisure activities during pregnancy. Yoshi justified his position on the gendered roles associated with housework and care-giving to their baby:

> It's only fair because I work all day, that she (partner) should prepare meals and do all the cleaning. I'm too tired when I get home from work. I just want to put my feet up. Sometimes I might do the vacuuming but, as far as the baby is concerned it's her territory.

Surprisingly, there was no verbal response to this remark from other respondents, but a few of the women in the group disapproved and shook their heads, demonstrating their annoyance with Yoshi's comments. In analysing the data, it appears that men were able to clearly distinguish between solo leisure and couple leisure and did not really have any clearly defined household tasks assigned to them. At times, they would help out with housework if they had time, usually with some vacuuming. Though, for most women household tasks, took up most of their time and was not enjoyable. Finding time for solo leisure during pregnancy for women was problematic and any available time for leisure was mostly taken up by shared activities or the numerous domestic responsibilities they mentioned.

Similar research has found that household activities are not considered as leisure for women, as many reported it as tiresome, repetitive, isolating and unappreciated (Deem, 1986; Green *et al*. 1986; Wimbush, 1986; Shaw, 1992; Kay, 1998). Divisions of labour inside the home is a recurring theme in family leisure research and most report that in reality this means inequality for most women. This is because household tasks are not shared equally between men and women in the home (Thompson, 1995; Shaw, 1997; Kay, 2003) and this was evident at the pre-birth stage in this study. Even when women received help in the home, they were still expected to manage the home (Deem, 1995). In the pre-birth focus group, the experience of leisure for men and women in the same relationship was often very different and was largely influenced by their 'assumed gender roles', due largely to socialisation processes which prescribe what is normal for a man and for a women (Freysinger, 1991).

4.3.2 Couple leisure

Pregnancy for expectant couples brought with it many challenges, including creating and accessing time for leisure. Nicky and Yoshi had set a 7.30 pm bedtime for their daughter as they believed children needed boundaries and structure. By using this strategy they hoped to maintain some time for themselves.

This arrangement was important for what Nicky described as "adult time together in the evenings", but in reality this time was not always spent together as Nicky had domestic chores to undertake and Yoshi was out three nights a week, with mates at the pub, at the gym or playing tennis. Evening time was also important for Aimee, by which time she was normally too tired to do anything but 'flop' in front of the TV. Nevertheless, this window of opportunity to relax was taken up by 'things' Aimee had to do around the house as she not had time in the day to complete them. Even this free time away from the duties of domesticity were not considered leisure time. The other problem for Aimee was that when she had time that was completely free of any obligation, she did not know what to do with it and was unsure of how much time she had. This led to feelings of frustration, due to the fact that she had not made the best use of her 'available' time. So in fact, she felt she wasted this time.

Making the best use of time was mentioned as an important strategy and some couples purposively spent time together during the pregnancy, as they anticipated they would have less time together once they became parents. Life before pregnancy for many had meant a fuller leisure life as individuals, as many described a wider range of activities engaged in on a more regular basis, before pregnancy. This was certainly not the current situation during pregnancy, as pregnancy now restricted their time and opportunity for leisure. Without exception, all women reported being tired, due to their pregnancy and for Hannah this meant the 'big' nights out had to stop:

> I used to enjoy going out at night with my friends. It just doesn't happen anymore. I don't feel physically capable of lasting the night. I'd probably just fall asleep and embarrass myself anyway.

Using available time for leisure as a couple brought with it many rewards and benefits for couples. Time spent together during pregnancy brought couples closer together and led to a better understanding of individual needs. During her pregnancy, Hannah often spoke with her partner Evan, about their plans for leisure once the baby was born and mentioned going to 'mums and bubs' sessions at a local cinema. They planned to spend time together as a family, at least one day each week, as Evan intended to re-organise his working hours to accommodate family leisure activity. Hannah appreciated this compromise on what she described as Evan's own personal time:

> You live as a couple together, but often forget each other, as so much time is taken up with childcare and work, so prioritizing time together gives you the opportunity to get to know each other again.

Yvette and Nate had bought a boat for family leisure outings and had already undertaken several outings as a couple and planned future family outings at sea, once they were parents. From what Yvette had said, it seems that partnered leisure required couples to be more selfless:

> You have to give up your own things for the benefit of the family. Not only do you have to think of your own needs, but your partner's and your child's. Couples don't talk about this sort of stuff enough and that can lead to problems in the relationship.

Nate nodded his head in agreement, "we plan to go for walks in the buggy and we've made a special seat, so our child can come with us". Many couples mentioned that more affordable and accessible forms of childcare provision would potentially give them more time for leisure, once they were parents. So, it seems that many couples during the pregnancy stage were already anticipating some of the constraints that might impinge on leisure as a family. In preparation for family life a number of couples had already become aware of childcare provision in and around Christchurch. However, many of them did not intend to make use of this service, due largely to prohibitive costs and lack of availability, as Aimee remarked:

> It's just too expensive in Christchurch. Also, you have to book weeks ahead to get a place. I just won't know what's happening that far ahead, so, I won't be able to commit to specific days. Also, you can never be certain about the quality of the childcare you receive.

Nicky and Yoshi expressed similar concerns and due to excessive costs they did not presently use these services. Access to paid childcare was considered a 'luxury', rather than a necessity, that few would be able to afford.

Ella and Eugene had spent a lot of money on baby-sitters and had to book weeks in advance to secure a Friday or Saturday night booking. Nicky and Yoshi had a different perspective of the issue, as they would never consider asking a complete stranger to look after their child. If no family member was available to 'baby-sit', they would simply cancel their intended plans. They appreciated that this decision might restrict their leisure time together, but they were unwilling to compromise their child's safety.

4.3.3 Realities of pregnancy

For most pre-birth couples, pregnancy was an all encompassing experience, which demanded their time, commitment and energy. Their focus of life was now on coping with pregnancy and planning for the new arrival. Even though two out of five couples had one child and had already experienced pregnancy before, there were still many unknowns of pregnancy which concerned and worried them all participants.

Hannah was concerned that there were many conflicting viewpoints and opinions of how to prepare for parenthood and most pre-birth women assumed it was their responsibility to parent. Wearing (1990) identifies that the core of this belief stems from women's ability to give birth and to suckle which were seen in patriarchal society, as the basis of their natural responsibility for parenting, household tasks and husband care. Aimee agreed with Hannah:

> There are so many people giving you advice all the time when you're pregnant, it's easy to get bogged down in the detail and feel confused with all the advice, with the 'do's', and 'don'ts', and the 'maybes,' but it's always women who get the advice from well intentioned people and never men.

Similar experiences for Nicky had created a sense of desperation, resulting in her visiting a local bookshop to purchase a large number of books on pregnancy and childbirth, even though she already had one child. Ironically, she never had the time to read them and her partner Yoshi, ended up reading them and often relaying a summary of each book to her. However, Yoshi found this really useful as he had read nothing during the first pregnancy and Nicky now described him as an 'expert' on the matter.

What couples really needed, according to Ella, was "straightforward, practical and simple advice on what to do and what not to do". Ella, Nicky and Aimee had used a number of local organizations to serve this purpose, including Plunket (a New Zealand wide organization to support young families) and the Christchurch Parents Centre South, to acquire what they believed was sound and realistic advice on a number of matters relating to their pregnancies. The advice the mothers were given was described as both practical and useful, as it helped allay some of their fears through the pregnancy. Nicky's first pregnancy was very challenging and she was concerned about all the difficulties that lay ahead and at the same time, she enjoyed all the attention from friends and family.

For other women in the group, accepting the inevitable changes that pregnancy brings was seen as very challenging to their relationship. It was a time when they experienced extremes of emotion from being very happy when everything was going well, to feeling very low when the pregnancy gave them problems. Aimee identified a number of problems with being pregnant that were often difficult to manage:

> It affects the way I feel, the way I look, the way people talk to me and the way people treat me, yet I was the same person when I wasn't pregnant, so why did people view me differently then?

Leisure during pregnancy was a concept that many women in this group had difficulty relating to, as most of their free time was now devoted to their unborn child. It was an idea they could relate to prior to being pregnant, when they remembered having more free time to undertake freely chosen activities. Any spare time now was either spent resting or sleeping, due to what most pregnant women described as 'excess tiredness'. For Ella, the first few months of her second pregnancy were the most difficult as she had experienced extreme discomfort and tiredness and found it difficult to cope with all the changes going on in her body. Yvette had similar experiences and sought medical help as her mood swings were worrying her parents and her partner. The medication she received helped her sleep and ironically gave her partner, Nate, the free time and opportunity to engage in his favoured leisure pursuits, walking the Port Hills. The difficulty of finding a reliable baby-sitter meant that Nicky and Yoshi had only managed one night out together in the last six months, and this was causing some stress in their household. For Eugene, planning for leisure during pregnancy required flexibility and patience as sometimes well intentioned plans did not come to fruition as he outlined in the following comment:

> I've learnt never to plan for leisure and it's my job to get up in the middle of the night, if the little one wakes up. After seeing to him, I often can't sleep, so I go out early in the morning for a jog or a bike ride, before the wife or baby wake up. In this way, I take advantage of the time I have available, when other commitments don't interfere with my leisure.

For all women in the group, the nature and intensity of leisure engaged changed during pregnancy. Leisure activities took on a more sedate form and many in the group now viewed walking as their preferred leisure activity, as it was considered a safe and low impact activity, that was unlikely to damage their unborn child. Before their pregnancy, walking was a necessity to get from one place to another.

Therefore, during pregnancy, walking took on a more purposive role and had to be planned well in advance. Many couples enjoyed walking together, but argued that many of the walking tracks would be unsuitable with a young child. A number suggested walks needed to be 'buggy and trolley friendly', to enable families to make practical use of them. Hannah and Evan suggested that the Christchurch City Council should consider planning exclusive family walks, with points of interests along the walkway, as this would provide a useful learning opportunity for children and be fun for all the family. This would also help promote "family friendly and healthier forms of leisure", according to Evan. Women were much more aware of the dangers inherent in some forms of leisure during pregnancy, to the extent that many of them no longer engaged in leisure activities with an element of associated risks. During the latter stages of her pregnancy, Nicky stopped using her scooter:

> It's too dangerous! If anything happened it would be my own stupid fault, so I'd rather not risk having an accident, because I have two people to look after. I have got to be responsible for on the scooter.

Yvette expressed similar concerns, as she no longer joined Nate on walks around the Port Hills, due to similar concerns about her unborn child's safety. Other women in the group felt the same way, and had to 'tone down' their leisure activities, to be less physical as their pregnancy progressed. In effect, these safety concerns meant that women's leisure was now more sedate and less intense. So for many women, pregnancy restricted their access to certain forms of leisure, due to always feeling tired and being worried that some activities were not safe for women in their condition. Yet, risk-taking may be one way in which women can emancipate themselves (Frohlick, 2006; Roster, 2007) and engage in more risk taking leisure pursuits, but in reality the 'ethic of care' for the unborn child means that they compromise their own leisure (Miller & Brown, 2005). For most men in the group, access and opportunities to engage in leisure did not significantly alter or change that much during pregnancy.

4.3.4 Child friendly leisure

Designing for child friendly leisure was a recurring theme in the pre-birth focus group as many recognised that a lack of planning and appropriate provision for families was evident in Christchurch for what they described as family friendly, facilities for leisure. Most of these comments came from pre- birth females who had experienced a number of practical difficulties when accessing and utilising leisure facilities.

Nicky and Ella who both had one child already were concerned about the lack of adequate changing facilities for children and toys to entertain them, which Ella commented, were either "broke, old, out of date or simply too dangerous to use". Nicky agreed with her:

> If places where people go for leisure are really serious about providing for families, they have to get the basics right, like adequate facilities for baby-changing and providing activities or 'things' to entertain kids, otherwise if taking kids why, would you bother going to such places?

There were some examples of good practice cited by some members of the pre-birth focus group, such as Yoshi:

> We go to a café, where we can drink coffee and look down and watch our child knowing they are safe and content. There are lots of toys, with a TV with children's TV and a number of DVD's, such as Postman Pat DVD or Bob the Builder or others, like that.

Eugene agreed, as he always went to cafes that he considered child-friendly with decent child seats and something to entertain them. Many pre-birth couples mentioned that the provision of an affordable crèche at all facilities would encourage them to make better use of the Christchurch City Council leisure facilities, once they became parents. Ella, a keen swimmer, visited a swimming facility managed by the Christchurch City Council at least once a week, simply because a crèche was available for use. The facility Ella visited was certainly not the best swimming facility available, but the only one that provided a crèche. Swimming was a popular leisure activity choice for many couples as it involved minimal organization and was value for money. Nicky often took her child swimming, as it only costs NZ$4 for both of them. Also, Nicky and Yoshi swam at the weekend at a local pool and took turns to swim and look after and entertain their child. The informal and child-friendly design of the pool meant they could spend at least an hour in the pool without their child becoming too agitated and bored.

Nicky's decision to visit certain facilities for leisure within Christchurch were based on her knowledge of appropriate changing facilities that were clean and safe. On a number of occasions she had visited so called 'family friendly facilities', only to discover that changing facilities were inadequate or non-existent. Getting out of the house had required a great deal of organisation and planning, so inferior facilities for changing nappies really annoyed her. As a result, she often wondered why she had made all the effort to get out of the house, when encountering such difficulties.

Furthermore, these experiences had discouraged her from leaving the house on future shopping and leisure trips. "It's just too much trouble at home, I have everything organised so changing the baby is not a major chore" (Nicky).

4.3.5 Summary of findings for pre-birth focus group

Nicky and Yoshi, and Ella and Eugene already had one child, but all couples were experiencing the same significant life event at the same time. When I asked these couples, if it was any easier 'second time around' a resounding 'no' was the answer, but this time around they knew what to expect, so there was some comfort taken from the previous experience. As a result of reviewing the data from the pre-birth focus group, a number of common themes emerged. Tiredness was a common factor that all women reported during their pregnancy, so it is no surprise that any spare time was used to rest and recuperate. Consequently, their own leisure was restricted and changed from more active forms of leisure, pre-pregnancy, to more passive forms of leisure that did not require a great deal of time, effort and energy during pregnancy. Time secured for self was rarely described as leisure, but time to 'chill out' and put their feet up to relax. What pre-birth women valued most in their leisure was freedom to do as they pleased and was associated with having fun, self expression and enjoyment.

Their male partners were still active in their leisure and involved in physical activity to keep fit, to release stress from work or to get together with their male friends. In contrast, women rarely got together for leisure with other women and more on the basis of necessity, when attending events related to understanding more about their pregnancy through contact with groups such as Plunket and the Christchurch South Parent Centre. For most women in this group, time for leisure was unpredictable and could not be planned for, that is unless they went out in the evening with their partner. These rare social occasions were planned by the male partner and the female normally became the driver as most females didn't drink during pregnancy. In other words, this activity was restrictive, and to an extent, serviced the needs of their male partner. Going out and not being able to drink was described by some women as 'boring' and 'not much fun' and led to a limited experience, especially when their male partners drank.

For most women in this group, leisure patterns and contexts had changed since pregnancy. However, their male partners' leisure had seen little change. Women were frustrated by this, but assumed this was the norm and did not further challenge their observations. Other themes that arose during the discussions included concerns over lost or dissolved friendships and the resulting lack of social networks, which is a concern shared by Green (1998) and Baker (2010) as friendship is important to women's well-being. Although, many women had made new friends through various antenatal group activities, they saw less of their single friends, when compared to their male partners.

During their pregnancy many pre-birth women expressed their concerns about poorly designed leisure facilities for families, in particular the lack of adequate infrastructure for, parents with young children. According to females in the pre-birth focus group this included adequate changing facilities, lifts and wide aisles for ease of access for strollers. Further analysis and coding of the data substantiated and confirmed these themes. Similar themes reported in the pre-birth group, were also evident within the post-birth group, with regards to lack of available time, opportunity and the numerous constraints that impacted upon their leisure, which are reported in the next section of this thesis.

4.4. Post-birth Focus Group Participants

Post birth couples ranged in age from their mid 20s to early 40s, a similar age range to the pre-birth group. Norm and Norma had a daughter aged 18 months and Erik and Cindy had a daughter aged 13 months. Ally and Nige had a daughter aged 9 months and Estha and Karl had a daughter aged 13 months and in the remaining two couples, Angie and Eddie had a boy aged 20 months and Anthea and Ollie had a boy aged eight months. More specific details of each participant using pseudonyms to replace their 'real' names are given below in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Post-birth focus group participants

Names	Age	Ethnicity	Age of child	Working status	Home
Ally Nige	Early 30s Mid 30s	NZ European Asian (Chinese)	9 months (girl)	Full time (IT) Full time (company finance)	Bought in desirable suburb, south of Christchurch
Estha Carl	Late 20s Late 20s	NZ European Asian (Malaysian)	13 months (girl)	Full time (admin) Full time (property consultant)	Renting in inexpensive part of Christchurch
Angie Eddie	Early 30s Early 30s	NZ European NZ European	20 months (boy)	Part time (consultancy) Full time (retail management)	Bought in new subdivision on outskirts of Christchurch
Norm Norma	Early 40s Early 40s	NZ European NZ European	18 months (girl)	Full time (construction) Part time (care work for elderly)	Bought in desirable 'hill' area of Christchurch
Erik Cindy	Early 40s Early 40s	NZ European NZ European	13 months (girl)	Full time (education) Part time (education)	Bought in mid range area south of Christchurch

4.5 Post-Birth Focus Group Study Findings

In this section, the key themes from the post birth focus group study are interpreted and illustrated using the words of the participants that were involved.

4.5.1 Parenting ideologies and realities

Responsibilities of parenthood in coupled relationships impacted upon lifestyle in a number of different ways. Estha highlighted that her time, like many other mothers in this study group, was determined by and dedicated to their young child. "All my spare time is taken up with all the tasks I have to do as a mum and if we go out as a couple to visit friends or relatives we have to take our child with us". Norm, husband of Norma, nodded in agreement:

> Yes, that's right, it has restricted us in so many different ways, that we did not envisage before the birth. I try to make sure that I involve our child in activities; otherwise I don't know where I'd get time to be with her.

Norma interrupted Norm's flow, to add her own comment. "We have had to prioritise our time now around our child. Norm has had to give up his training for the half marathon, but now he tries to involve our child in his leisure time, so I can have some time out, to get on with household chores". The family based literature reports many benefits of involved fathering as Lees (2007, p.83) outlines in some detail:

> Children with involved and responsible fathers are more likely to be psychologically healthy, have positive behavioral outcomes, show positive social initiative, display healthy socio-economic development, have positive attitudes towards school, achieve well at school, show faster cognitive development, have higher self esteem….[and] be satisfied with their life.

Taking childhood duties seriously was a theme that arose on a number of occasions throughout the discussion. As a mother, Cindy believed being a responsible parent was about caring and putting the needs of children first and foremost. "There is no compromise, you either do it well or suffer the consequences". When asked to explain what she meant by 'consequences', Cindy alluded to later life problems associated with misbehaviour due to what she described as lack of good parenting. This prompted an interesting discussion centred on what the group thought was good parenting practice, the general summary of which emphasised quality time together as a family and parents being good role models for their children.

For some parents this meant compromising their own time for leisure. Since the birth of their child, Cindy and Erik had "mourned the death of leisure for a good cause" meaning the needs of their child. Cindy was adamant that as a parent, she took her duties seriously, as she was responsible for the future of her child. Angie confirmed her agreement with Cindy and realised the consequences, especially for her own leisure. "Leisure is something that rarely happens now, my main focus in any spare time I have is concerned with the needs of our child".

Ideologies amongst post-birth couples surrounding notions of fatherhood and motherhood were diverse, but it seems that mothers took their mothering role very seriously, which according to Miller and Brown (2005) constrains women's access and opportunity to participate in leisure. Other studies that relate to leisure and motherhood have also found that the ideological influence of socialised gender roles (motherhood) means that women have less time than men to pursue their own leisure (Miller & Brown, 2005; Frohlick, 2006). Also, many couples claimed that, they would learn best by direct involvement with their child. This style of parenting "is not something that can be spelled out ahead of time. Parents learn a great deal about themselves through the experience of parenting" (Warner, 2006, p.66).

4.5.2 'New' demands on time

Free time for many couples was now a concept that many could not relate to, since the arrival of their child. Kelly (1995, p.47) expressed similar thoughts:

> The birth of children not only adds responsibilities, but breaks the simplicity of the dyad. Now a dramatic set of responsibilities and roles turn the couple into a more complex family and also may seriously erode the quality and quantity of dyadic leisure.

In order to have real meaning leisure for fathers involved in this study was associated with unobligated time that was the antithesis to paid work. However, any available time after work for Nige meant helping the wife with the baby or entertaining the baby by taking them for a walk or involving them in some kind of activity, while she got on with housework or preparing meals. This left no time for anything else, but at least Nige had time to connect with his child in an activity they both enjoyed. His partner Ally disagreed and told a different version of the story. "He still gets out and about and he certainly has more time for himself, than I do". Nige responded, "I have less time now and more responsibility, but work full-time, so Ally undertakes the main parenting duties.

Making effective use of time was a strategy practiced by many couples in order to make best use of scarce time, by organising time into discernible 'chunks'. Ollie and Anthea had managed to negotiate, plan and manage their time to account for work time, leisure time and baby time:

> I do exercises in the morning, then I'm off to work and at lunchtime I sometimes fit in a short run. When I get home after work, I help the wife out with the baby bathing her, entertaining her and sometimes changing her. I really enjoy the contact with the baby and my wife needs some relief after spending all day with her. (Ollie)

Organising their day into discernable blocks of time for specific purposes, such as leisure-time, work-time and baby-time, enabled Ollie and Anthea to make better use of their time. Baby time was important for Angie and Wayne, but this meant less time to plan holidays and travel overseas. Before their child was born, they'd had 4-5 holidays a year, but now their priorities had changed:

> Life is different now, and we always have to think about [how and] what, we are going to do with our son. Anyway, we love the time when we are all together. I suppose you could call it leisure as we really enjoy it, when we go out for walks or a drive. It's time to bond as a family, when we are together. (Eddie)

Making time for family leisure was also crucial for Cindy and Erik to the extent that they knew all the playgrounds around Christchurch. It is interesting to note here, that Cindy had the final say in determining family leisure, as Erik left decisions to her. For most other couples, decisions regarding family leisure were mostly determined by the male, but the organising and planning was in most cases, left to the female. This feeling of obligation to the family seems to be unique to women and impacts upon women's sense of entitlement to personal leisure (Miller & Brown, 2005; Strandins *et al*. 2006). The female members of the group then spent time collectively discussing the merits and pitfalls of the many playgrounds they had visited. Playgrounds were considered a wonderful resource for family activity as they were free, readily available and frequented regularly by all the mothers and their child, but only infrequently by fathers and then mostly at weekends. Any spare time was now taken up with the duties associated with motherhood and domesticity. Many women could relate to the idea of leisure before they were pregnant, but not now they were parents, much of their solo leisure had simply disappeared. In essence, for many of the women free time was not really free, but largely determined by the needs of their child and partner.

For Esther and Ally, the unpredictability of baby sleep and feed patterns meant that planning for solo leisure was often wasted time, as invariably it did not materialise. Angie and Norma had both managed to allocate some time for themselves in the day once they had established regular sleep times for their babies, but Angie recognised that this 'baby free' planned time, "was not free at all, as it was a chance to catch up with all the other stuff, like cleaning, vacuuming and generally tidying up the house". Her partner, Eddie, often had to work long hours to supplement the household income, which is a finding consistent with the work undertaken by Such (2009). Nige worked away from home regularly, which involved overnight stays and the only time he saw his baby was at weekends. So at weekends, his time was dedicated to family life, which meant time with his partner (or couple leisure) was severely limited:

> Time at weekends to do things without the baby just doesn't happen anymore. We do get out of the house but it's with the baby for a drive or a walk, something that is easy to arrange. We have had to tailor our time to suit our situation, this has been difficult and painful, and we could do with finding some free time for each other. (Ally)

4.5.3 Couple leisure

Balancing personal time and family time was a challenging task that required negotiation and consultation between partners, as Norma had realised being a mother and being organised went hand-in-hand with each other, but it was difficult for her to find the time to think about how she could best use her time. Whilst Ally was pregnant, she had meticulously planned with her partner how they would use their time, once the baby arrived. In reality, the free time never became available and was swallowed up by the demands of parenthood. For most couples since the birth of their child/children, couple time was now considered a luxury, rather than a divine 'right'. For many post-birth couples, time together without children rarely materialised and this lack of time together impacted upon their marital satisfaction (see Belsky & Penskey, 1988) and their sexual relationship (see Hackle & Ruble, 1992). Many couples reported that their circle of friends had dwindled since they became parents. Since childbirth, most of their friends were now connected with their antenatal group:

> My friends at the antenatal coffee group are my best mates now, as we see each other often, for a good chat, where the kids can play and we can have some adult time. It's really important as the others really understand what being a mother is about. (Ally)

These sentiments are consistent with women in Wearing's (1990, p.53) study. "Getting together with other mothers was seen as a form of enjoyable productive leisure, where child-care was shared and mothers could swap ideas and enjoy each other's company". Norma expressed similar concerns to Ally, as she now had little contact with her pre-birth friends:

> It's because they get fed up of us talking about kids, they get turned off by all the baby-talk. They need to appreciate that it will be the same for them, when they have kids. My time is committed to my child, since I've been a parent. When I say to mates I can't make it, they think I use the baby as an excuse. It's just not like that.

For many post-birth couples planning couple time had to be worked around childcare duties, as Estha demonstrated:

> Our child's needs determine our day, so sometimes when you have planned something, things change and you have to forget what you've planned. It can be so frustrating, as it takes a lot of….time to plan.

However, forward planning to account for parental responsibilities was a useful strategy to plan 'couple time' without children, but problems arose for some couples who had no support network of friends or family to baby-sit their child/children. Without any established support network, going out as a couple in the evening was no longer possible for many couples. Financial hardship was a factor that limited many couples engagement in leisure and was a major constraint to the type of leisure they engaged in. Shortage of available time, for most post-birth couples, came as an unwelcome consequence and quite a shock. For example, Angie noticed a significant change in how she used her time:

> The difference in time we have now is huge, compared to the time we had before, we did plan to have a child, but could never have realised how most of our time would be taken up with our son. It is very full on being a 'new 'parent, the demands of childcare are endless.

Anthea and Ollie had also spent some time planning for parenthood, but the difficulty in making decisions on the welfare of their child presented challenges:

> It's hard thinking about what to do next, as we did not expect we would have to make so many different decisions, nothing prepares you for being a mum or dad. You just use your initiative and deal with situations as best you can. It's quite stressful, trying to work out what to do in the best interest of the child. (Anthea)

Couples adopted a range of strategies to deal with the unknown in order to better manage their time. Ally was now more focused, "since having the baby, I have to make better use of my time, I have to, I have no choice, as there's less of it now". Working at home had enabled Cindy and Erik to better manage their time, in dedicating time off for each other from their child and at the same time giving them what they described as 'quality time' with their child. In effect, choosing to work from home had freed up time for solo leisure, but also meant more time spent with their daughter. The importance of family time was echoed by a number of couples as important for their child's future development. Arranging couple time for Nige had seriously dented his own leisure pursuits as the needs of the baby came first. Time out with his wife came second, which further constrained time for solo leisure.

The discussion on accessing couple time then, took a new direction and focused on childcare support strategies. Ally, who now longer worked full-time and was now a 'stay at home mum' had recently managed to arrange paid childcare to free up time, so once a week she now had a babysitter for half a day, to help out. She used this time to undertake what she termed, "the essential jobs I need to do, without the baby, and so I would not call it leisure" (Ally). Ally and Nige were more fortunate than some other couples as they had relatives who lived nearby, who were willing to baby sit at relatively 'short notice'. This was really helpful for them, but other factors needed consideration. As Ally noted:

> It depends how our son is on the day, as like most young children he is unpredictable and you might not want you to leave them with anybody else if they are playing up. Also it's difficult to say there's no need to baby sit now, once the babysitters arrive. You feel you've messed them about and it feels very embarrassing.

For some couples, availability of 'unpaid babysitters' was not even an option:

> It is difficult for us, we don't have many friends or family here, you feel cheeky asking people to baby-sit, what's in it for them? We do try, to get out of the house though, but it's always with the baby and very rarely do we have time together, just as a couple. (Carl)

Estha agreed with Carl and added, "staying in the house all day, just drives us both mad so we get out of the house and go for walks to the shops, just to get some fresh air" (which seems rather ironic, when the shops are 'indoors' and relatively close within a five minute walk of their home).

Angie and Eddie considered themselves more fortunate than other couples, as both had parents that 'baby-sat' for them regularly and Angie's sister was also available anytime, and often at short notice. Nevertheless, they had to plan in advance as both their parents baby-sat for their other grandchildren and they had to wait their turn.

Anthea and Ollie had no family ties in Christchurch whatsoever and this, according to Ollie, didn't allow them to spend any time together as a couple, without the baby. Ollie described this as just "a consequence of early parenthood, people just have to cope with it". The sharing of parental duties amongst some couples meant that couple time was more achievable which is reflected in Dyck and Daly's (2009, p.183) study where couple time was only possible through negotiating the responsibilities of parenthood. The same theme was reported in Such's work (2009, p.76) where she argued that, "men's lack of participation in domestic work acted to widen the leisure-gap between men and women in couples". In summary, as Lupton & Barclay (1997, p.124) have argued in their book on 'Fatherhood' that parenthood for most couples "inevitably brings with it, an increased burden of domestic labour and upheaval in couples routine", as shown in the analysis of family life for post-birth couples in this focus group study.

4.5.4 Constraints on leisure

Constraints on time available for leisure further restricted the number, range and frequency of engagements in solo leisure activities for post-birth females. For Ally, the only involvement in activities she undertook alone was considered leisure, whereas spending time with her family was definitely not. Norma, then asked Ally, "is this a kind of work then?" Ally responded, "I suppose it is really, but I don't get paid for it". Angie disagreed, "surely going out with your family and visiting friends or going for a walk or drive is fun and therefore leisure?" Ally responded. "Yes, I agree family time can be fun, but for me it's still not leisure. Before the baby was born I had control over my free time, I had choice and flexibility to use the time as I wanted to, for myself". Ally continued, "right now, I really need a break from my family for it to be leisure to be my own. I like to exercise, it helps me relax. Ollie had some sympathy with this perspective:

> Having your own time and space without the family is important. I enjoy swimming with the baby and I would call this leisure. If, I was being selfish my preference would be to escape on my bike in the hills, where I can really discover true freedom and be by myself.

The notion of freedom was a key element for the majority of post-birth females, as it was for pre-birth females, when they described their solo leisure. Cindy's notion of freedom involving getting out on her bike to discover her local area, but her bike rides were now shortened and less frequent, due to tiredness and the lack of time. Anthea empathised with Cindy. "Sleep deprivation in the early days, is like a form of torture". Both Erik and Norm expressed similar concerns as both had to care for their child when their partner was sick. Erik described his experience during his partner's sickness, which meant his opportunity to participate in leisure, was even more constrained:

> When my wife was sick, I was fully responsible for looking after our daughter. Looking after our child was so much more demanding than going to work. I don't really know how Cindy manages, when I'm not around. It was a relief when she got better and I went back to work.

During his partner's illness, Norm felt really stressed and had to see the doctor:

> It's hard to put into words how tough it was, you are on your feet constantly and I felt knackered all the time. I'm definitely more sensitive to mood swings and I've became more stressed. I can understand my wife's concerns about the challenges of parenting.

Similarly Estha, could not relax when looking after her young child. "My daughter gets bored so easily and when that happens, she's off on walkabouts". Erik acknowledged this comment:

> You almost feel you have to protect them from any harm at that age. They are so new to the world and so vulnerable and they don't realize the dangers of their actions, so you always have to look after them, before thinking about yourself.

4.5.5 Summary of findings for post-birth focus group

Similar constraints to leisure that were reported in the pre-birth group, were also evident within the post-birth group, with regards to lack of available time, opportunity and the numerous constraints that impacted upon their leisure, which are reported in the next section. Nevertheless, three key themes emerged from the research findings for this group, including, conceptions and realities of parenthood, increasing pressures on time and changing leisure contexts and patterns. Within each key theme, a number of sub themes arose, which were explained earlier. How couples imagined parenting duties differed markedly from the realities they described. Ideas concerning parenthood were influenced by their own parents, friends and family members who themselves had young children and gave advice.

The duality of parenting was evident in what couples said about parenting, in that parenting was described as challenging, but at the same time rewarding. Adapting to this 'new' kind of lifestyle required resourcefulness, more effective use of available time, and required both partners to work as a team in sharing parenting duties. Nonetheless, some men in this study were reluctant to give up their own 'leisure time' for parenting and many men reported feeling poorly prepared for the challenges of parenting and as a result lacked confidence in their ability to parent. These thoughts are shared by men in a study undertaken by Mitchell and Chapman (2006) of eleven couples who were interviewed, before and after the birth of their child. One of their key findings reported that men lacked information about preparing for fatherhood. As new parents, men felt vulnerable, as many assumed they could fit their new baby into their existing lifestyle. This caused some stress in their relationship with their partner, which in some cases was evident in men in the pre-birth focus group.

Support networks and offers of help towards baby care did exist for some couples in this study, but rarely in the first few months after birth as many parents were reluctant to leave their young child with other people even family members. For most post-birth couples, this was a critical time to bond with their sibling, but during the focus group discussions it became evident that mothers spent more time with their child and had ultimate responsibility for their child. Craig (2007, p.135/136) seems to agree as "the masculinisation of maternal caring patterns has not occurred, and that any project to feminise paternal caring patterns are underdeveloped". Earlier work by Wearing (1984) in her 'ideology of motherhood' study identified that, for most first-time mums, childcare responsibility was seen as natural and inevitable. However, in later work Wearing (1990) in her 'beyond the ideology of motherhood' study, she presents evidence to suggest that some women were using a range of strategies to resist social expectations surrounding 'natural' motherhood.

The second key theme involved balancing the new demands on time from a number of sources including demands for work time, baby time, family time and 'personal' free time. Parenthood brought with it increasing pressures as most time was now dedicated to the demands and obligations of parenthood, especially mothers that suffered the "double burden of career and family" (Pfister, 2001, p.75).

Post-birth couples reported that their time was now more constrained and many females had noted a severe dilution of their own time, when compared to their male partners. When their babies slept, time was still not their own, but involved numerous and necessary baby-centred and household tasks. So, in effect this time was not 'free', but obligated time to meet the demands of motherhood and domesticity. For some men in this group, leisure time was described as more limited now they were fathers, but they were still able to undertake solo leisure more frequently than their female partners, both during pregnancy and in the early stages of parenthood. There was also evidence to suggest in the data that leisure was a major site for fathering as noted by Harrington, (2009, p.3) and is, "central to the generative notion of fathering".

For most women in the group, the concept of leisure was an idea they had difficulty relating to. For leisure to have 'real' meaning it had to be personal and involve some element of free choice and freedom, which in their present circumstances was highly unlikely. For most post-birth females a clear distinction between solo leisure, couple leisure and family leisure had now developed, since the birth of their child.

In summarizing, it appears that solo leisure is more about fulfilling needs of the self, whereas family forms of leisure are primarily for the benefit of the child and couple leisure is concerned with maintaining and developing coupled relationships (Orthner & Mancini, 1990). Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004) recognise family leisure as 'purposive', where parents use leisure activities to pursue goals they value as a couple, which locates leisure at the centre of family relationships (see Poff *et al*. 2010a, 2010b). The focus group data supports this observation as a number of post-birth couples purposively engaged in family leisure for the collective benefit of the family.

4.6 Discussion of Pre-Birth and Post-Birth Findings

In comparing, the pre-birth and post-birth groups, it seemed that there were a number of similarities in their experience and also a number of significant differences. In analysing both sets of data, four core themes emerged: household tasks/duties; access and use of time; pregnancy/childbirth/parenthood and leisure/lifestyle (family).

Women in the pre-birth group were primarily responsible for the majority of the associated household tasks, even during pregnancy, whereas, in the post-birth group there is some evidence to suggest that this role was shared.

Lack of time was reported as a constraint to engagement in leisure for both pre-birth and post-birth couples, but the reality for men and women was often very different. Pre-birth couples were still able to achieve some element of balance between their employment commitments and leisure, but this was not the case for post-birth couples where the demands on time were more complex and involved time allocation for baby time, family time, work time and leisure time. As a consequence, difficulties were encountered in securing a healthy work-life balance for many post-birth mums. In some cases, this put extra strain on women's relationships with their partner. However, a number of men in the post-birth group were able to work from home and help their partner with parenting and domestic duties which lessened the burden for their partner and helped their relationship. The post-birth group were more resourceful in their use of available time, even though they had less of it, as many micro-managed their time into discernible 'chunks' of time for different activities. A number of couples in the post-birth group practised what they referred to as 'effective time management strategies', by firstly estimating their time, then dividing this time into more definable activities. In this way, they categorised different time commitments to make better use of their time, such as 'own time', 'baby time', 'couple time' and 'family time'.

Pregnant women reported extremes of emotion from feeling 'high' to feeling 'low' and experienced regular mood swings and described pregnancy as tiring. Many women in the pre-birth group had to deal with problems of body image, and a lack of control on how their body form was changing, which affected their confidence and access to leisure. This was an issue reported by women in the post-birth group, for some found it difficult to lose weight after the birth of their child, which often resulted in them feeling depressed. The major task for couples at the pre-birth stage was concerned with preparing for childbirth, described mostly as a very positive experience, even though they were concerned about the lack of information on parenting and the practicalities of parenting. Post-birth couples described their experience as both positive and negative, but in general the realities of parenting were much tougher and more challenging than they had expected.

Attending antenatal classes was described as useful by pre-birth couples to learn about the functional and biological aspects of pregnancy and birth, but limited in terms of providing essential advice on parenting, once the baby had been born. Pre-birth couples did not mention any major concerns about their future parenting role, except the major costs associated with purchasing baby clothes and equipment in preparation for the birth of their child. A number of the women in the post-birth group had saved money by borrowing baby equipment and clothes from friends and relatives, which saved them a significant amount of money.

In the third trimester of their pregnancy, women were not as active as they were in their first and second trimesters and undertook safer and less active forms of leisure. Active leisure 'kick started' again post-pregnancy, in some case only six months post-birth, where a number of women were determined to 're-kindle' their active leisure interests and get their body back into shape, despite time needed to engage in family life. Most women in the pre-birth group engaged in more 'solo' leisure, when compared to the post-birth group and it is evident that some women in the pre-birth group were able to carry on leisure based around their own needs and had more freedom in their leisure, when compared to women in the post-birth group. In the post-birth group, a clear distinction emerged between solo leisure, couple leisure and family based leisure, which was not the case in the pre-birth group. Pre-birth couples had more choice in their leisure, whereas post-birth couples lacked choice as their child's needs came first and some women expressed feelings of guilt when taking time out for themselves at the expense of their child.

Couples in the pre-birth group reported more time and opportunity for holidays abroad, but most post-birth couples opted for local and short-stay holidays, with friends or parents who could provide support for childcare. This finding is supported by other family leisure research conducted in New Zealand by Davidson (1996) and Spowart *et al*. (2008).

4.7 Implications of Focus Group Findings for the Interview Studies

The issues raised within the focus group studies, helped form the foundations for the interview study and determine the topics that would be worthy of further investigation at the interview stage of this study. The data analysed from both focus group studies helped to identify the key issues concerning pregnancy, parenthood and leisure and influenced the type of questions utilised for the interviews.

Using interviews provided the opportunity to explore these issues raised in the focus group studies in more depth, in the context that pre-birth and post-birth couples had described and understood them. The focus group studies gave the participants the opportunity to talk collectively about issues that concerned them all at their stage of the family lifecycle (Rapaport & Rapaport, 1975).

The first stage of the research generated a range of ideas on family leisure that could be further explored at the interview stage. Tolich and Davidson's (1999, p.121) claim that focus group studies at the initial stage of research are important, as they "produce a richness of data for further exploration" at later stages of the research process. Furthermore, during the pre-birth and post-birth focus group studies, participants were encouraged to interact with one another, by posing a number of questions that they could all relate to (Table 3.2). These questions were discussed at some length by focus group participants who were encouraged by the moderator to re-evaluate and re-consider their own attitudes, understandings and specific experiences (Krueger, 1988).

4.8 Summary of Chapter

This chapter presented the findings of the pre-birth and post-birth focus groups studies and discussed and evaluated the themes that emerged from the data. In the final section of this chapter, the focus group findings were utilised to develop the next stage of this research study. Essentially by using focus groups at the exploratory stage of the research, it was possible to 'fine-tune' the areas worthy of further investigation at the second stage of the study involving in-depth interviews. In the next chapter, the findings from three sets of interviews conducted with pre-birth, post-birth and pre-birth now post birth couples, will be analysed, discussed and then evaluated.

CHAPTER 5 – Interview Findings and Discussion

(Pre-birth and Post-birth)

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of three sets of interviews, which included, 50 individual (solo) interviews that were undertaken with participants in the pre-birth and post-birth groups. 24 individuals were interviewed from the pre-birth group and 26 individuals were interviewed from the post-birth group and 12 'couple' interviews were conducted with the pre-birth group and 13 'couple' interviews were undertaken with the post-birth group. Also, 4 pre-birth couples were re-interviewed, at the post-birth stage.

Firstly, the pre-birth interview findings will be introduced and then discussed in the form of themes that arose during those interviews. Secondly, the post-birth interview findings will be introduced and then discussed in light of the themes that arose during the interviews. Thirdly, a number of couples from the pre-birth interview group, now post-birth group will be re-introduced and their findings highlighted and then discussed in relation to what they reported at the pre-birth stage.

5.2 The Pre-Birth Interview Study

The interviews for pre-birth couples were designed to uncover key information related to the research questions by asking interviewees about their experience before and during pregnancy in terms of their expectations, preparation and challenges they faced and how pregnancy impacted upon their leisure. In the next section of the thesis, the pre-birth interviewees are introduced and the key themes from the interviews are identified and then discussed.

5.2.1 The pre-birth interviewees

All interviewees within this group resided in the Christchurch and ranged in age from early 20s (Karen) to late 30s (Nick and Alan, both aged 37). However, the majority of interviewees were in their early or mid 30s and a number of couples were of similar age (Yaz/John-both 33, Pete/Sue-both 29, Rita/Angus- both 34 and Rory/Ria-both 29). In all other couples the male was slightly older than the female, from one to five years older.

All couples interviewed were living together within the same household, but it was not determined whether they were married or not, as this was not seen as a significant factor in this research study. In terms of their ethnicity and cultural identity, most individuals described themselves as New Zealand European, New Zealand Pakeha or UK European and two individuals described themselves as New Zealand Maori (Dan/Ruth).

All couples within this group were expecting their first child. At the time of interview, a number of couples interviewed were at the advanced stage of pregnancy (third trimester). One couple was expecting their child within the 'next few days' (Yasmin and John) whereas, Karen was only four months pregnant. A number of couples mentioned they had recently returned from working overseas (five couples from the UK and one couple from the USA), to start a family and enjoy the New Zealand lifestyle. Alan and Rhian, originally from the USA had moved to New Zealand for "lifestyle choice to remove themselves from the increasingly commercialization of life in America" (Alan). Likewise, those couples that had recently returned from the UK, back to New Zealand did so to alleviate stress in their lives as they viewed life is New Zealand as more relaxing and had family support there.

Most interviewees described New Zealand as a 'safe place to live' and many had found work relatively quickly on their return, albeit at much lower rates of pay compared to the UK, as they were willing to accept a drop in salary for a less stressful life in New Zealand. Two couples, (Rachel/Sam and Cody/Brenda) had recently moved from the North Island, to Christchurch to purchase a more affordable home, when compared to property prices in Auckland. More extensive details of the pre-birth interviewees can be found in Appendix 6.

5.3 Key Findings of Interviews (pre-birth)

The key findings that emerged as a result of the pre-birth interviews are presented and evaluated in the following sub-sections. The themes that emerged included: ideologies of parenting; familial roles; expectations of parenthood; planning and preparation for parenthood; preparing for the birth; change, challenge and parenthood; provision for childcare; 'me' time and pregnancy; time for each other; leisure and pregnancy; constraints on leisure; planning for family leisure; collective leisure and leisure facilities in Christchurch.

5.3.1 Ideologies of parenting

Expectant couples discussed this issue in some detail during the interviews and explained how their future role as parents was of some concern to them. This provided a useful insight into their thoughts and ideas about their expectations and the major factors that would influence their approach to parenting. A range of factors were raised during the interviews that were considered significant in terms of their parental role and the extent to which their beliefs about parenting would shape their approach to parenting.

Pre-birth couples' own experience of being parented was mentioned as an important factor that would influence their own approach to parenting, in particular the style of parenting they had experienced as a child. Trussell and Kay (2009) findings support this view, as they argue that the relationship which is most likely to be significant for expectant parents is the one they have with their own parents. Concerns surrounding new parenting roles were also evident amongst interviewees in Warner's (2006, p.66) study: "the meaning of being a good parent grows out of give and take of lived experiences. Daily contact at mealtimes, playing games….all gives clues about what their children's needs and desires are".

Rhona and her partner Mick agreed that 'parental influence' would be the key factor determining their approach to parenting. "Basically you are a product of your upbringing, and it is the major influence. In the end, we'll probably end up just like our own parents" (Rhona). Vera's described her parental influence as insignificant as her mum had left home when she was young and her father had problems with alcohol addiction and was never around:

> I came from a broken home, where my parents did not have much respect for each other and were always arguing and dad ended up being really strict with me and when I think back he could be physically aggressive with me at times. I really missed out on the feminine touch in parenting as my mum was simply not there for me.

Both Rory and Angus recalled similar experiences to Vera. "I was hit frequently and had wooden spoons broken on my back on a number of occasions. My dad was too much of a disciplinarian as he was ex-army" (Angus). These thoughts were echoed by Rory, whose father was in the British Royal Air Force:

> Dad always gave me a 'whack' when I was naughty and sent me to my room. I did not enjoy being hit and hated him when he did this. I can't ever remember him giving me praise, which is important for young children.

Ruby's mum was also strict, but she described her as a good role model:

> My mum was a teacher and into being in control at home. Whereas, my dad was quite calm and laid back. They were very different in their approaches to parenting, so I suppose, I learnt 'heaps' from them both and I'm only just beginning to notice their influence on my ideas on how best to parent in the near future.

Ned planned to be more tolerant of bad behaviour by staying calm when under duress as a parent. He planned to be patient and take a deep breath and think about the way in which he would deal with the behaviour of his child. When asked to elaborate, he responded, 'the modern parenting approach'. He later provided further information and explained that he wanted to avoid smacking his child which, he considered physical abuse to a minor. Using physical force had not worked on him and had left him with some very unpleasant memories and physical scars, which he found difficult to talk about. Moreover, he was vehemently opposed to any form of physical abuse to children and gave his support to the anti-smacking bill, which was being debated by the New Zealand Parliament at the time of the interview.

In terms of discussions concerning smacking, a clear distinction emerged between what pre-birth females believed was acceptable, when compared to males. This gendered division, highlighted that a number of males would support smacking as a form of parental control whereas females would not support this view. For Yaz, smacking her child would be inconceivable and an abuse of her privilege as a parent. Yet, in the same interview her partner John felt some sympathy for the 'pro smacking lobby':

> There is nothing wrong with a smack. It did me no harm although, Yaz doesn't agree with me. I'm not sure how we'll settle our differences, I'll be the 'bad cop' and she'll be the 'good cop'. We'll be sending out mixed messages and I'm not sure how we'll resolve this. We've already had a number of arguments about it. (John)

For Cody, misbehaving as a child meant a 'whack around the ear' or on the 'back of his head'. This experience, made it quite clear to him that he would not subject his own child to such abuse. Cody suggested 'time out' as a strategy to deal with misbehaviour, which Paul alluded to as well:

> It will be important to give time out for our child if he or she is naughty. Consistency will be important as well, but we don't want too many rules as it could become confusing for the child. Using praise and rewards will be more important to reward good behavior. (Paul)

Ideas about parenting in terms of identified gendered roles have evolved significantly, when compared to parenting styles that most interviewees were subjected to. Indeed, it seems that times have changed when stories told by expectant parents here are compared to similar stories reported in the parenting literature and to the literature mentioned within this study (see Oakley, 1980; Deem, 1984; Wearing, 1984; Biasleschki & Michener 1994). There is some evidence to suggest that the pre-birth couples were more willing to share parental roles, when compared to more gendered specific roles of their own parents. They would argue they are more open-minded and relaxed about their role, than their parents were, but we only have their word for this and more evidence is needed. Alan and his partner Rhian had organised their employment so that they could both work from home and spend time with their baby to share parenting duties. Shaw (2010) would argue that such arrangements are evidence of new and emerging ideologies about parenting and that ideologies surrounding motherhood and fatherhood have changed and led to a re-defining of parental roles.

Such (2009) provides evidence to suggest that fathers are becoming more involved, which signifies a shift in their responsibility with regards to parenting and this has the potential to relieve women of childcare responsibilities. Shaw (2010) supports this view as she believes that men are now participating more in domestic work, which has the possibility to free up time for their partner, and has the potential to redistribute time resources and power relations for couples. Craig (2006) is less convinced of this shift and believes that mothers are still responsible for undertaking most of the childcare and household duties in two-parent heterosexual families.

Traditional gendered roles in respect to parenting styles were evident when pre-birth couples talked about their own parents, but less so when they discussed their own ideas about how they intended to parent. The gender divide in terms of expected parenting role was alluded to by a number of pre-birth couples and an approach many of them wanted to avoid. Alan spoke about the parenting roles he had been subject to as a child:

> My dad dealt with the discipline at home, but did little else. Mum looked after us and did most of the housework. My parents had fixed ideas on the male and female role in parenting, but we don't want to have set stereotypical roles, according to our gender. I think, we'll see what happens as the reality may be quite different to what we expect, but our intention is to share parenting.

Mick mentioned a similar gendered parenting approach his own parents had used. "My parents were quite traditional, mum stayed at home and looked after the kids, whilst dad went to work and handed out the discipline at home". A number of other pre-birth males recalled similar experiences to Mick, as Stu illustrates:

> Although, I thought my parents raised me well, dad was the one who dealt with any bad behavior in the house. If he was smiling when he came home from work, you knew you were okay. Mum was always in the background and not involved in handing out discipline.

Dave had suffered similar experiences as a child, but was keen to adopt what he phrased as the 'cool parental' role:

> I don't like the idea of hitting children and even a small tap I suppose, is a form of abuse. Also, I want to avoid any form of mental abuse that, I was often subjected to. I want to be positive and encouraging to my child and always give praise when it is important to do so. My partner's mum is a great role model for us as future parents.

Similarly, Yaz and John discussed their ideals of parenting in some detail, during their couple interview and wanted to remain relaxed and did not want to make too many plans:

> It all depends on how we cope with the arrival of the child in the first few months. Babies can change so much. They might be lovely and quiet in the first few months then they'll find their lungs. (Yaz)

John agreed, "Yes that's right and we want to get out and about and not be stuck in the house. My dad used to take us out a lot and we used to go exploring, which is what I'd like to do with our child". Dan remembered similar trips to visit his large extended Maori family in the North Island, which he described as "a great adventure and lots of fun". He had fond recollections of these visits:

> Dad was really chilled out when we were at the 'rellies' (relatives). He seemed such a different person, he was more relaxed. He was always with the adults inside discussing what seemed to me, serious family business, although there was always lots of laughter fuelled with drink. I really felt like part of a big family and proud to be a Maori.

Dan's major concern was that his child should develop an interest in Maori culture and would speak the Maori language and respect Maori traditions. His wife Karen supported Dan, but believed their child also needed to appreciate western culture. They were both excited about this prospect and had sought advice from other mixed-raced couples and from their own parents, who were a mixed-race couple.

Sue's concerns regarding parenting were largely based on her professional training as a teacher:

> As a parent, I want to try and replicate what I do in my job, in terms of giving positive praise and being consistent with my child. Bargaining and pleading with children to behave how you want them to, in the long term doesn't work. I appreciate there will be challenges ahead and I will need to be flexible in my approach.

A number of couples mentioned the importance and influence of other family members such as relatives and how they influenced their ideas about parenting. For example, Ned's grandparents would be a major influence on how he would parent. As a child, he had spent a lot of time with them. They had taught him to be responsible for his own actions and be accountable for himself. He considered these important lessons in his early life that he could use as a parent. Compared to his own mum and dad, his grandparents were very patient with him.

As a result, he wanted to utilise some aspects of this approach in his own style of parenting. This observation was common to a number of couples whose grandparents had been involved in their parenting. A less disciplined approach to parenting was suggested by Rita:

> My parents were quite old, compared to most other parents, I knew. I was an only child and some say I was spoilt, but if I misbehaved, I was made to feel guilty and they always tried to explain what I had done wrong. From this experience, I will try to be patient as a parent and not become too 'wrapped up' in being the perfect parent.

A number of others highlighted the importance of their friends in relation to their ideas about parenting:

> Our friends will influence our parenting style, more so than our parents will. My mate's approach to parenting is relaxed and easy-going and he's very open-minded and liberal. He's very much a family man and has a 'tight knit' family. He gives his kids space to learn and develop and always spends time with them. (Marty)

In preparation for parenting, Yaz had purposively observed her friends in action with their own children. As a result, she was now more aware of a range of techniques to manage her child's behaviour. "I've learnt so much from my friends just by watching how they interact with their children". Also, Rory's and Ria's commented that their friends with children had already influenced their approach to parenting, with reference to the importance of routine and healthy eating for young children.

Many pre-birth couples realised that pre-conceptions concerning parenting, could all change once the baby arrived. Ruby spoke to lots of friends who'd had different experiences and Dan and Karen were aware of the inherent challenges and difficulties for a child growing up in a multi-ethnic household. Preparation for parenting involved reading a range of books, and watching a number of videos or DVDs on various parenting matters. Cody and Brenda had invested a considerable amount of money to purchase the relevant literature, which they read with great intensity and enthusiasm. From this Cody argued that he and his partner were able to get to know each other better by talking about what they had read and gain a broader perspective of parenting issues.

Also, Alan and Rhian read widely and talked about issues raised in the literature with like-minded friends. Mick and Rhona also read books to prepare them for their future role as parents and were now more aware of techniques involved in parenting. Although Paul was an avid reader, he avoided reading books on the subject of parenting and instead relied on his partner Sue, to impart her knowledge on the subject to him, verbally. Marty argued that the majority of parenting books were of limited value and presented unrealistic expectations for parents. Rhian shared his concerns:

> The parenting literature presents an ideal world that does not really exist. The focus of most books is on the biology of birth and the birthing process. If you did everything some of the books suggested it would costs you a fortune….more realism is needed to reflect reality.

Nina thought more practical advice could be sought from parents, friends and relatives, rather than books:

> People who have children understand the practical day-to-day issues of being a parent and are better able to offer practical advice. My friend who has a young child aged has given me lots of advice, which will help me parent and avoid stressful situations and avoid panicking.

Also, other forms of media influenced pre-birth couples approach to parenting. Ned had recently taken some time off work to prepare for parenting and got bored, so to fill in time his wife suggested he watch the TV series 'Nanny 101':

> Surprisingly the TV programme gave me some useful ideas on how I might manage our child's behavior. I did like the idea of practical tips to give ownership of the problem back to the child and not feel parental guilt. After all, my philosophy on successful parenting is concerned with the development of a 'well rounded' person to mould them into a positive adult who cares for others.

Watching kids and parents programmes for Ned was worthwhile, as it provided a useful 'window' into what he described as the "real world of parenting". A number of pre-birth couples were concerned that the media caused unnecessary stress and pressure on expectant parents. This was due largely to the common image projected through advertising, of the 'perfect parents with the perfect child' who lived wonderful lives and wanted for nothing. This perception gives a false picture of the reality of parenthood, and for most parents bears no relation to the challenge and demands of real-life parenting (Shaw, 2008b; Spowart *et al*. 2008).

In summary, a number of pre-birth females suffered anxiety about parenting and often felt bombarded with too much information about parenting, especially with reference to the topical debate of 'parental control of children'. Secondly, some were concerned that parenting issues were often 'sensationalised' by the media for effect, rather than substance (see Spowart *et al*. 2008). For the majority of pre-birth couples, reading the appropriate literature on parenting was useful, but not a necessity. For most of them, time out to plan and prepare for parenting was important, but was a practice most commonly practiced by females, rather than males.

5.3.2 Familial Roles

Conceptions about being a mum or dad were discussed by a number of pre-birth couples, when I asked them how they would describe a good mother (mum) or a good father (dad)? One of the limitations of this line of questioning was that I only asked expectant fathers about the qualities of a good father, and I only asked expectant mothers about the qualities of a good mother. Nevertheless, this question proved a useful strategy, when comparing ideas about assumed parenting roles.

The key words used to describe a good mum that were common to most females were concerned with being there for the child, giving time to the child unconditionally and meeting the needs of the child. Furthermore, expectant mothers talked about the importance of caring, nurturing and providing a 'safe' environment for their child. Such mothering qualities were described by a number of females:

> A good mum is somebody who is always there for their child, who will love their child, no matter what? They don't pre-judge and they're patient and consistent in the way they deal with their child. They put their child's needs before their own. My mum was a good role model, as she always spent a lot of time with us to make sure we felt wanted and that we were cared for. (Karen)

Karen's comments were supported by both Nina and Sadie. "A good mum is somebody who is always there for you, when you need them. It's important to feel loved by your mum" (Nina). Sadie was in agreement. "A good mum is there to talk to you about anything and someone you can depend on. My dad was always quite serious, whereas mum was good fun". These reflections on motherhood seem consistent with Oakley's (1980) work over thirty years ago, that motherhood is viewed as natural and the greatest achievement of a women's life. Later work by Raddon (2002) provides evidence to support this view, when referring to the cultural prescriptions of the 'good mother'. Lupton and Barclay (1997) disagree and explain that such myths can perpetuate women's disadvantaged status and dependency on men, which have prompted a call for more research on these aspects of mothering.

Many females reported feeling stressed, tired and short of time during their pregnancy and appreciated that once they became parents, dedicated 'baby time' would be critical to their future relationship with their child. Making time to establish the child/parent relationship was very important for pre-birth females. For Ruby, this meant taking the time, to get to know her child by caring, nurturing and keeping them safe. Karen and Vera held similar views to Ruby and mentioned the importance of 'baby-time', where the parent could listen and talk to their child to improve communication with them. Therefore, giving or making time for the child during the early stages of parenthood was viewed as essential. One expectant female described this strategy as 'parenting with a purpose'. Although, number of other females were concerned that finding time would be difficult, due to the other demands associated with motherhood. These demands have been described in some detail by Enright (2004, p.73):

> It is the middle of the morning, an ordinary morning of undressing, dressing, sterilising, mixing, spooning, wiping, squawking, smiling, banging, reaching for the bread knife, falling down, climbing up, in the middle of which - a crisis! Which is dealt with in the military style: change nappy, remove shitty vest, wash hands, find clean vest, pull baby away from stairs, comfort baby when she cries for stairs, dress baby, lift shitty vest, soak shitty vest, wash hands and finally were out the door and into the car seat, off to the supermarket, me singing 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' and remembering I have left the back door wide open.

Rita spoke on behalf of many of the expectant females, when she emphasised that meeting the needs of the child would mean not taking them for granted. "They are people just like us and need to be valued as individuals". Pre-birth males stressed their supporting role in parenting in contrast to the central role that most females would play in caring for their child. As Lupton and Barclay (1997) note, the reality of an immature non-social and demanding baby is very challenging for many men. This observation is supported by Kay (2009, p.22) who has noted that, "fathers perceive themselves as being secondary in both importance and competence, where caring activities for their offspring are involved". Nevertheless, some pre-birth males in this study intended to take their caring role seriously: "being caring, supportive and around for my child will be very important to me" (Rory). Similarly, Dave described his future role as a father, about being there and available to his child. "You need to show an interest in the child and have fun with them". Adopting a positive attitude to his fathering role would be important to Dave as he had a number of concerns about his future role as a parent. Sam envisaged similar problems to Dave:

> I'm often on call at weekends in case of an emergency, so there is a lack of flexibility in terms of when I am going to be around to look after our child. I'll do my best to be there when I can, but I don't want to be like my own father who always got home late and worked long hours and rarely saw his family, which can affect couples' relationship negatively.

Also, Mick was concerned that his work might negatively impact on his relationship with his child and partner:

> My work is very taxing and involves long unsociable hours. I don't want my work to affect my family. I know there are certain societal expectations about mothering and fathering, but I want to avoid carrying out these beliefs in the way, I intend to parent. I just want to be involved and help my wife, whenever I can.

The discipline role associated with fathering was highlighted by a number of pre-birth males as something they did not want to be entirely responsible for. Many suggested this aspect of parenting needed to be shared with their partner. Angus talked about this issue in some depth during his interview, recounting stories of the type of discipline he was subjected to as a child. "A good dad should not hit his child, that's an invasion of their personal space. Although, I realise good dads are human and make mistakes and sometimes they might need to be 'big' enough to apologise to their child". The importance of being involved and making time for fathering was important to a number of males interviewed at the pre-birth stage.

In the pre-birth group one of the most important roles of a father, was described as the main earner, to provide the financial means to allow the female partner to focus her time and energies on the parenting role as in many cases they would be reliant upon 'one' income. This view is supported by Kay (2009, p.18) as she identifies their provider role to the family, "lies at the heart of men's identity as fathers and their practice of fatherhood". Likewise, for Cody, a good father was somebody who could provide for the family and be around for his child:

> You don't get your time again with your child, so you need to make the best of that time. I've changed my hours to be at home more. I think it's important that my child knows me as his dad, rather than some stranger who visits home now and again. (Cody)

Similarly, Sam and Alan were frustrated that their parenting time might be compromised and limited by their work obligations and supported the value of 'dad time' with the baby. Sam emphasised the supportive role a father could undertake to support his partner. Dan's recollections of the male parenting role were quite different. "My dad was quite strict and liked rules and order. If you disobeyed him you got punished, it was as simple as that"! I hope to be more relaxed about those sorts of 'things'. These ideas seem to reflect Kay's (2009, p.7) observation that fatherhood has become more complex and contradictory and as a result, it is not what the role of father should be. There is some evidence to suggest that this might be the case for some of the men interviewed at the pre-birth stage in this study.

In summary, it appears that pre-birth females involved at the interview stage of this study support the view that mothering qualities of caring, nurturing, kindness and patience are positive signs of effective parenting they intended to follow. As future mothers, they described their key role as meeting the 'immediate' needs of the child or what Shaw (2010) refers to as "intensive mothering". As a result, pre–birth females had intentions to focus their attention on their child's needs to the detriment of their own needs. This could leave pre-birth females with little time or energy to see to their own needs, once they became parents. Similarly, pre-birth males suggested that a 'good dad' would be somebody who was supportive and who made time for their child in being available to them. Shaw (2010, p.6) has recognised this trend in contemporary parenting styles and comments that, "the good father today is thought to be one who is friend and confidante of his children". Craig (2006) concurs with Shaw's observation, but notes it's mostly evident with white middle class men.

Kay (2006a, 2006c) joins the debate and agrees that men are now under pressure to fulfil their modern expectations of their role as a father and still see their role as one of provider contextualised within the 'ethic of work'.

5.3.3 Expectations of parenthood

Expectations concerning parenthood ranged from, "I'm really looking forward and excited about being a parent" (Rose), to "I'm really concerned that I'm not fully prepared to fulfil our parenting roles" (Ria) and, "it's quite frightening, even though I work with parents and young families in my job" (Vera). A number of pre-birth couples talked about being stressed and not sure how they would cope with what Karen described as a "daunting experience" and a "journey into the great unknown". Both Ria and Rose remarked that they were looking forward to their journey into parenting and had 'mixed' emotions about the challenges of parenting. Karen was enthused about the challenge and the life experiences it would bring. Rose mirrored this view and was impatient to see her child grow and develop their own personality. "I realise 'things' will change once the baby arrives and life will be more challenging, and the realities of being responsible for somebody have not really 'hit home' with me yet". Sam, her partner agreed:

> It will be a 'wake-up call' for both of us. We will need to be serious about it, so giving time for the child will be our imperative in meeting the baby's demands, which I'm sure will be numerous.

The first year of motherhood is the most challenging in terms of women maintaining a sense of self (Oakley, 1980; Cole, 1998). This observation is further clarified by Shaw (2010, p.8): "the idea of mothers protecting children from risk as well as being responsible for their health and well being and for their physical, social, emotional and intellectual development continues for many years". As a result, women feel obligated towards their families and place the needs of their families before themselves (Cole, 1998). On the theme of incorporating lifestyle into the parenting role, Karen spoke about the possible realities of parenting:

> My hubby just thinks about all the 'fun' things. Parenting is like a job, the difference is you don't get paid for it or get a day off. I don't think my hubby has really come to terms with how tough it might be.

Many parents had similar concerns to Karen on how they would cope. I'm looking forward to the challenge and appreciate that some of it will be mundane with changing, feeding and looking after the baby (Vera).

Marty, Vera's partner then gave his view:

> I'm considering requesting overtime, so that we can have more money to cope. My wife thinks this is a bad idea, because we'll see less of each other and she won't get a break from the baby, but I'm not that interested in the baby stage (Vera laughs and shrugged her shoulders in the couple interview). I'm more interested in the stage where I'll have the opportunity to play and do some sport with our child".

Dan held similar views to Marty. "I'm not really interested in changing nappies. I want to get out and about and do 'things' with my child and introduce them to a range of activities". It is interesting to note that Dan expressed this view in his 'solo' interview, but did not express these views in the couple interview. Organised activities play an important role for fathers in forming relationships with their child (Harrington, 2006). This view is supported by Larson *et al*. (1997) where fathers used their leisure time to engage with their children, whereas mothers found it more difficult because of their role of family caretaker and observed in later work by Harrington, (2009, p.56):

> Writers in contemporary fatherhood draw attention to fathers' pre-deliction to play with their children as opposed to engaging in what is usually referred to separately as childcare.

A number of pre-birth females planned to take some time off from work and focus their energies on the task of parenting. "Lack of time", remarked Nina would be a major obstacle, so she had thought about making better use of her time and had planned to be better organised. Ria was also worried time commitments to parenting and about her 'future' responsibilities in relation to parenting. Her feelings had grown stronger the closer she got to the birth date:

> I'm not sure, how I will cope? I've talked to other friends with kids and they've told me the 'mothering genes' will just kick in. I'm not going to work in the first year and we're returning to the UK. (Ria)

A number of pre-birth couples talked about their journey into parenting and were apprehensive about their roles as a future parent. Opinions ranged from "I've got absolutely no idea" (Dan) to "I feel very confident about my future role as a mother" (Rose). Stu was looking forward to the birth of his child as he had "no worries". However, Nina was feeling stressed and not looking forward to the birth of their child. "I just can't wait till my body gets back to normal, I don't feel in control of my body and my hormones are all over the place, sometimes I'm good sometimes, not".

Ruby voiced similar concerns and even though five months pregnant, she had still not fully come to terms with what she described as "the shock of pregnancy". Her pregnancy was unplanned and it took her some time to accept and acknowledge that she was 'pregnant' and she had mixed emotions about the 'whole' experience. She was excited about becoming a mum and at the same time she was apprehensive, experiencing problems coping with range of emotions. Sue expressed similar concerns:

> Pregnancy can be quite isolating as often you feel like a 'hermit'. My brain doesn't seem to be engaged the same way as it used to be. I have mood swings, which is unusual for me. It will be important to 'get out and about' once the baby is born and it will be tiring.

A number of pre-birth males discussed the issue of change and recognised that this was a significant life event for them:

> It's something new and I like change. I try not to dwell on the negatives too much. It's fascinating that we do not really have any idea about what we are about to experience. If there are any issues, we will have to deal with them as they arise. (Cody)

Angus described a similar approach:

> I'm quite cool about the 'whole thing'. I know it will be a big lifestyle change, but I'm prepared for that. I've had lots of 'chats' with mates with kids and they've given me some really good advice.

Ria had also sought practical advice from friends, as she was surrounded by lots of people who'd parented themselves and freely gave their advice. She appreciated her life would change as this event was probably the most significant life event she'd experienced since her marriage. She was prepared to be adaptable and approach her mothering role in a positive manner. Sadie was told she may have problems conceiving a child. As a result, she lost confidence and started to have health problems. Getting pregnant was a 'wellness thing' for her. It was a sign that she was getting better, both physically and mentally. Before pregnancy, she was too focussed on getting promotion at the cost of her health and relationship. Getting pregnant had changed all that, for the better. "I was far too involved with my job and moving 'up' the career ladder. Becoming a parent will be a positive life change".

Ned's approach to parenting was to dwell on the positives. He was looking forward to showing his child what he described as the "great outdoors". Also, Ruby envisaged a bright future for her family, once the baby arrived:

> The new addition will make us feel like a proper family, we're just a couple at the moment. I'm organised and tidy, although my friends think I'm a bit 'anal' at times. I'm sure these skills will help me.

Positive expectations were not only restricted to the parenting role as a number of pre-birth couples expected positive life changes, post pregnancy. "Once the baby arrives, I think we'll be forced into socialising more with like-minded people with young children. We'll definitely go into the city more and use more of the local facilities" (Alan). His partner, Rhian, expressed similar views:

> Parenthood is going to 'shake-up' our lives substantially and will change our perspective on so many 'things'. Since I've been pregnant, I've noticed that people are more caring towards me. People open doors into shops for me and ask me lots of questions and wish me good look for the birth. This makes me feel more confident.

It seems that pre-birth couples' expectations and emotions about parenthood during pregnancy were mixed. Vera identified a number of challenges that couples might face when they became parents. In particular she identified that there would be emotional, physical and financial concerns that might lead to unnecessary worry and stress.

5.3.4 Preparation and planning for parenthood

Pre-birth couples were preparing for parenthood in a number of ways. Alan and Rhian had been planning for a while:

> I got lucky and got pregnant quickly compared to some of my friends. We're glad we didn't have children when we were younger, as we're now more financially viable as a family and more mature. (Rhian)

Alan agreed by nodding his head:

> I'm really looking forward to the birth of our child. I'm excited about being a parent and have already bought all the baby gear. When I visit baby shops they ask if I'm buying for my daughter, the cheek of it! I'm excited and scared at the same time.

Previous contact and experience with young babies was thought by a number of pre-birth couples to be a useful introduction to the realities of parenting. Vera had undertaken child-minding for a wealthy family based in the UK with a young boy. Vera described this experience as 'daunting':

> The experience was mostly a negative one, as I personally witnessed the neglect of a child by the parents. This was a useful learning experience as it made me even more determined to be an involved parent.

When I asked couples about how they were preparing for parenthood, many talked about their own experiences as children. Rhian's parents were not around that much when she was a child as they were busy people with important jobs:

> I was raised by hired help and don't remember mum and dad much. When I used to ask where they were, I was simply told they were busy. I'll be different and want to be fully engaged with my child, so I'm taking time off work to dedicate to my child. (Rhian)

A number of other pre-birth couples sought advice from friends and relatives who had young children. Rose, Rory, Marty and his partner Vera viewed this as a useful strategy in helping them cope with the likely challenges they would face as a parent. Nina and Rhian had purposely observed others' parents behaviour with young babies in public places. This strategy was useful and helped them differentiate between what they termed as good and bad practice, with reference to parenting. These observations would often form the topic of conversation when they met up with like-minded friends with children. These discussions were useful in helping them prepare to become parents and provided them with an insight into the realities of parenting and the likely, 'day to day' challenges they would face.

A number of pre-birth couples had accessed parenting literature from local libraries and many had purchased parenting books recommended by their midwives or antenatal tutors. "I've just read a really good book called 'Baby Love', that will be useful and I'll try to use my motherly instinct, once the urge kicks in" (Ruby). Rory was supportive of his partner's endeavours, as in his spare time after work he would often be seen reading a selection of parenting 'self help guides'. His work colleagues were told of this, and as a consequence he was teased by them and they accused him of going 'all girly', which Rory thought was rather immature and ill-informed. Rory enjoyed reading and this was an extension of his preparation. However, he was concerned that books often gave conflicting advice, which confused him.

Ria (his partner), shared similar views to her partner Rory:

> Reading books doesn't really help prepare you for parenting. In the early days of my pregnancy, I read quite a lot of books, but got fed up with the same 'old' scenarios. Books are of limited value, learning from others personal experiences is much more useful and practical.

In summary, there is evidence to suggest that a number of expectant parents had strategies in place to help them prepare for parenthood. Many prepared by reading books about parenting, but some argued that this strategy was of limited value and often led to confusion. Many sought practical advice from friends and family members who they trusted. A number of pre-birth couples mentioned that prior contact and communication with young children was useful in helping them understand the basic needs of children.

5.3.5 Antenatal class

Pre-birth couples reflected on their involvement with antenatal classes and it became apparent that a range of views existed with regard to the usefulness of such classes. Their comments are summarised into positive and negative reflections in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Reflections on Antenatal class (Pre-birth, interviewees)

Positive Reflections	**Negative Reflections**
Meeting like minded people to share experiences, worries and concerns.	It's boring and too simplistic.
The coffee breaks allow for interaction and sharing of experiences, so far.	Too much emphasis on birthing process and emphasis on the biology of the experience
It's time out with my partner, amongst like-mined people.	There is not enough time to mix and interact with other group members
Learning from others really helps	Asked directly to share personal experiences
Provides the basics you need to know, about pregnancy and childbirth	More focus needs to be given to the parenting role (once baby is born)

Pre-birth couples suggested a range of recommendations to improve antenatal classes which are illustrated at the end of this section in Figure 5.1 and are discussed later, in more detail. Karen enjoyed going to antenatal class as it focused her energies on preparing for the birth. She enjoyed class as it was good fun and a useful opportunity to meet other people in the same circumstance. During coffee breaks she was able to share her experiences with others and generally have a laugh by sharing stories. She was disappointed that her partner Dan was reluctant to attend these classes with her. Ruby had similar comments to put forward and was concerned that class participants were not given the opportunity to contribute to class based activities.

The learning style used in most antenatal classes involved mostly one-way communication between the instructor and the class with no real opportunity for class based discussions. As a result, many pre-birth couples were concerned that the sessions were 'too teacher-centred' and rarely involved their input. Ruby suggested that the antenatal leader could do more to involve participants in relation to the issues that were often raised by class participants, during coffee breaks. Too often, the only time pre-birth couples managed to talk with each other was during the coffee breaks. A number of others agreed with Ruby, "coffee breaks are the best time for learning, from each other about the realities of parenting when the group can be very supportive of each other". Mick shared the same opinion, "having a good 'chinwag'/talk, breaks the ice and gets people to mix with each other and that helps them 'open-up' and begin to talk about the kind of issues we'll all face in the near future". Nina expressed similar concerns about the value of attending antenatal class. Her partner Stu no longer attended the class, as he couldn't find time to attend due to work commitments or that was the excuse Nina said he'd given. Nina persisted and saw the course through to the end, even though it was of limited value in helping her prepare for parenthood. Alan was more even more critical:

> The class was too focused on the problems associated with childbirth and I could have read about all this in a book in my own time. I think the classes needed to be more light-hearted, where participants can have some fun. It was information overload at times and boring.

Sue continued on this theme, "they (instructors) spent far too much time on the labour process, there was little information provided on what to do once the baby arrives". Her partner Paul was more critical:

> It was a complete waste of time. I don't know why, I bothered going. We didn't get time to talk with other couples or chat about preparing ourselves for the arrival of a newborn or how to prepare ourselves as first-time parents.

Paul continued to debate antenatal class, with more reasoned detail. "The tutor did not mention anything at all that would help me prepare as a father, it was all focused on what women need to do with nothing to help men". Paul's comments are consistent with men preparing for birth in Mitchell and Chapman's (2006) study, where parenting information presented at antenatal class was primarily aimed at women. In summarising the key outcomes of their study, Mitchell and Chapman (2006) noted that men felt unprepared for parenthood which placed them under severe psychological and emotional risk.

Having time to talk with other couples about their fears and worries of parenting was a topic raised by a significant number of pre-birth couples. "Too much emphasis in the antenatal classes was placed upon the biology of pregnancy and birth" (Yaz). When Yaz was asked if this was important, she responded, "most people know about this already or they can read about it for themselves in their own time". Ria agreed, "the focus on the biology of parenting was overkill". Vera added her own thoughts:

> I enjoyed being able to talk to other couples, but the class was slow, tedious and boring. I don't really think, I learnt that much. The few discussions in class usually dragged on for too long, and some people became quite irritated. The course needed better structure and direction and prior consultation with participants on what they needed.

Ruby and Dave highlighted a number of benefits associated with attending antenatal class. "We made 'new' friends and even formed our own coffee group who still meet outside of class hours" (Ruby). Likewise, Angus really enjoyed his antenatal course, as it was an opportunity, to get out of the house and he was keen to learn about the birthing process and his class planned to form their own baby-sitting club.

Other support systems and organisations mentioned by expectant parents in helping them prepare for parenthood included parenting organisations such as Plunket and their own midwives. Plunket offered a range of useful courses for parents, but not for expectant couples. They offered advice on parenting, but their focus was on parents with children, not those preparing for parenthood. The allocation of midwives to expectant couples early on in their pregnancy was considered a good strategy by expectant couples:

> I really like the midwife system here in Christchurch. My midwife calms me down when I'm stressed. She's very approachable and understands what I am going through. She puts me at ease and has really helped me focus on the positives during pregnancy. (Ruby)

Rose had similar comments to make concerning the supportive and positive role that midwives play during pregnancy. "I meet with my midwife regularly. I have learnt so much from her and I don't know how I would have coped without her". In summary to this theme, pre-birth couples put forward a range of ideas to improve their antenatal class (Figure 5.1) in helping them cope with the demands of pregnancy and help them prepare for parenting.

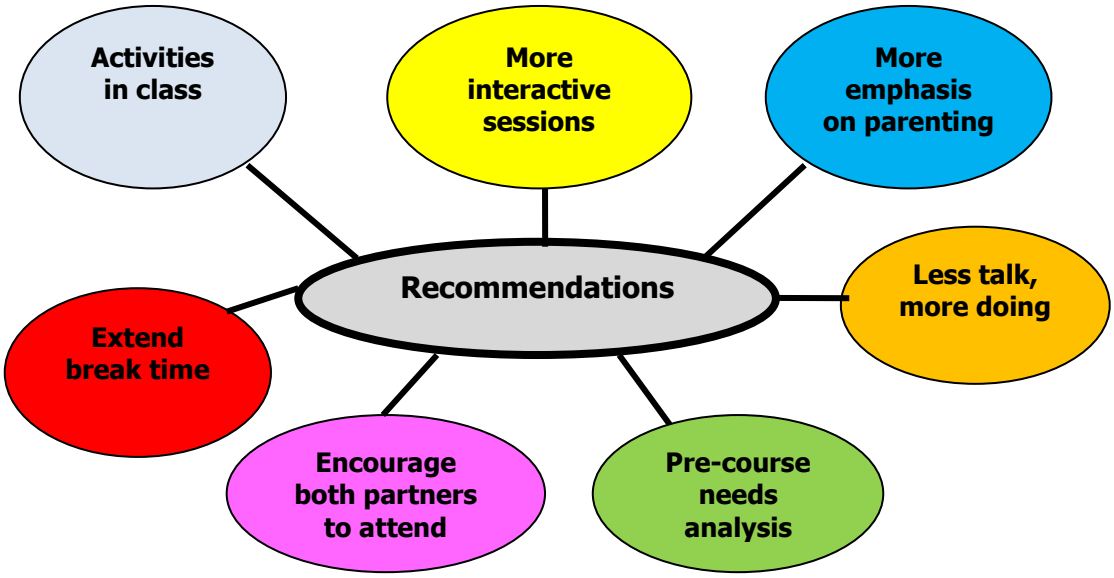


Figure 5.1 Improving antenatal classes for expectant parents (Pre-birth)

5.3.6 Change, challenge and parenthood

Many pre-birth couples talked about parenthood as a challenge and mentioned a number of concerns they had. These concerns and the resulting challenges they might face are highlighted in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 The challenges and concerns of parenthood (Pre-birth interview couples)

Positive	**Fears and worries**
A new life venture and becoming a family/time together	Becoming a parent and how will we manage?
Becoming a mum/dad and involvement of own parents	Into the great unknown/no experience and daunting prospect, practicalities and responsibility
Make us better time managers	Post natal depression

Rory described parenting as a "daunting life challenge" and was uncertain about how he and his partner would manage:

> I'm not sure we'll manage, but we are back in the UK, Ria will have more family support around her. That's the decision we've made, but it was a difficult decision and having family support close by has swayed our decision to return to the UK.

Ned was still in a state of shock, concerning his future as a father. "I'm freaked out about the whole experience and haven't really got my head around the idea of becoming a dad. I like my freedom, but I suppose that will disappear and life will change. His partner Sadie butted in, "don't be too alarmed with what he said, he always worries too much. We are already planning and thinking about our role as parents and really we're looking forward to the challenge". Contradictory comments between couples were not unusual and a common thread emerged, that women were more positive than men about meeting the challenges of parenting. However, some women worried about the long hours their partners worked. Rose gave evidence to support this observation:

> Sometimes he doesn't get home till midnight. He's on call, all day at the moment and on duty two nights a week. He also works every third weekend, so he won't be around that much.

Rose's concerns were shared by a number of pre-birth females as a number planned to give up work or work part-time, which meant that their male partners were seriously considering working longer hours to make up the shortfall in the collective household income. Financial pressure associated with parenting was an issue many pre-birth couples referred to during the interviews, as some relied on one income during pregnancy, particularly pre-birth females in their third trimester.

The relationship between employment and being a father has been well documented and highlights according to Kay (2009, p.17) "the pivotal role and significance of paid work in men's ideologies of parenting". Furthermore, this gives fathers evidence of their own responsibility to the family which, is an expectation shared by mothers and children. Ruby was worried about how her own career would be affected by parenthood. She was planning on taking six months off work some of which would be on half pay. She described herself as the 'breadwinner' in the family, and was worried that taking time off would seriously damage her career prospects and the household income. A number of other pre-birth couples also mentioned that balancing the needs of home life and work life, would be their major challenge. Pete's job involved working long hours, which meant by the end of the week he was exhausted. Consequently, he anticipated that most of the parenting duties would be undertaken by his wife. He was frustrated by this prospect as he wanted to be the 'kind' of father that got involved in all aspects of parenting. Pete and his wife Sue had discussed this issue frequently and Sue was comfortable with this arrangement.

Sue planned to take a year off work and was unsure when she would return. The implications of this strategy would mean that Pete would probably need to work even longer hours and be away from home for longer periods. Sue described this vision of the future when referring to their contact with each other "we'll be like ships in the night". This was a compromise they were willing to make as they still had their mortgage to pay off.

Pre-birth couples highlighted the need to be organised. Marty planned to have a weekly roster to make the best use of their free time. "We'll need to think smarter with our time and use it more wisely for the sake of the baby". Managing time and making the best use of time for Mick was a challenge he welcomed:

> I appreciate that my wife will have to deal with the more day to day duties concerned with our child as I'll be out at work. When, I'm home, I want to prioritise my time entertaining our child, which will give my partner some space and a break from parenting. (Mick)

Postnatal depression was a concern shared by a number of pre-birth females and a mental health issue alluded to in much of the parenting literature. It was an issue many women were aware of, but not something they fully understood or indeed would recognise, if they suffered from it. Vera worked with many young mums in her professional role and recognised the problems:

> It will have a huge impact on my life and there are so many variables that are impossible to work out and control. I do have serious concerns about post-natal depression as many women get it and don't realise they have it and some don't even like to admit, they've got it.

A number of pre-birth females thought that excessive tiredness could be a contributing factor and something that most women could relate to. Rose talked about lacking energy all the time during her pregnancy and expected this to deteriorate, once the baby was born. Coping with the demands of the baby would be both a physical and emotional challenge for Rose as she felt unprepared.

Similarly, lack of energy and the need for more sleep was an issue that concerned Sue. "I'll be tired, especially in the first six months. If my husband arrives home early, I'll be able to have a nap and catch up on some sleep". However, during the interview with her partner Pete, it was evident that he was unlikely to arrive home early from work as he now had to work longer hours. In order to prepare for the changes and challenges of parenthood Karen had visualised the possible eventualities she might encounter:

> Some of the more difficult challenges I expect will be sleepless nights and the never ending demands of changing and feeding the baby. I have no real idea what it will be like. It will be difficult to live up to expectations that I want to achieve, but I suppose I'm putting extra pressure on myself and I don't need to.

Mick, Sue and Rhian had more practical concerns about heating their homes as they all lived in old weatherboard houses (built of wood) that were difficult to heat. They had all made plans to improve their home heating, at quite significant costs to themselves. Angus had discussed this issue recently with his partner and was making plans to complete the renovation work himself. If his plans did not work out due to lack of funds, he could always go to what Angus referred to as plan 'B'. "We'll just have to put on extra layers and grin and bear it for a while, like my parents did." His partner, Rita was quick to respond to this suggestion and give her own opinion on the issue. "I don't think so. If we've got no heat, we'll be renting, with heat. The house will go on the market to be sold and we'll be looking for a modern house with heating, already installed".

In summary, pre-birth couples shared a number of similar concerns about becoming parents. Many were looking forward to becoming a 'mum' or 'dad' and the possibility of spending time together as a family which many commented would benefit their relationship with their partner. Becoming parents concerned pre-birth couples as for many it was a 'new' experience that many felt unprepared for. Many voiced many practical concerns that they would face in the future, such as finding time for each other and dealing with the pressure of work and the emotional and financial pressures of parenting. Tiredness was probably one of the most important changes for pre-birth women during pregnancy and both males and females reported feeling 'time-stressed' and fearful of what to expect as parents.

5.3.7 Planning for childcare

Making plans for childcare was an issue raised by a number of pre-birth females to allow them time out together as a couple or for time out on their own. Ruby described this as "space for leisure, to do as she pleased". At the time of the interviews, a significant number of pre-birth females already had plans for childcare, as some had made provisional arrangements with friends or family. In terms of childcare support, other family members were identified as significant individuals to assist with childcare duties. Friends were also deemed important in this regard, and childcare agencies and organisations were also mentioned.

However, not many pre-birth couples intended to use their services due to what many described as prohibitive costs associated with hiring external help. They were reluctant to pay for hired help as parenting was their job and many pre-birth females expressed concerns about leaving their child with 'relative strangers'. It is interesting to note that only women in the pre-birth group expressed this concern, yet most men were keen to hire help for childcare purposes and were prepared to pay the going rate.

External sources of help with childcare also involved extended family members and a number of pre-birth couples intended to utilise family members that lived close by, to help care for their child. Nonetheless, some were reluctant to ask or rely on friends for help. There was other evidence that emerged from the findings which suggested that couples preferred female childcare, whether their services were offered voluntarily through family or through a child-minding agency. There was no evidence to suggest that pre-birth couples would use males to look after their children, further evidence to support the gendered nature of childcare (Nixon & Halfpenny, 2010).

Evidence of shared childcare responsibilities was scarce amongst pre-birth couples, but Ne mentioned in his solo interview that he had plans to be involved. "I intend to work just three days a week and look after the baby on the other two days of the week. That will be good for the bonding with the baby and give Sadie a break and possibly some time for us together". Vera was more fortunate than most, as she had family living close by, but her husband Marty was making enquiries about jobs where both their parents lived in the North Island, so they could have childcare help available locally. Rita had family nearby to help, but was not considering this as an option as she wanted to spend the first six months with her child, without childcare.

During the first six months she had no plans for time out for herself or time with her partner as her key focus would be on the needs of her child. Her partner Angus was not fully convinced that this was a good idea for their marriage. Rhona also planned to undertake most of the care giving in the first six months, but realised she might need a break to spend time with her partner.

A number of other couples had more formal arrangements with relations that lived nearby. "On a day-to-day basis it will be me, but I'm not very organised, so mum has offered to help with the baby care and she only lives around the corner" (Sue).

Nina's mum lived even closer on the same street and was self employed and based at home, so was always available at relatively short notice. Her dad had also offered to help and was now retired and had 'time on his hands':

> Having mum so close will enable us to have time for ourselves to get out of the house and keep in contact with most of our. Although, we don't want to abuse mum's help and want to give dad a chance to help out when he can, so he feels included. (Nina)

In their study of families negotiating couple time, Dyck and Daly (2009, p. 189) recognised the importance of childcare help for couples being able to spend more time together in rejuvenating themselves as individuals and inspiring them to parent:

> Parenting couples who regularly got out together had parents nearby who could take over the running of their homes caring for their children… for those whose families were not close by, or not interested in helping, or otherwise not felt to be trustworthy, finding childcare for a night out or an overnight getaway presented a worrisome challenge.

Cody had already been offered help with childcare through friends at work, who now had teenagers:

> They enjoy looking after children and I think some of my friends miss not having young children around anymore. As long as Brenda gives the okay, I'll be cool about them helping out, if need be.

Brenda agreed with her partner. "Yes, I think it's a good idea in principle, but we'll have to wait and see as people promise and then change their mind". Since moving to New Zealand from the UK, Mick and Rhona had developed friendships with a number of other couples, who'd recently started their own family. The same friends had recently formed their own babysitting club that both Mick and Rhona were keen to join, to allow them to have time together and alone for solo leisure. The club worked on the basis of a ticket system, where one ticket was given for each hour of child minding, which could be exchanged for babysitting services of an equal value from other members. Only women were allowed to sit, which is further evidence to substantiate the claim that childminding is 'highly' gendered where the burden of childcare is borne by females (see Palmer & Leberman, 2009). A banker from the group was assigned each month to keep track of members who had babysat and those who had used this service. On a regular basis, every other month, women from the group would meet for a social evening together, to catch up on any news.

The men in the group did not really know each other that well and had never met collectively as a group. The club was useful as it saved couples money and enabled couples to go out together without their child. According to Mick, the group was comfortable with these arrangements, in the knowledge that baby sitters were friends who they knew and trusted. Such informal arrangements are supported by what Dyck and Daly (2009, p. 189) have to say about the nature of childcare. "Mothers primarily organised childcare….and relied heavily on their personal social networks for help particularly their mothers and sisters and female friends".

Vera and Marty were reluctant to use the services of child minders or nannies employed professionally. However, Brenda and Cody welcomed the idea and were prepared to spend money on what they described as "reliable and trustworthy babysitters". This would give them the opportunity to have some time together or to keep in contact with their friends, who did not have children. Brenda was fully aware that, 'time-out' as a couple was important for her relationship with her partner and to keep in contact with friends who didn't have children. She was also mindful of her own individuality and stressed the importance of time-out for herself with friends. She was reluctant to follow the example of some of her friends who had ceased to socialise, once they became parents. "I appreciate that parenting will be a 'full-on' and a stressful experience, but in order to keep my sanity, I'll need time to myself". This intensive form of mothering that Brenda alludes to is well documented in the parenting literature where in the early years of parenthood mothers undertake a multitude of roles (Palmer & Leberman, 2009). This involves developing their child mentally and physically and providing a safe, risk free environment (Wall 2001 cited in Shaw, 2010).

Shaw (2010) has recognised a number of different practices in parenting and identifies them as 'hyper-parenting' and 'helicopter-parenting'. However, in the parenting literature they are viewed as the same suffocating approach to parenting. For example, Lareau (2011) in her book 'Unequal Childhoods' suggest that 'helicopter parenting' inhibits natural neurological processes that help children grow into adulthood, by slowing the brain's maturation process and as a result, prohibits children from free thought, and independence. Honore' (2008) supports this view in claiming that too many parents micro-manage their children by over scheduling them, with too much structure and monitoring throughout their childhood.

Furthermore, in his book 'Under Pressure', Honore' (2008) advocates slower forms of parenting, to allow children to work out who they are, rather than what parents want them to be and to allow them plenty of time and space to explore the world on their own terms. This idea stems from the slow living movement popularized in Parkins and Craig's (2006) book, 'Slow living', as an alternative way of living that is slower and more meaningful.

Most of the parents wanted to do the best for their child, but were often frustrated, because of conflicting advice and their lack of experience. Some of Yaz's friends had volunteered their help, but she was concerned about their lack of experience with babies and how she would explain to her friends that she did not need their help, without offending them:

> Friends have offered to help out, but in the first few months I think it's important that I'm there for the baby. I'm not sure leaving the baby with someone else is a good idea. We want to be involved as parents and take our responsibilities seriously. (Yaz)

This observation is consistent with commentators on parenting issues that argue that an involved style of parenting is emerging in contemporary society (Wall 2001, cited in Shaw, 2010). Shaw (2010) asserts that fathers are now more involved as parents and as a result have become more emotionally connected with their children. This 'new' involved form of parenting has been labelled by Craig (2007) as 'involved fatherhood' and is an issue which has been discussed at great length by many commentators of parenting. Shaw (2010) sees this as good news for women, as it may potentially relieve them of some of their traditional responsibilities associated, with parenting. According to Craig (2007) this has not been the case, as women still undertake the majority of household and childcare duties.

Shaw (2010, p.7) supports Craig's (2007) concerns and comments that "women continue to be selfless and sacrificial focussing on their children's needs and wishes to, the exclusion of their own personal requirements and desires". Furthermore, Shaw (2010) recognises that women service the needs of their child first, often at the expense of their own needs, which was evidently what a number of pre-birth females involved in the interviews just expected to happen, when they became mothers. To some extent, the same pattern emerges in the evidence presented by Jenkins and Lyons (2006) in that 'solo' dads sometimes forego their own leisure at the expense of their children's leisure.

A number of expectant females had spoken to their employers about more flexible patterns of working or the possibility of working on a part-time basis. This finding is consistent with the work of Daly (2001) and Bryson *et al*. (2007) who have shown that employed female parents find it difficult to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance. According to Shaw (2010, p.9), "this is due to increased hours of employment, unsociable hours and changing workplace expectations".

The majority of pre-birth females were concerned about how their future role as a parent would impact upon their work and future career. Sadie had already made plans in negotiation with her employer, enabling her to work from home as a parent:

> I work from home most of the time now. My employer has been very supportive and understanding about the fact that I'm going to be a parent soon. They've helped me set up my own workplace at home, and have no problems with me combining work with parenting. I consider myself fortunate in being able to do this.

In summary from the feedback that pre-birth couples provided, it appears that access to childcare is dependent upon a number of variables depending on personal circumstance which are mostly concerned with the availability of family and friends to help with childcare. A number of pre-birth couples did not intend to seek assistance with childcare as they viewed childcare as their key role as parents. Only a small number of expectant couples intended to seek out professional help with childcare as many assumed this option was not affordable to them as any spare money would be spent on their child.

5.3.8 Solo leisure

When pre-birth couples were asked about leisure a range of responses were offered, but common to all was the importance of time to undertake activities. Although traditional ideas about leisure connected to freedom of choice and time for self expression and relaxation were deemed as important, they were not necessarily put into practice. For Nina, leisure was about doing things for herself, when she wanted to. This was normally active and involved activities that were described as enjoyable. Rose re-iterated what Nina had said:

> Leisure is really just about time for me to do as I please, when I want to. It's something that I do of my own free will, in my own time when I can really enjoy time on my own terms. At work, I have no choice, but in leisure the choice is up to me.

The concept of self in leisure was also critical to Ria. "It only feels like leisure when it's time for me. I kind of expect to get time for myself as I work full-time. Rose expressed sympathy with this perspective:

> Having time to pursue things that I want to do is really important to me. It's usually involves me doing something, where I could be on my own doing my own thing. It's very much an individual kind of pursuit.

Pre-birth couples made the connection between work time and leisure time, in that time for leisure was quite different and had different qualities to work time. However, many family leisure commentators note that once couples become parents, this distinction becomes blurred and is difficult to discern (Horne, 1993; Kay, 2003; Shaw, 2001). Moreover, family leisure commentators report that leisure can have both positive and negative implications (Freysinger, 1995; Henderson, 1996) and for many women 'true' leisure could only be achieved, when it was free from family obligations (Henderson & Bialeschki, 1999).

Ned commented that his work was a "means to an end to have leisure". For Ned, work was a necessity which provided the funds to engage in his favoured leisure activities. A number of pre-birth couples supported this view and saw leisure as the antithesis of work:

> Having freedom and feeling relaxed is really what my leisure is about. It's a time when I have no worries in the world, when I have fun and enjoy myself. I suppose it's a kind of escapism from work and home when I feel I am in control and when I have earned the time for me. If I didn't have to work, I wouldn't. Work has strict time boundaries, and deadlines, leisure is not like that". (Ned)

John expressed similar ideals to Ned. "Leisure is the opposite of work for me and it's about something I want to do where I am free to choose my own the activity. I watch quite a lot of TV to relax and most of the time it's 'crap' and I don't enjoy it". Although, watching 'The Simpsons' for John was considered good fun, as he did not take it too seriously. So it seems that an activity such as watching TV could be described as leisure, but could serve many different purposes. Therefore, time for oneself could meet a number of different purposes, one of which could be leisure. For example, Rory watched TV to relax from the stresses and strains of every day work, but did not describe this time as leisure. During his interview, Rory talked a lot about the importance of his work. He enjoyed his job and would not change it and was reluctantly leaving to return to the UK to be closer to family and relatives.

Work he recognised was a central life interest, which provided him with the means to participate in leisure. In the joint interview with his wife Ria, they both agreed that work was a necessity for leisure. "You can't really have one without the other and if you don't work, I don't think you really appreciate the value of leisure" (Ria). She did go on to qualify this statement. "Now, I'm pregnant and giving up work soon, I still value leisure, but it's different now". This observation was confirmed by what Rhona had to say on the topic:

> I am now less active than I used to be. I have to expect that in my condition, I can't do the 'things', I used to do. It's frustrating at times, and tiredness is a major constraint in what I can do now in my leisure.

Sue had similar concerns to Rhona:

> I can't go on my moped it's just too risky now. If something happened, I would never be able to forgive myself. So, not being able to use the moped has severely restricted my leisure.

Rita expressed similar frustrations at the latter stages of her pregnancy:

> I'm now nine months pregnant and am becoming quite fed up with being pregnant. My options are more limited now and I just watch TV to help pass the time away. I 'm less tolerant than I used to be and I really miss tramping (walking) and going away on holidays.

Many pre-birth women had lost contact with friends as dealing with the demands of pregnancy consumed most of their time:

> Pregnancy can be a lonely experience sometimes. You become more reclusive and much more aware of your body shape, so you find excuses not to go out with friends. I suppose you just lose the confidence you used to have, before pregnancy. (Yaz)

A number of feminist writers on family leisure have also recognised that women often suffer from a lack of confidence during pregnancy, similar to the reasons given by Yaz, above (Wimbush, 1984; Green *et al*. 1990; Bialesckie 1994; Craig, 2007; Shaw, 2008). The same authors report that many of these same women lack time and energy to make plans for their own leisure. Nevertheless, it seems their male partners were still able to maintain relationships and spend time with friends during pregnancy, as noted by Angus. "I still get out on the bike, several times a week. I really enjoy this male bonding, as it's a good release from home life".

This finding is consistent with the work of Henderson and Bialeschki (1999) and Currie (2009) where solo leisure for women during pregnancy declined more than it did for men, thereby recognising a gender difference in leisure. For women, free time for personal leisure declines during pregnancy and after the birth of their first child. However, men are still able to find time for solo leisure, but in many cases have less of it (Silver, 2000). It is interesting to note that during pregnancy expectant parents in this study were already anticipating that they would have less time for leisure, once they become parents in terms of their own solo leisure.

As a result, less personal time for leisure was of greater concern for mothers, than it was for fathers. This observation was evident in what Ria and Rory had to say in their joint interview. Ria mentioned that once their baby was born, her husband's cycling activities would have to be curtailed. However, there was no mention of this during the individual interview with Rory who remarked that his activities would probably not be affected by the birth of their child. This was further evident in what both Cody and Marty had to say, about their continued involvement in competitive sport which required a significant amount of their personal leisure time:

> I'm still cycling competitively and will continue this when the baby arrives. I can't just give up after all the training I've done. It would take too long to get back to the level of fitness I'm at now. Having my own time is important and I'm not sure how I'm going to compromise this time, once we become a family with a baby. (Cody)

Marty still placed high value on his continued commitment to competitive sports:

> I still play touch and lots of other sports. Also, I go fishing with my mates on a regular basis and snowboarding and skiing in the winter. I really enjoy being in the outdoors, it's a change from my work.

During the joint interview with his partner, Vera responded to Marty's comments:

> He loves his sport and it gets him out of the house and that's good for both of us at the moment, but I'm not sure he fully appreciates or is fully prepared for the arrival of the baby. I've coped with him being out a lot during the pregnancy, but I won't afterwards.

In summary, the importance of 'self' for pre-birth females was important, in giving them time out from other obligations such as work and preparing for parenthood. The concept of leisure for many appears to be associated with notions of freedom, choice, enjoyment and relaxation. Pre-birth males enjoyed greater access to more active forms of leisure and on a more frequent basis.

Pre-birth females were more restricted in terms of time available and opportunities for leisure, especially more active forms of leisure. Similar findings have been reported by a number of family leisure researchers, who acknowledge that there is often a tension between time for solo leisure and family leisure (Thompson 1998, 1999; Trussell & Shaw, 2009). According to Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004) this is further compounded by the fact that women have less time and resources for solo leisure, compared to men.

Within this study, there is some evidence to suggest that this may be the case for a number of expectant mothers once they become parents. In his time use study of parental leisure in Canada, Silver (2000) recognised that this trend was more pronounced just after the birth of the first child, when personal time for women declined substantially. As a result, the extent of their participation in sport and physical recreation was largely determined by the demands of parenthood. This finding is supported by research undertaken in New Zealand by Gomez and Castillon (2006) on work, family and parenting, and on research in the United States undertaken by Johnson *et al*. (2006) on coupled leisure in families and research on women's experience of family leisure in Canada (Trussell & Shaw, 2009).

5.3.9 Time for each other

During the individual interviews with pre-birth couples, the importance of time for oneself was emphasised, as explained in the previous section. However, during the interviews with both partners it was evident that time for each other was also viewed as valuable. As a result, some pre-birth couples had thought about planning their time purposively to make sure they had time for each other, post-birth:

> We plan to allocate time for each other and time as a couple. A number of couples with young children I know have lost sight of the importance of maintaining their relationship with their partner, as their focus has been exclusively on the baby. We want to avoid this. (Rory)

His partner Ria tentatively agreed. "Yes it's important for us to have couple time, but at the moment I can't imagine wanting to be away from the baby for any amount of time". Rose had similar plans in place:

> Moving back to the North Island will give us a life outside of the baby and time together. The time together will be good for our relationship and for our baby. We are really looking forward to going out for walks together or going out in the evening for a meal or just for a coffee.

These observations are consistent with other research data on parenting which indicates that mothers in two-parent families continue to do most of the childcare (Craig, 2007). In this study a number of expectant mums were already anticipating their parental role and responsibilities, prior to 'actual' parenthood. Even though Paul and Sue had spent a lot of time together at home during pregnancy they realised that once the baby was born, Paul would have to go back to work and Sue's role would be one of primary care-giver to their child. Vera, spoke passionately about this topic from her own professional perspective:

> Sometimes, mum and baby take centre stage and then dad feels neglected and this causes relationship problems. We advise expectant parents to be aware of such issues and plan time for each other.

The same issue was raised during the interview with Sadie and Ned. They'd already made plans to have quality time together post-birth. "My parents have offered to baby-sit whenever we need them. This will give us more time for each other, as we feel our relationship will suffer if we don't" (Sadie). Ned was one of the few men, to add his comments on this issue:

> I've heard lots of 'new' parents, lose contact with friends. This is something we don't want to happen. Many of our close friends have young children, so they've given us lots of useful advice and going out with friends will give us more time together as a couple.

For Brenda and Cody, arranging time for each other was going to be problematic. However, they were quite prepared to pay for babysitting services to have what Cody termed a "life after childbirth". For Brenda, time together without the baby was going to be very important for her marriage and for maintaining relationships with friends.

Both Rhona and Karen were concerned about creating couple time as 'new mums':

> We'll just kind of muddle along and do our best to have time together. Any spare time that I might have will probably be taken up with part-time work. Having a baby around won't be cheap and no doubt I'll have to supplement our present income in some way. (Karen)

Rhona expressed a number of similar concerns to Karen, in her interview:

> Coping with the demands of being a mum will probably require all my energies and time. My mum will be visiting from the UK to help, so that will give us time as a couple. We haven't made any specific plans to spend time out together as I might, have to go back to part-time.

In summary, pre-birth couples were aware of the importance of planning time-out for each other from their 'future' parenting duties. Many were anticipating they'd have less time together as a couple. The early stages of parenthood were of particular concern to pre-birth females as they believed that most of their time would be dedicated to their baby. Pre-birth males were more optimistic and anticipated that personal time for leisure would not be compromised that much.

5.3.9 Leisure and pregnancy

During the interviews with pre-birth couples, they were asked whether they had noticed any changes in their leisure before and during pregnancy. A number of them identified that their leisure was now more restrictive, involved fewer people and a narrower range of activities. This was clearly evident for pre-birth females as most of them reported that their leisure was now simpler, involved more passive forms of leisure and was located mostly around home. This trend was highlighted by Sue:

> Before pregnancy, I had a busy social life and would go out for meals, to bars and nightclubs. I just can't do that now. This transition to home based life was difficult for both of us. We miss our friends and socialising with others, as it was part of our life.

Paul, Sue's partner then added his own observations:

> We were always out or away at weekends and often stayed over at friend's houses. We just don't do that now. We're less active, but life is busier. Sue suffers from excessive tiredness and seems to need a lot more sleep. She never used to be like that at all.

After nodding in agreement with Paul, Sue rejoined the conversation:

> You're very restricted in what you can do, when you're pregnant. I sit down a lot now and watch TV or read books. Paul will often come home to discover I've fallen asleep reading a book. I've tried the pregnancy classes for women 'thing', but it just wasn't for me.

A similar change in lifestyle was noted by, Dave:

> When she comes home, Ruby just 'flakes' out on the settee, and then watches TV. Quite often she'll fall asleep and then go straight to bed. Most of our spare time is taken up with looking for houses and the money goes towards buying things for the house and for the baby.

Before pregnancy, Vera had a busy social life, but since pregnancy life had changed:

> I'm not the social animal, I used to be. I used to do half marathons, but don't even run anymore. I miss my nights out and the fact that I'm not drinking wine at the moment. It's just one of the many sacrifices you make as a parent. (Vera)

Prior to pregnancy, Cody and Brenda had led an active social life and had a wide circle of friends. "We used to be 'party animals'. If there was a party we'd always be there" (Cody). Brenda added her own perspective on what Cody had said:

> Getting 'dolled up' to go out, just doesn't have the same appeal anymore. I am enjoying being sober (laughs) and the fact that I don't wake up with a thick head in the mornings. We were party animals and enjoyed this lifestyle, but this can't be sustained now.

Feeling tired and worn out was a symptom of pregnancy that many pre-birth women in this study had to endure. Much of the literature on family leisure has reported similar findings, when discussing the realities of pregnancy for women (Freysinger, 1994; Shaw, 1997; Kay 2009).

Rhian and Alan described themselves as seasoned travellers, but since pregnancy their trips abroad had become extremely limited:

> We'd fly overseas to attend music and film festivals. There's less urgency in our life now and we've learnt to settle down and take it easy. Most of our free time now, we just spend around home. (Alan)

Rhian agreed with her partner, Alan:

> Yes, we just chill out more now, but still make an effort to keep in contact with friends. We're keen 'church-goers' and friends there are very supportive of us and we appreciate that.

Nina and Stu were also keen travelers and had backpacked all over the world:

> We really miss the independence to travel, and backpacking and pregnancy just don't mix. I miss not being able to go out with mates and I miss my running. Stu's lucky, he's been able to carry on with sport and he's keen to involve our child, once they're old enough. (Nina)

A number of couples at the pre-birth stage had already made plans for time together as a family focussed around a leisure activity, which is evident in what Yaz had to say:

> We both want to take time off work and travel with the baby. I'm already making arrangements for us to travel overseas and go camping. I've been busy, and collected lots of information and planned travel routes for all the family to enjoy.

This view is supported in the literature in Larson *et al's*. (1997) study where family leisure was a key site for familial affiliation and attachment. Sadie and Ned were also keen campers and had recently travelled extensively in Europe.

However, the thought of sleeping on hard grounds when pregnant was not an attractive option for Sadie. "We've bought a campervan now, but as I get bigger, getting in and out of the van is proving difficult". Ned responded, to what Sadie had said:

> Yes, we don't go away very much now and Sadie's involvement in other activities is now very restricted. She no longer takes part in any 'kind' of physical activity. To counteract this, I try to be around a lot more, but I still get some time to go canoeing and running. Most of our spare cash goes towards costs associated with becoming a family.

Sadie then acknowledged some of the benefits of being pregnant:

> People take an interest in you when you're pregnant, especially other women. They ask you, how's it all going? This has given me renewed confidence and I can't wait to become a mum.

A number of females in the pre-birth interview group talked about frustrations and lack of more active forms of leisure. Many pre-birth women remarked that their changing body shape during pregnancy had put limitations on their involvement in leisure activities that were deemed as physically demanding. Brenda illustrated this when referring to her participation in rugby. "Rugby has been put on hold for now. I do miss the camaraderie and the 'banter'. I miss the exercise and my body is just not capable of dealing with the rough and tumble of the game". Karen expressed similar feelings:

> I'm just too fat now and playing sport is uncomfortable in my condition. Also, it's not safe and I'd be a fool to carry on. So my leisure has been sacrificed to deal with the demands of having a baby. I used to love exercise and going to the gym on a regular basis, but I don't really enjoy it anymore, as my body restricts my movement.

Both Yaz and Sadie were also frequent visitors to their local health and fitness centre, prior to pregnancy. Before she was pregnant Yaz described herself as 'very active' and visited her local gym four times a week. Rhona used to be a keen swimmer and swam competitively for a local swimming club, but was no longer able to sustain her commitment and time to all the training that was involved. "Carrying on with my swimming was just not feasible anymore. There's no way, I would be able to make the early morning swims or find time to go away to compete". As a result many pre-birth females had to scale down their own leisure activities and most now pursued more passive and less demanding forms of leisure.

This observation appears to support Fullagar's (2009) research of family leisure practices in Australia were women were constrained because of negative discourses of risk and responsibility that women were subject to.

Going for a walk or a coffee with friends was a leisure activity frequently reported by many women at the pre-birth stage, as this was a relatively simple activity to arrange. More physical activities were now deemed as 'unsafe' and too demanding for pre-birth women, in their present condition. Vera expressed her serious concerns on this issue. "Some activities are just too risky when you're pregnant" (Vera).

Ruth noted that the intensity of her leisure had changed. "I'm no longer involved in physical activities because I want to make sure, I don't harm or injure the baby". This was further substantiated by Ruby:

> I've became less mobile and felt sluggish during games, I'm sure the coach, knew I was pregnant. During the early stages of pregnancy I continued to play, but I lost confidence in my ability and was always conscious of the fact that I could harm the baby. I felt quite fragile at times and this affected my game and I had to stop playing.

Karen had been very active pre-pregnancy and had participated in a range of activities that included surfing, horse riding and going to the gym. Due to complications in the early part of her pregnancy engagement in these activities, had virtually ceased. This led to frustration and affected her well-being:

> I just want to get through it (the pregnancy and birth) and hope the baby arrives safely. I'm not really thinking about my leisure at the moment, it's not really at the forefront of my thinking. My main concern is to get well, as my health is important for the baby's health.

Before she was pregnant, Rose competed in road biking and triathlon events with her partner Sam. Since the pregnancy her involvement had stopped, but Sam her partner had continued to compete and Rose supported his continued involvement. This meant they saw less of each other and now Rose was engaged in more 'toned down' activities on her own, such as walking coffee with other female friends. This involved shorter walks and time spent at the local gym, doing 'light' exercises. "I'm not involved in active leisure anymore. I'm carrying precious cargo that, I do not want to damage. I'm keeping safe" (Rose).

Angus was still involved in active sports when he had 'time on his hands'. Most of his spare time was now taken up with renovating the property they'd recently bought, Dan's leisure had been relatively unaffected by his partner's pregnancy as his time available for leisure, had not changed, but he now worked longer hours.

Marty described his job as "very demanding" and he was often called into work unexpectedly and most days arrived home from work "feeling knackered". Mick identified similar demands on his time:

> Work involves being away from home and this has put a lot of strain on our relationship. We don't see each other as much and don't have as much time together. When I get home, I'm always tired.

Rose expressed similar concerns that her husband was often worn out, through over-work, and this was having a negative impact on their relationship:

> I appreciate his job is demanding, but he needs to realise that dealing with the pregnancy is extremely tiring and I get frustrated that we don't get out that much these days or spend enough time together out of the house. I'm now stuck at home most days and look forward to him coming home, but he's often home late and that means I don't get much adult conversation or company.

In summary, a gendered perspective is evident within this study, when pre-birth men's and pre-birth women's access, opportunity and time for leisure is compared. Financial restrictions during pregnancy, was a concern for a number of pre-birth couples. This meant couples had less disposable income to spend on leisure and what money was available was spent on cheaper forms of leisure or on preparing for the birth of their child. To supplement the household income, males often worked longer hours and were bound by the 'ethic of work'. This restricted their access to a narrower range of leisure activities that were less costly. Leisure activities tended to be those that were easy to plan and organise within a short time-frame. Such (2009, p.81) reported similar findings in that the, "freedom associated with leisure in the pre-children stage phase of the life-course was largely reported to have declined".

Even so, pre-birth men still had more time and energy to pursue their own leisure pursuits, whereas many women were less active and engaged in safer forms of leisure. For pre-birth men tiredness was connected with the demands of their present employment, as many men had taken on extra work commitments to earn more money. The experience of pregnancy in many ways prepared pre-birth women for the challenge that lay ahead for them.

Their solo leisure was curtailed in readiness to deal with the demands of motherhood, where their priorities would shift to the needs of their child at the expense of their own. This was a compromise that many pre-birth women were willing to endure for the sake of the family (see Shaw & Henderson, 2005). Women's concerns over engagement in 'risky' activities highlighted above, supports Fullager's (2009) research of family leisure practices in Australia were women were constrained because of commonplace assumptions, concerning 'safe' forms of leisure activity.

5.3.10 Planning for family leisure

During both the solo and joint interviews, pre-birth couples were asked if they'd had any thoughts concerning leisure as a family in the future. From the responses given, it is evident that a significant number of couples had already made tentative arrangements and plans to engage in leisure collectively as a family unit together. Involvement in this form of leisure was highly valued by respondents. This was given further credence by mention of the many positive benefits associated with family leisure which, were outlined in more detail in the literature review of this study. This was confirmed by Alan:

> Leisure will be about all of us, the baby won't be left out. Our spare time will be for all of us, to do things together. We plan to go for walks as a family. I'm quite excited and have already checked out which walks we'll be able to do with the buggy.

Rita had similar plans. "We'll go out for walks together as it's something we can do as a family. The focus in our leisure will need to shift to the needs of our child. I imagine our own leisure and family leisure will be quite different". Here, Rita makes an important distinction between two distinct forms of leisure. A number of others agreed with Rita and confirmed that leisure would serve as a useful vehicle for family bonding and identity. Furthermore, they recognised that their own personal leisure would become less of a priority as family leisure took precedence. Therefore, their own leisure would need to be sacrificed to make time for family leisure, which increases the likelihood of tension between personal leisure and family leisure.

This was more evident amongst pre-birth women as many pre-birth men hoped to maintain their own time for leisure throughout the pregnancy stage and beyond into fatherhood. Through leisure, family relationships could be built and sustained. This is recognition of the fact that family leisure is often undertaken for a number of other reasons, unconnected with the benefits normally associated with leisure.

In the family based literature, this is often referred to as 'purposive leisure' where leisure is objective driven and planned, so that time together can be used to develop a sense of family to teach children about important values (Shaw & Dawson, 2003/2004).

According to Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) the purpose of family leisure is connected to parental satisfaction and as children move through the lifecycle they spend less time with their parents and are less influenced by their parents, instead experiencing more satisfaction in their leisure with friends (Larsen *et al*. 1997). So, the critical time to have an impact on their child through leisure was in the early stages of parenthood. Nina mentioned a number of leisure activities, which might help achieve this objective. "Spending time together, such as going for walks on the beach, going away together for holidays and going to family based events will really be good for our family and will help us become a recognised and functioning family.

These words support Wearing's (1993) remarks that the family plays together is more likely to stay together. So, family leisure can be a vehicle to encourage family togetherness through a range of activities engaged in collectively. Walking was the most frequently mentioned activity that families planned to engage in post pregnancy. Both Alan and Rhian clarified its purpose. "Walking will be good for us all, it will get us out of the house doing something active in the outdoors". Rita supported this view and had already collected information on many local walks in the area. "Being together in the outdoors will be important for us as a family. It's so easy to organise and it won't require much pre-planning. Its low costs and won't require much effort and has lots of potential benefits" (Rita). Angus added further to the debate on the benefits of walking for families:

> I'm a keen walker so it's great that she's taking such an interest in something I really enjoy. We won't go on really long walks and will have more rest stops, otherwise Rita will hate it. I'll try and make it more fun and educational. I know Rita's keen to visit cafes along our intended routes, but that's fine with me as we'll need more rest stops.

Rory and Ria had similar plans:

> Once the baby is born, we'll have to do more low level walks. It will be important for us to be flexible in what we do, but I suppose it will depend very much on the needs of our baby. Our priorities will change from the two of us, to the three of us.

Stu and Nina were more ambitious in terms of their plans for walking. "We're keen to do some of the big walks in New Zealand and be more adventurous than most. We're both looking forward to showing our child the wonders of the New Zealand landscape". Other family based leisure activities mentioned by couples in order of priority included visits to local parks, community libraries, local beaches, swimming pools and visits to 'family' type attractions in Christchurch such as, Orana Wildlife Park and Willowbank Nature Reserve. Three common themes emerged in couples descriptions of family leisure, in that it had to be purposeful, child friendly and meaningful. This was evident in what Ria said:

> Our leisure will be based on the needs of our baby and the extent to which the whole family can benefit. To help achieve this, I plan to do some parenting courses through the South Christchurch Parenting Centre. Planning for family leisure will help with social interaction with our child and help us become better parents.

Dave and Ruby planned simple activities such as going to the park and feeding the ducks. Ruby commented that their focus would be on cheaper forms of leisure post-birth as she planned to take 12 months out of work and as a result, they would be reliant on only one income:

> We'll go and do activities that don't cost that much, like visiting friends or going out for walks and to local playgrounds. We want to be active, but we appreciate we might be restricted when the baby is very young. I want our child to learn about my Maori heritage.

During the interviews with pre-birth couples, it became apparent that many would value time spent together as a family group, after the pregnancy. This time was classified by most as 'family time' and quite different from 'leisure time'. For Rose, family leisure had a specific purpose:

> It's about being together in each other's company as a family, which matters most. So taking the time to be with the family is the key to success in being a family. Not only does this time help the family, it also helps your relationship with your partner.

When I questioned Rose further on what she had said, she added that the most important challenge for herself and her partner was that their time together was unpredictable:

> I suppose before we even think about making good use of time, we firstly need to know how much time we have and what commitments we will have once the baby arrives. Then we'll have some notion of what time we'll have left over to be at leisure or to spend time as a family together.

Her partner Sam often worked shifts and sometime had to be on duty at the weekends and in the evenings. It was difficult for Sam to plan ahead as he had no direct control on when he needed to be at work. Karen and Dan envisaged similar difficulties to Rose and Sam. Dan often had to work late into the evening as his job involved extensive travel to different parts of New Zealand. In reality, he often had no idea what time he would finish work and his work hours were often unpredictable. When discussing family leisure many pre-birth couples talked about their own family times as a child, Sadie remembered time with her mum and dad playing games:

> I used to play shaking a carton full of rice. I can still remember the sound of the rice rolling around the edges of the carton. It certainly focused my hearing and made me realise the many different sounds around me as a child.

This prompted Ned to recall his own childhood memories in Australia:

> I used to love just having 'simple' fun, nowadays kids don't play that much, as the emphasis is more on competitive sport or playing on the computer. Play for me was so much fun, there were few boundaries. Kids need more opportunities to play with other children to socialise. It's so important for their development, to be able to have fun.

This view is supported by Crain (2003), and Guldberg (2009) cited in Shaw (2010) who advocate the developmental benefits of free-play, especially without adult supervision or interaction. Also, Louv (2005, p.3) recognises that free-play helps children re-connect with nature to avoid what he terms, 'nature deficit disorder' and supports more opportunities for play in natural surroundings:

> The young spend less and less of their lives in natural surroundings, their senses narrow, physiologically and psychologically, and this reduces the richness of human experience and a growing body of research links our mental, physical, and spiritual health directly to our association with nature in positive ways….Children need contact with nature. Reducing the broken bond between our young and nature, is in our self interest…because our mental, physical and spiritual health depends on it.

The importance of play cannot be underestimated and the benefits associated with free-play are further outlined in some detail by Sutton-Smith (2010) in his seminal work on play, 'The Ambiguity of Play'. Ned continued to qualify his perspective on the issue of play:

> Kids learn so much when they play, yet we don't realise until we're adults. We tend to get more serious as we age, so my prerogative would be to hold onto your childhood and enjoy play for the fun of it.

Rory expressed similar thoughts.

> There's plenty of time to be serious in life as an adult. What's important is that kids have fun in their leisure time with the family. Through play they can gain confidence in a safe environment and then transfer this positive attitude and outlook into their own adult leisure.

In summary, it is evident that pre-birth couples had a number of concerns regarding their future plans for family leisure. They recognised that their own leisure time would need to be compromised for the sake of family leisure. A number of pre-birth couples realised that prioritising family leisure could potentially impact negatively on their own solo leisure and the type of leisure activities they might be able to take part in. Making time to be together as a family was described by many as important for purposes of family bonding and functioning (see Poff *et al.* 2010a). Some couples had made tentative plans for this to materialise, but others envisaged major problems in achieving this objective. Activities planned included walking, visiting parks and inexpensive family attractions. For many, simply spending time together would be important and giving their child the opportunity to play in a safe and conducive environment was mentioned by a number of couples as critical for their child's future development and the ability to mix and socialise with other children.

5.3.12 Family leisure

In discussion with pre-birth couples a number of benefits were highlighted concerning proposed plans for family leisure. This collective form of leisure would they suggested be important for family bonding, especially between partners and between parents and their child. For Karen, the objective of family time at leisure would be crucial in building family relationships. "It's going to be important that we make time to be together as a family. That means activities that we can all enjoy. Something, that will help us bond as a family". Nina was keen to involve 'extended' family members in family based leisure activities:

> We plan to go out for meals, go for picnics and go walking and even going on holiday together. My mum and grandparents are looking forward to being involved. Their involvement will give our family stability and give our child a more rounded development". (Nina)

This comment was supported by her partner Stu. "They'll be able to pass on their knowledge and experience and help our child learn". Angus noted similar benefits.

"Involvement of our parents will help mould our child and family leisure will be an excellent vehicle for this". The involvement of extended family members in leisure was a strategy that a number of couples expected to pursue:

> Once we're back to the UK, life will be more structured, so we'll make better use of our time. Our parents are both very active, so they're keen to come walking and go camping with us. This wouldn't be possible if we'd stayed in New Zealand. So, going back to the UK will give us more options in terms of family leisure. (Rory)

Ria, his partner reflected on what Rory had said. "Yes, families are important to us and it is the main reason we're moving back to the UK". Also, a number of other pre-birth interviewees talked about their own experiences in family leisure, as a child. Recollections from this perspective helped frame their own ideas and plans for family leisure as parents:

> As kids we went everywhere with mum and dad. We had lots of fun and I learnt so much from my parents. For me, family leisure is really about getting to know my family better, when we spend quality time together. We got into a sort of sporting lifestyle. So, I'd like to give our child similar opportunities to what I had. (Marty)

His partner Vera supported most of what Marty had said. However, Vera argued that caution was required in striking a balance between what was in the best interests of parents and the child:

> In my professional capacity, I see to many parents trying to do too much with their children. Having fun and spending time with them doesn't have too 'cost the earth' and relatively simple activities can positively impact on family life. There's a difference between encouraging children and pushing them too far, which can damage their future development as a well rounded human being. (Vera)

A number of pre-birth couples anticipated that the arrival of their child would help them spend more time together in collective activities in what they termed as a 'real-family'. This is supported by research undertaken by Zabriskie and McCormick (2003) and Poff *et al*. (2010b) who argue that collective activities as a family often results in satisfaction with family life. In examining the data that resulted from the interviews conducted with pre-birth couples, it appears that for many plans for family leisure were well advanced and were justified by the collective benefits that many of them mentioned. This included important shared time together as a family and the opportunity to better communicate with each other.

A number of pre-birth interviewees recognised that family based forms of leisure in the first year of their child's birth, would be restricted due largely to the age of their child and the fact that much of their time as a family might be spent around the home. In reality, this might result in more time at home together as a family unit, in more restrictive home based leisure activities. Nevertheless, a number of pre-birth couples had more ambitious plans for family leisure and had plans to be active in the outdoors.

Most pre-birth couples appreciated that family leisure could be beneficial and had purpose. Nonetheless, a significant number of them expressed concerns about the influence of more commercialised forms of family leisure. This is an issue alluded to by Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004) and confirmed in later work by Shaw (2010) when they discuss the expensive nature of commercialised forms of family leisure. Shaw (2010) recognised a gap between parental ideals and the reality of costs involved in some forms of family leisure. Making time for family leisure was considered one of the biggest challenges they faced and many highlighted their intention to involve extended family members in family leisure, in most cases their own parents.

5.3.13 Leisure facilities in Christchurch

During the interviews, pre-birth couples were asked to discuss their use of leisure facilities in Christchurch. In responding to this line of enquiry, they were encouraged to relate to their use of facilities before and during pregnancy. This led to discussions concerning both their plans to utilise local leisure facilities, pre-birth and post-birth. In general most expressed their opinion that the choice and range of facilities for family leisure in Christchurch was adequate and good value for money. A number of pre-birth couples argued that more commercially oriented facilities for family leisure were expensive and often overcrowded, when compared to public leisure facilities. On a more positive note, many reported that a range of possibilities to engage in family leisure were evident, within the boundaries of the study area.

Leisure facilities such as public parks and walking tracks were well utilised during pregnancy, as they were easy to access and involved little or no costs. In order to give their opinion on facilities for leisure in Christchurch, they often referred to other facilities outside of the study area for a point of reference. According to Ned, facilities for leisure in New Zealand were cheaper, than those in Australia.

Brenda and Cody had spent time living abroad and were able to compare leisure facilities in Christchurch with facilities for leisure in Australia and the UK:

> In terms of the different places we've lived, Christchurch's sporting and recreational facilities are probably the best. You don't have to get into your car to drive everywhere and public transport is readily available. Also, there are lots of free facilities and the Christchurch City Council offers lots of events to its rate-payers. (Brenda)

This view was supported by her partner Cody and a number of others:

> Christchurch City Council does a good job in terms of leisure facilities compared to many other places in New Zealand. Their approach is proactive and they try to engage all members of the community in some form of activity. There is some focus on families, but not exclusively families with young children" (Rhona).

Stu then gave his opinion. "In Christchurch, we're really lucky as we live in a place where there's lots to do, that is free or with minimal costs". Mick held a similar opinion when he compared facilities for leisure in New Zealand with those in the UK:

> Accessible information on leisure facilities could be improved and I think the council need to set up a dedicated website for sport and recreation and provide more specific information for families.

Lack of information on leisure facilities for specific groups was a concern that Yaz also raised:

> I would want to know if facilities were easily accessible for buggies and if there was specialist parking provision and what activities were available for families with very young children and pregnant women.

Karen was aware that a range of facilities existed for leisure in Christchurch and suggested that parenting groups such as the Parents Centre and Plunket had a role to play in making the transition in leisure between pregnancy and parenthood more seamless:

> We really needed some help in areas like, coping with the 'highs' and 'lows' of pregnancy and what activities are safe to take part in, during pregnancy and I suppose advice about leisure facilities that are pregnancy and family friendly. (Karen)

A number of pre-birth couples recalled their involvement in leisure pre-pregnancy and some described how pregnancy had affected their life now, which included their involvement in leisure. Mick was a very keen golfer, and before his wife was pregnant played golf at least three times a week:

> I play once a month now, and can't imagine how, I'll be able to find the time to have four hours on a golf course after the pregnancy. Golf has had to take a back seat in preparation for the birth. I really miss playing golf with my mates and the courses are never that busy.

Ruby expressed similar frustrations to Mick, with regards to her engagement in leisure before pregnancy:

> I used to go to the gym several times, it was my social life. I got quite depressed, when I couldn't exercise. At the moment my condition is not conducive to exercise. I'm too big and when I exercise now, it feels too uncomfortable and I don't enjoy it as much. Now, I just go for walks or for a coffee with other pregnant women.

When I asked Ruby if she had plans for leisure post-pregnancy, her main concern was to use her visits to the gym "to get her body back into shape, by exercising". Since the pregnancy she had developed an interest in local walks and was keen to join a local walking club and intended to make better use of local parks, around her suburb:

> Nearly every suburb in Christchurch seems to have its own bit of green space. A friend of mine, who works for the council, told me that there are over 300 green spaces in Christchurch. It seems that most parks in Christchurch are frequented by families, so it makes me think they are safe and family friendly. (Ruby)

A number of expectant mums had plans to attend 'Mums and Bubs' movie sessions, offered at a number of local cinemas in Christchurch. This was cited as an example of good practice, and an opportunity that a number of expectant mums would pursue. Sue and Paul frequently attended movies and were members of a local film club:

> I've been along to some of the mums and bubs sessions with my friend, but the cinema can be quite noisy and you don't really get the chance to watch the film, but if it enables mums to get out of the house, that's a good thing. (Sue)

Nina had plans to attend, but was concerned that dads were not encouraged:

> It should not be assumed that it's mum, who always stays at home and dad that goes out to work. In reality, its women who hold the principal child care role, but for those men that do it, they have my admiration and need recognition.

Angus and his partner Rita used to be keen walkers before pregnancy and had completed many of the 'Great Walks' of New Zealand. Also, they were aware of many walks around Christchurch, but had not used them, since the pregnancy:

> Information on specific activities for pregnant women would encourage us to do more. I'm so unfit at the moment and most of the time, the gym is full of 'perfect bodies (men and women who look well toned and the epitome of fitness). This really puts me off going as you've got to look the part to be there, I don't look the part, and we can't afford it, anyway. (Rita)

Angus in hindsight had been checking out local parks to take his young child:

> There are lots of small parks in Christchurch, but some of them could be better maintained and the equipment in some of them is not very imaginative. Most of them are built to a 'standard design' that seem 'Americanised'. So the types of leisure facilities that we'll use with the baby will be very different to the types of facilities we now use.

Nina and Stu, unlike Ruby, had a number of concerns using public parks in certain parts of Christchurch. "Some parks are not safe and often young people use them to congregate, so we won't be taking our child to these parks" (Stu).

Ria and Rory described themselves as keen walkers and at the time of interview had used many of the local tracks on the Port Hills:

> There are lots of walks we've accessed which are well maintained. However, signposting is an issue and it's easy to get lost on some of the tracks. There is a shortage of good quality maps of the area and I don't think the walks around Christchurch are very well publicised to the general public" (Rory).

Ria added to what Rory had already said. "We used to go to Pioneer Recreation Centre in the evening which was enjoyable because it was quiet, but now we have trouble getting out of the house". Alan described himself as an 'atypical user' of public facilities for leisure:

> We prefer nature and don't really use built facilities for our leisure entertainment. We do have plans to visit the museum and the new art gallery with the baby. My idea is that leisure should be purposeful and educational for our child. I'm not into 'fake' or commercialised types of leisure that many families seem to be attracted to.

In terms of planning for leisure post-pregnancy, a significant number of couples had spent time researching suitable venues for family leisure. However Dan and Karen had neither the time nor inclination to undertake this task:

> We've no idea what's available for families or the facilities we would visit as a family. People tell me there are lots of family friendly facilities in Christchurch, but I'd just prefer to go to my friend's house, so my child could play with her kids. (Karen)

Sue had intentions to use local leisure facilities, post pregnancy, but needed to do more research on what was available:

> We've not really had time to plan ahead for leisure, but we've thought about doing Gymbaroo to improve and develop the baby's awareness of space. Also, we've made enquiries about the gymnastics programmes for children at QE2, which seems a family friendly facility.

Karen commented on the same topic. "Gymbaroo is very expensive and anyway you can achieve what they do in class by yourself. It's a 'bit' of a gimmick, so I don't think we'll bother with it". The availability of a crèche at local leisure facilities was mentioned by a number of pre-birth couples as important in them making decisions about their leisure post-birth.

However, Vera argued that this could have the opposite effect of discouraging family leisure, in that parents would not make use of this time to bond with their child, spending their leisure time together. Vera and Marty had spent some time overseas and expressed the view that facilities overseas for young children were much better than in New Zealand. In this regard, it should be noted that Vera and Marty were referring to their experiences of living in the UK without children. This finding was tentatively supported by a number of other pre-birth couples, but most qualified their statements by anticipating that their opinion might change once they became parents.

Pre-birth couples were aware of a number of local libraries which they described as 'child-friendly'. Library South in Beckenham and New Brighton library were mentioned as examples of good practice in providing facilities for families with young children. In contrast, some couples described a number of restaurants and cafes they visited as unwelcoming to families. Cody and Brenda were frequent visitors to local restaurants before and during the early stages of pregnancy:

> We love to get out and eat, but I'm not sure if some of the restaurants we've visited are 'geared up' for accommodating families with young kids. Cobb and Co. is supposedly, but to be honest it wouldn't be my first choice of restaurant. I suppose we need to prioritise the needs of our child, when selecting where we eat. (Cody)

Rose had similar observations to make:

> Restaurants in Christchurch could do a lot more for families, especially couples with young children and babies. When I've visited local restaurants, I've noticed that high chairs, if provided, are often in a bad state of repair or dirty. Even in so called 'posh' restaurants they seem to actively discourage families. They're probably too concerned with the needs of their other guests at the expense of families. So, we'll probably rely on personal recommendations.

It was apparent, that pre-birth couples support the view that public facilities for leisure are adequate in Christchurch and that Christchurch City Council is proactive in its approach in providing opportunities for family leisure, but could do more. Commercial provision for leisure in Christchurch tended to be viewed as more expensive and hence more restrictive for families, although the Raspberry café in Tai Tapu, was described as a fun and family friendly environment and an example of good practice in regards to family leisure. "It's great for both kids and parents so it meets both their needs" (Paul). Nonetheless, Cody had reservations about the venue. "It's secluded and child friendly: but the car park needs securing properly".

Brenda, Sue and Rhona spoke positively about Library South in Beckenham. "It seems like they thought of virtually everything for kids" (Brenda). Sue was in agreement with Brenda. "They have a really good stock of children's books and there are computers for children that are child friendly. The Botanic gardens in Christchurch were mentioned as a venue many planned to visit and utilise post-pregnancy. Alan provided specific justification to these generic comments:

> It costs nothing and there's a café to 'chill out' in and decent changing facilities, which I think is important when you have young children. It's a facility that I would consider child friendly and one that demonstrates good practice in proving the basics for families. The kid's treasure hunts they plan are very popular with young children and they try to mix fun with learning.

A number of pre-birth couples made specific reference to a number of church groups that offered leisure activities for families with very young children. At these venues there was often lots of space for children to run around and often a café attached to the venue for parents to escape to, whist their children were being entertained by activity leaders. Rhona justified what some of the others had said:

> Some church groups offer a range of child friendly activities and these facilities are often central, have good car parks, changing facilities and toilets, which are all important considerations for first time parents.

Likewise a number of malls in Christchurch such as Northlands, Riccarton and Eastland malls were all noted as having good changing facilities for children that were clean and safe:

> Most of the better malls have good access for families. Many have specific parking slots for parents and wide corridors for easy access and some even have children's areas, with seating provided for parents. However, South City Mall is a bit of a 'dump' with toilets that are never cleaned and a lack of parking provision for parents. (Nina)

Willowbank Nature Reserve was identified by a number of pre-birth couples as family friendly and a number had plans to visit:

> I went there as a kid and found it to be a fascinating place. I haven't been since my parents took me, but have fond memories of our family visits there. I'd like my own child to experience what I did. It's very popular with families, so they must be doing something right. (Angus)

Ria had recently visited Willowbank Nature Reserve with some friends and had enjoyed her visit. However, she argued that the Maori show was "expensive and not very authentic", because the focus of the show was on entertainment and not Maori culture which weakened the authenticity of the performance.

5.3.14 Improving leisure provision for families

A number of pre-birth couples were already aware of what many of them termed 'child-friendly leisure facilities'. Many now viewed facilities for leisure in Christchurch with a critical 'eye' in terms of whether they were suitable for families. These purposive observations provided expectant parents with some notion of the suitability of existing facilities for family leisure. Some suggested that parenting interests groups could possibly help facilitate leisure provision. The most commonly mentioned organisations were the Parents Centre and Plunket. A number commented that these and other similar organisations could do more, to engage families in leisure by working in partnership with leisure providers. The first major task required leisure providers and parenting organisations to work together in what Marty identified as "joined up thinking". He suggested that leisure providers in Christchurch needed to engage with parenting organisations proactively and find ways in which they could better promote and provide information on family leisure facilities in Christchurch. Rose shared Marty's concerns:

> There needs to be some kind of booklet or web based resource where parents can access information easily concerning family friendly facilities and events that are suitable for parents with young children. There seems to be lots going on around Christchurch, but it's often difficult to find information, unless you know where to look for it.

When Rose was asked if she had any practical suggestions to improve the dissemination of information, she responded with a number of ideas:

> An annual publication that listed all the events and activities in and around Christchurch would greatly help families to find the information in the form of a booklet. Somebody needs to take responsibility for this task, to bring together all the different interests groups and provide information in a more usable format for families.

Rose suggested a more strategic approach was required:

> I would advise Christchurch City Council to work in conjunction with health and parenting organizations in order to provide a range of options for young families. I think family leisure is really important in developing the child and in promoting healthy relationships in families.

Sam was rather quiet during the joint interview with his partner Rose, so I engaged him by direct supplementary questions on this topic and he responded. "Those responsible for leisure provision in Christchurch need to offer more activities where all family members can take part together or independently in the same facility". Brenda suggested that Christchurch City Council could compile a range of booklets designed to provide information on leisure activities and facilities to families:

> These publications could be put on the council webpage, in a similar way to the council's existing events website. Family guides on leisure would be a good idea, but how would families access and contribute to this process? There's lots of green space in and around Christchurch that seems under used, so why not let residents plan and manage these types of spaces.

Many other pre-birth couples raised the issue of access to information for family groups. "Besides the Mizone booklet the council produce, which details the various sports clubs and teams available in Christchurch, there's not that much information, specifically provided for families" (Rory). This issue also concerned Rita:

> We've recently set up an antenatal walking group and have been trying to secure funding to promote our group, as lots of pregnant couples walk and we always see mums and dads walking with buggies.

Angus followed Rita's comments with a description of walks he believed to be family friendly and accessible, and supported the idea of walking booklets for families:

> I would encourage the council to adopt a more 'community led approach', to involve people in making decisions about what's provided for specific groups. In terms of family leisure, it would be useful if funding was made available to produce a book of walks around Christchurch" (Angus).

Ned added his own view: "A set of criteria upon which leisure facilities might assess themselves would be a useful starting point". Sadie had similar concerns:

> As future parents, we need to know what facilities are available to families. I think the idea of outreach programmes to get families involved would work. The key is to get families active and doing something together, but I'm not sure what the best way would be.

Although Christchurch has a number of leisure attractions operated by commercial providers, not many pre-couples used them as they were too expensive. Alan, Ned and Dave remarked that most commercial attractions were too 'Americanised'. Alan went further and referred to them as 'fake or false leisure' that lacked authenticity:

> In New Zealand, we need places where kids can explore their natural environment and their heritage. I left the States to avoid the influence of 'Americanisation'. Why not have 'kiwi' themed playgrounds that inspire young children instead of the drab, functional playground facilities that are mostly, made out of cheap, 'crappy' plastic.

This comment is consistent with what Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004) uncovered, in that the gap between parental ideals and the reality of family leisure are quite different, primarily related to the costs of commercial forms of family leisure. In terms of costs, many pre-birth couples intimated that commercial leisure facilities in Christchurch were simply beyond their financial means. "Private facilities are just too expensive for us and public leisure facilities are a much cheaper option and just as good" (Marty). His partner Vera joined the conversation:

> Next year my gym membership will be $1,000; there's no way I can justify paying that. We'll need to find money for childcare and for buying all the things that go with being a 'new' parent. The crèche at the gym is always booked and there's now an extra charge just for using the crèche.

Many expectant parents assumed car parking would be problematic when visiting leisure facilities with babies and this was made clear by comments made from Angus:

> Car parking facilities for families in Christchurch are hopeless. Everybody seems to park in designated family spaces, because their more convenient. So spaces reserved for parents and their children are always full. Something really needs to be done about this.

Yaz had similar concerns and suggested monitoring of car parks and prosecution of guilty offenders. A number of specific suggestions were put forward by pre-birth couples and included the development of waterfront facilities for family leisure. Sumner and New Brighton waterfronts were mentioned as possible areas which could be developed. In debating this issue pre-birth couples often referred to examples of good practice in Australia, in parts of Sydney, Perth and the Gold Coast. A number suggested that waterfront facilities for leisure in and around Christchurch were outdated and need significant injections of cash. When compared to most Australian cities, existing facilities in Christchurch seemed old fashioned and in a bad state of repair. Talking on the same issue Cody suggested that there was an urgent need to modernise waterfront facilities for leisure. In the next section of the thesis the post-birth interviewee findings are presented and interpreted.

5.4 Post-Birth Interview Study

The interviews for post-birth couples were designed to uncover key information related to the research questions by asking interviewees about their experience during pregnancy and early parenthood in terms of their expectations, preparation and challenges they faced and how pregnancy and parenthood impacted upon their leisure. In the next section, the post-birth interviewees are introduced and the key themes from the interviews are identified, discussed and then evaluated.

5.4.1 Post-birth interviewees

The oldest participant in this group was Alvin (46), compared to the youngest, Olga (26). Meg/Colin and Dean/Clara were the same age, whereas the male participant in all other couples was older than the female participant, with the exception of Dawn, who was three years older than her partner Greg. The primary role of caregiver was undertaken by the female member of the family in all couples in this group, with the exception of Greg, who had given up his job to be a full-time, stay at home dad. Marie, Clara and Kate did not work on either a part time or full time basis and in a similar way to Greg, described themselves as full-time, stay at home mums.

In most cases, post-birth interviewees worked in professional type occupations that required specific skills and qualifications. A number worked in skill based occupations (Sharon, Jan and Sam) and Stef was a part-time student. All the couples lived within the boundaries of the study area, described earlier. A number of couples (Ben/Marie, Stef/Dean and Clara/Steve) had within the last year returned from living in Europe to start a family.

Two other couples (Meg/Colin and Cora/Denny) had moved from the North Island for a better quality of life and cheaper housing in Christchurch. All couples, within this group had one child, with a range in age from as young as 3 months (Sandy/Alvin) to 19 months (Clara/Steve). In terms of their ethnicity and cultural identity, most participants described themselves as New Zealand Europeans, with Dawn and Sharon identifying their Maori heritage. Fay, Paul and Teus identified themselves as UK European and Olga and Jan as Russian. More specific details of the interviewees presented here are given in Appendix 7.

5.5 Key Findings of Interviews (post-birth)

The themes that emerged in the post birth interviews included: familial roles; ideologies of parenting; preparation and planning for parenthood; preparation for the birth; realities of parenting; meaning and context in leisure; scarcity of time; provision for childcare; constraints and change in parenthood; leisure as a family; leisure facilities in Christchurch and improving leisure provision for families.

5.5.1 Familial roles

Couples talked about their ideas concerning their roles as mother or father, but only pre-birth and post-birth males talked about the qualities of a good father, whereas females only mentioned the qualities of a good mother. Within this study, the opinions of males on aspects of mothering were not sought, neither were the opinions of females on fathering. Nevertheless, this area of questioning proved a useful strategy to compare ideas about assumed parenting roles according to gender within the family, and would serve as a useful line of enquiry to compare pre-birth expectations and post-birth realities on the same issues. The key words used to describe a good mother that were common to most post-birth females were concerned with nurturing and caring for their child (see Urwin, 2007).

In essence, meeting the needs of their child came first. This is consistent with Bromley's (2012) research who described mothering as both emotionally and physically demanding that constrains leisure access and opportunities for mothers. It comes as no surprise that mothers described their role as serious and emphasised the caring and nurturing roles of motherhood, which required patience and the ability to listen and talk to their child, which reflects the dominant discourse of motherhood recognised by Wearing (1984).

Communication was considered an important skill by all mothers which they believed would improve with practice and experience, but was only mentioned by a couple of fathers (Colin and Greg). Tina referred to a good mother as "somebody who demonstrates that they care and meet and respond to their child's needs". Sharon provided a similar view. "A good mother needs to be approachable and give love and time for their child". For Kate, this was a natural process, where the "maternal instinct kicks-in". A number of other mothers described the same process. "It's scary at first, but you get used to it, you simply have no choice, you get over the initial shock of being responsible for a human being who belongs to you (Marie).

Sharon was in agreement. Other challenges mothers had experienced included "devotion to the child" (Meg) and the need to be "less selfish" (Cora). Stef advised caution in maintaining a balance between being a good role model as a mother without being too overbearing:

> When you're a mum your own needs have to come second to the needs of your child. A child needs to know that they are loved and supported. Being a good mum is about allowing your child to develop as an individual. I want the best for my child and to do this, I need to spend time with them to be a positive influence in their life.

Planning time out to communicate with the newborn was considered a challenge for many mothers due to the many other tasks associated with child caring. Most post-birth males argued that their work obligations limited their contact with their child and the opportunity to help with household tasks. The exception was Greg, who undertook most of the childcare and the domestic obligations as he and his partner agreed that he would be a 'stay at home' dad. Most of the comments raised by post-birth females were encapsulated by what Stef had to say about being a mother:

> I am really enjoying being a mother, but it's a lot more responsibility than I first thought. We spend less time together as a couple, but that's just a consequence of parenting. I do seem to have a lot of fun with my child and I really enjoy the contact with my child.

Stef's comments were echoed by a number of other mums. "Having time for your child is critical for their development and to develop your skills as a parent" (Kate). This view was supported by Tina, "a good mother is somebody who communicates with their child through talking and listening". Clara agreed, "I talk to my child all the time to demonstrate that I'm responding to them". Sharon added further confirmation. "The parent-child relationship for me is based on respect for each other". The use of physical force to control a child's behaviour was deemed by all post-birth females as negative parenting practice. Meg had firm views on this topic and talked at length on this issue and was keen to see the anti-smacking legislation pass through New Zealand parliament quickly. Greg shared similar views and was the only post-birth male to offer specific comments on this issue, as most other dads were simply unaware of the debate:

> I'm against smacking children, as I view it as a form of physical abuse. Recently, I witnessed a parent smacking their child and the situation got quite ugly and I was thinking of intervening. When the anti-smacking bill is passed, what I witnessed will be a criminal act.

Post-birth females reported that parenting made them feel stressed, tired and short of time, but acknowledged that 'baby-time' was critical in forming a positive relationship with their child. Sharon complained that her partner did not give her much help with household and baby chores, which left her little or no time for her to feel free from the binds of motherhood. Currie (2004, p.238) in her study of motherhood and exercise also noted a lack of time for mothers, which caused them anxiety and stress. Both Olga and Clara gave similar feedback and noted the importance of 'baby-time' where the emphasis was on listening and talking to their child to improve communication with their child, to enhance the child/parent relationship. Consequently, allocating time for children during the early stages of parenthood was considered a priority by most post-birth females. However, as noted earlier there was a cost to this prioritisation of time in that, personal time and couple time had to be compromised.

Most post-birth males viewed their parental role as a father in a supportive capacity, by entertaining their child in playful activity. However, Greg took his parenting roles very seriously:

> I spend more time with our child than my wife does. It's a reversal of roles and our parents and friends don't understand why we have such an arrangement. We're breaking traditional family stereotypes.

Greg's concerns are evident in much of the parenting based literature, where females see their role as primary caregiver and many women believe that parenting is still the domain of the female (Hand, 2006; Urwin, 2007). For Greg, it was overwhelming, operating in what he termed a 'parenting domain' dominated by females, where there were few men to support other dads that decided to be the main carer. He often felt isolated being the only dad around the playground or at parenting events during the day. He struggled with the lack of male companionship and sometimes felt he was being scrutinized by other parents, who were nearly always female. This form of maternal gate keeping acts to resist men's full involvement as a parent, subjecting them to a part time and supporting role (see Lees, 2007). Kay (2009, p.17) recognises that fathers face many different challenges in the future on, "deciding whether to be a good provider or active father, caring or economic, nurturing/involved/engaged or breadwinner". This multiplicity of roles might be very confusing to many fathers in terms of which role takes priority and roles have the potential to be conflicting.

In terms of role classification Hatter *et al*. (2002) have recognised four types of fathers. Firstly, 'enforcer dads' are very hands off and spend a limited amount of time with their children. 'Entertainer dads' are more involved and spend more time with their children, especially playing and involvement in leisure based activities (Such, 2006) and sport (Thompson, 1999) where fathers have the opportunity to connect with their child (Harrington, 2006a, 2005). 'Useful dads' do take some responsibility for household chores, but take the lead from their female partner. Nevertheless, their partner still undertakes the majority of the child and house care duties associated with parenting. Finally, 'the fully involved dad' shares all parenting and domestic duties, but are still not as fully involved as their partner.

With the exception of Greg, all post-birth fathers highlighted their supportive role in parenting, whereas post-birth females stressed their central role in meeting the needs of their child and not their own needs. This could possibly be the result of what Kay (2009) refers to as the secondary role that fathers expect to undertake once they become parents, as many do not feel they have the parenting skills to cope with the demands of parenting. Conventional wisdom often dictates that once the child arrives, the mothering genes kick in and the maternal instinct comes naturally to all women, to enable them to cope with the demands of parenting.

Research by Hand and Lewis (2002) has indicated that some men prefer a different arrangement and a greater role in child-caring, but recognise that there are difficulties in challenging traditional arrangements**.** Kay (2009) agrees that most men identity with the role of fatherhood, through their supportive role in providing the financial means for the family and the handing out of discipline for the child. She argues that, many fathers simply slip into their assumed role because of the tradition of fathering and if they dare to challenge the conventional wisdom, this is often frowned upon by others who often hold fixed and traditional views about the gendered role of parenting.

Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that this view is supported by the data generated during the post-birth interviews as many males associated their parental role with supporting their partner and being the financial provider for the family unit. The same observation was made in Dermott's (2006) who reported that men's hours of work increased to compensate for a reduced household income. Similarly in this study, men's work obligations compromised and limited their role as a fully involved father.

In concluding the theme on the familial role, it is evident that post-birth females perceive their parenting role as mothers in caring, nurturing and protecting their child. Their key function was to attend to the immediate needs of their child as opposed to their own needs. In contrast, post-birth males practiced a more supportive role in parenting which, could be described as a less intensive style of parenting, involving fathers in entertaining their child through some form of leisure activity or play. For post-birth males bath time was also important an opportunity for fathers to interact with their child, as they often had full responsibility to undertake this parenting duty.

These findings are consistent with research undertaken by Trussell and Shaw (2007) who indicate that fathers embrace their parenting role through involvement with their child in leisure activities. Similarly, Thompson's work (1995, 1998 and 1999) with West Australian families discovered that family leisure was father's primary context for leisure and the main site for familial affiliation. Also, in Australia Harrington (2006a, 2009) and Jenkins and Lyons (2006) have demonstrated that fathers' involvement with their children in activity based play is a site for fathering, which has better enabled them to fulfill their expectations as a parent.

However, Craig (2006) and Shaw (2010) have challenged the traditional view of men's position in parenting. They argue that fathers in middle class families are beginning to share more of the burden of parenting with their partners due to more mothers in employment. Hand (2006) supports this view, providing evidence that some men want more involvement in childcare, but have great difficulties in challenging the conventional wisdom upon which traditional parenting is often based.

5.5.2 Ideologies of parenting

Ideas about parenting for the majority of post-birth couples stemmed from their own experience of being parented, from friends who had children and from extended family members such as aunts and uncles, who they had some form of contact with. Contact with these various groups of people provided post-birth couples with a range of ideas and strategies to practice positive parenting. Post-birth couples attempted to replicate what they termed 'good parenting practice' into their own style of parenting from the people they respected as good parents.

From the interview data generated it was possible to identify an important link between a happy childhood and positive parenting. That is, those parents that described their childhood as happy seemed also to be enjoying their new role as parents. A number of them commented that they had simply carried over their happy childhood into their role as parents. For these individuals this just seemed to happen naturally. However, it wasn't always the case that an unhappy childhood transpired into similar experiences as a parent. Those that described their childhood as unhappy due to strict and more traditional forms of parenting, experienced more difficulties and challenges in coming to terms with their new role as a mother or father. Many lacked positive role models on which to base their ideology or approach to parenthood. Marie had her say on this issue:

> My parents were very strict and traditional in their approach to parenting. I want to be more 'modern' and be more flexible. As parents we need to be mindful of the way in which we parent, as this could affect our child's behavior and their development as an adult.

Dawn had similar recollections:

> I got fed up with being told off all the time. It seemed all the contact with my parents was based on negativity. I'll take the time to listen to my child and my priority will be to establish a positive relationship with my child and help them develop as an individual.

For Sandy, ideologies of parenting were based upon a caring and loving relationship between a child and a parent. Greg expressed similar ideas in adopting a caring philosophy to parenting in order to connect and be fully immersed in his role as a parent in a non aggressive manner. When I asked him to clarify what he meant, he explained that he was very supportive of the anti- smacking campaign launched at the time of the interviews by Sue Bradford, a member of the New Zealand Labour Party.

It is interesting to note that post-birth interviewees that had not been smacked as children were adamant that smacking was bad for children and a practice that they wanted nothing to do with. However, a number of post-birth males saw nothing wrong with smacking and some viewed smacking as an acceptable form of control. "I was smacked as a child and it did me no harm. I really don't see any harm in giving a child a smack if they done something wrong". This comment was made by Teus, in the joint interview with his partner Sharon. His comments upset Sharon and at the end of the interview he reluctantly apologised, but it was too late; the damage had been done. After, the interview Sharon gestured an expletive towards Teus and stormed out of the room in which the interview had taken place. Later, during the solo interview with Sharon, she offered more details on the incident and said that she'd been unhappy with Teus supporting the use of physical force to chastise a child. This caused some friction between them and after the joint interview Sharon spent a week with her child living with her parents, without Teus. Being a good role model as a parent concerned a number of post-birth interviewees:

> I want to be the best parent I can be. Parenting is much more challenging than I imagined, but we get lots of support from the extended family. I've read a lot of books as I am the primary caregiver and the best advice I could give is that, there is no such thing as the perfect parent and you learn as you're doing it and there's no magic formula. (Greg)

Greg and Dawn faced other challenges in preparing for parenthood in that a number of their friends and relatives did not agree that Greg should be the main caregiver and Dawn the main earner. It appears that it is a still a commonly held view that it is not acceptable or 'normal' for men to stay at home as the person responsible for the majority of the parenting duties. A number of researchers' investigating parental roles have disputed this claim, as some fathers want to be more involved in the wide variety of parenting roles, but lack confidence (Hand & Lewis, 2002; Hand, 2006).

Meg and Colin had utilised the experience of both their own parents to form their ideology of parenting. 'I suppose our ideas are a mix of a more traditional form of parenting fused with a relaxed and easy going approach. Both our parents did a good job; it's just that they parented in very different ways". In her solo interview Meg added further comment on the issue. "My parent's been influential and I've had the chance to talk to my friends with young children and gain some knowledge and experience of the difficulties and challenges that might lie ahead for me as a parent". Likewise, Clara had purposively remained in close contact with friends who had children for ongoing advice on parenting matters:

> Even in the early stages of parenting, I've made a special effort to keep in contact with my mates and make time for myself. Their advice has really helped me out at times and given me the confidence to parent in the best interest of my child. (Clara)

Dean and Stef were the only post birth couple who did not express an opinion on their philosophy or ideas about parenting. "We don't have a philosophy and we haven't given it any thought, I suppose we'll just manage as we go".

5.5.3 Preparation and planning for parenthood

Post-birth interviewees alluded to a numbers of strategies they had used to help them prepare for parenting. Many had spoken with family members and relatives, whilst others had spoken with friends for help and advice on parenting.

> I have a girlfriend who is a great parent and she has given us so much good advice which really helped in the early months. You make mistakes and my friend just told me to relax and take time out as it is all part of the learning process of becoming a parent. (Kate)

Similarly, Colin spoke about his friends who he considered as good role models as parents, as they would be important in helping him become a better parent. "I have gone out of my way to make contact with our friends with kids to ask them about their experience, to gain some useful hands-on experience about real-life parenting. As a result, we made a list of do's and don'ts which have really helped us define the ways in which we parent" (Colin).

A number of others talked more specifically about their own experiences as a child and the way in which they were parented. This experience impacted upon their own style of parenting and how they would replicate the approach their own parents had used. Fay described her parents as good role models as they both had experience of dealing with young children as part of their employment.

Her dad was a primary school teacher and her mum had managed a play centre. This observation was supported by a number of other post-birth couples when reflecting on the influence of their own parents on their parenting style:

> We have set up fixed routines when to feed the baby and when the baby needs sleep, but this all turned to 'custard' when the baby's sleep patterns changed and I was sick. Parenting then became a matter of survival and a major struggle and it meant my husband had to take time off work and he'd only just started a new job. (Meg)

The importance of being organised was also recognised by other parents, but in the parenting based literature it is widely acknowledged that parenting is unpredictable (Holden, 2010), so it is important for parents to plan for contingencies, in a sense a form of risk management strategy:

> We're more organised now and we make better use of our time. I do the morning 'things' with the baby, then I'm off to work and for the rest of the day Cora takes over. You never know what's going to happen and have to plan for all sorts of eventualities. (Denny)

Many post-birth interviewees had purchased parenting books recommended by their midwives, whilst others utilised the services of local libraries to research and acquire literature on parenting. Fay had undertaken extensive research in a number of libraries around New Zealand, whereas Meg highlighted a number of limitations with relying on literature to help prepare for parenthood:

> Many parenting books paint too pretty a picture of parenthood, but the reality is often quite different. They put too many expectations on 'new' parents, because when you don't meet these expectations, you feel a failure. Parents should be able to make mistakes. It's all part of the learning experience of becoming a parent.

Meg did mention one specific book, named 'Baby Love' the same book highlighted by Clara from the pre-birth interview group. For other post-birth females parenting books often gave conflicting advice which confused them. Marie expressed the view that parenting books only provided parents with the basic elements of parenting and suggested the best advice was to learn from friends, relatives and parents. There is evidence to suggest that a significant number of post-birth couples sought out a number of alternative strategies to help them prepare for parenting. The most important form of advice came from; their parents, influential friends and from previous contact with young children. A number of others sought advice and attended parenting based courses offered by parenting organisations such as Plunket, and local parent centres in Christchurch, that were relatively inexpensive.

5.5.4 Preparing for the birth (Antenatal class)

The opinions of post-birth couples highlight the benefits and shortcomings of antenatal classes they attended and are presented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Reflections on antenatal class (Post-birth, interviewees)

Positive Reflections	**Negative Reflections**
Basic advice on dangers with birth	Rigid course structure and lack of class involvement
Opportunity to meet like minded people and share experiences and concerns	Content and focus is primarily on the woman's role, prescriptive and regimented
Opportunity to mix, learn from, and socialise with, like-minded people	Too much emphasis on birthing process and on the biology of the experience
Coffee breaks to reflect and discuss key issues affecting all expectant parents	No time to interact with other group members or little opportunity for group to reflect on course
Time out to be with partner in preparing for the birth of child	Patronising approach to delivery of material and instructional style adopted
Lots of information provided, but basic and of limited practical use	Lack of relevant information and guidance on how to parent, once the child arrives

Paul did not enjoy going to antenatal class as he suggested that the antenatal leader patronised her audience, where communication was primarily one-way between the leader and the class. As a result, he stopped going to class after a few weeks and learnt a lot more by reading books on parenting. Alvin had simply assumed that classes were for women and never attended any of the classes. A number of other dads simply couldn't make classes, because of work commitments.

Post-birth couples also expressed some concern with the impractical scheduling of classes and the autocratic teaching style adopted by antenatal tutors. Most of these observations are consistent with what pre-birth couples had to say on similar issues. On a more positive note, post–birth couples commented that some of the content delivered was useful, but it was delivered in a rather monotonous style by the same person every week. A number suggested that antenatal courses needed different presenters, who could offer alternative perspectives on parenting.

Many parents were grateful for the amount of information that was provided to them during the class, but most of this information dealt primarily with the basic biology of birth and the problems and difficulties associated with pregnancy and birth. Nelson (2003) reported similar misgivings with antenatal class, where the focus was on labour delivery and not on the realities of motherhood. "Antenatal class provided some useful information on the birthing process and on preparing for birth in a theoretical way, but did not provide any guidance on how to parent and tended to be focussed exclusively on the mothering role" (Fay). Meg was quite blunt, when relating to her attendance at class:

> Antenatal class was a waste of time. Parents face different challenges, this was never alluded to. Sometimes in the class we'd be given mixed messages and I can recall an incident when we were talking about birthing plans and the instructor totally confused us all.

Ben was less direct in recounting his experience of attending antenatal class, but was still critical of the advice provided:

> The focus was on women's role so, I felt like a 'spare-part'. The best part of the course was during coffee breaks, when I had the chance to talk to other expectant dads to express our fears and share advice.

Sharon's comments gave support to what Ben had said:

> Antenatal classes tell you very little about being a parent and for first time fathers, it's even worse. There's a gaping hole here, as the emphasis in our class was entirely on women and the birthing process.

Greg, Dawn's partner was extremely disappointed with his antenatal class:

> The class was boring, uninformative and very basic. The perspective presented in class did not deal with the reality for most and was unrealistic. Male parental care was an issue I raised in class on a number of occasions, but it was never discussed.

So, it seems that the unplanned and informal time elements associated with antenatal class (coffee breaks) were the most useful time that parents enjoyed as they were free to discuss issues with like-minded , especially for Sandy . "At coffee break, I acquired lots of useful practical tips and guidance from other couples". Likewise, Colin observed that, "antenatal class was a good opportunity to meet other parents, especially those with kids, some of them we still keep in contact with. We meet them for coffee or go around to each other's houses". Marie's antenatal group met on weekly basis over coffee to discuss how they were coping with parenthood.

Kate also met on a regular basis with mums from her antenatal group for coffee. "Our group is very strong and we all 'gel' well as a group and now the girls have nights out, now our babies are more settled at home. Also, it's really useful being involved with other mums to share concerns and issues and to pick up useful snippets of advice".

To summarise this theme, post-birth couples offered a number of recommendations to improve antenatal classes, based on their personal involvement in their own antenatal class. Figure 5.2 below highlights a range of practical ideas put forward by them to improve antenatal classes and in the next section couples describe their realities of parenting.

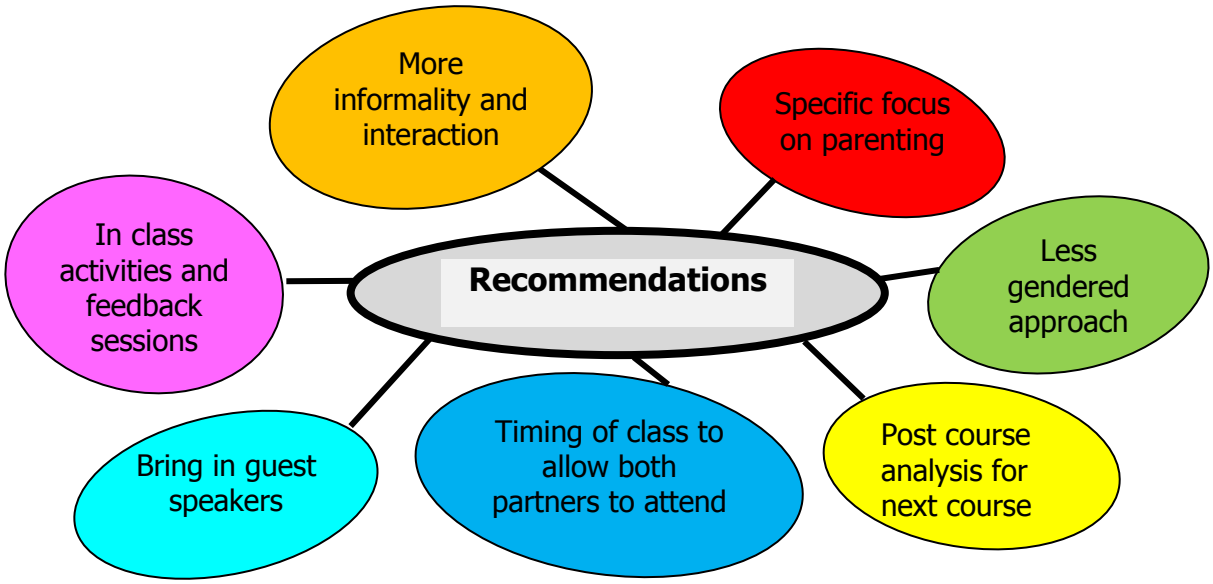


Figure 5.2 Improving antenatal classes for expectant parents (Post-birth interviewees)

5.5.5 Realities of parenting (the experience)

Within coupled and solo interviews many post-birth couples talked about what it was like to be a first time parent. In this regard, they essentially reflected on their parenting role as mum or dad. For a minority the experience was what they expected as most said they had coped well with their new role. "It's been pretty good, I think I've handled the parenting, better than I expected and it helps that work have given me time off to parent" (Denny).

Fred supported this view, "being a parent has been so much fun. I've really enjoyed watching our child develop and having a child has totally changed our lives". Both Cora and Greg were just as positive about their new roles as parents. "It's been fantastic and I'm really enjoying being a mum and making family plans" (Cora).

"It's a unique experience and has made me appreciate that most of our daily worries are trivial, compared to the concerns of most parents" (Greg). Fred continued to debate the issue and described parenting simply as the greatest experience of his life so far. "It's made me realise how selfish I can be at times and appreciate how much my parents did for me and how much they loved me". Since becoming a parent Fred had developed a much clearer understanding of children, which he argued had helped him become a "more effective and confident teacher". Consequently, his role as a parent had positively impacted upon his role as a teacher. Being a parent meant that Ben and his partner now saw much more of their friends with young families. "Being around other families with young kids has really helped us learn from others'. Meg supported Ben's comments:

> Talking with friends has been a useful for us, when you feel under pressure and don't know what to do. Being a stay at home mum is a lonely experience, so having friends to talk to, has been invaluable.

Sharon had more mixed feelings, concerning her role as a parent:

> Parenting is rewarding, when you're greeted with a smile, but after getting up four times in the night your resolve is tested. It's been a major change in my lifestyle and I have had to be less selfish.

Kate had similar 'ups' and 'downs' with first-time parenting:

> You have to feed them, change them, clean them and then there's the good bits, you get to entertain them which is lots of fun as your helping them develop and it's great when they smile as you're helping them develop.

Ben also, had mixed emotions on his new role:

> The first few weeks were a matter of survival, but now we're through that, we've had time to reflect and relax and I'm enjoying it now, even though we spend most of our free time around the house.

Alvin described a similar pattern to his transition to parenthood:

> It's a time of life where I am enjoying the experience, but you can't have fixed ideas or plans. My biggest worry is that the wife gets some time out from mothering to remember her own needs as an individual.

Sharon his partner responded to Alvin's comments:

> Yes, he's right. Working part-time and being a full-time mum doesn't work. Giving parents a decent amount of time off from their work commitments, when their child is young is critical to effective parenting and to the future of family life. The problem is that many parents have to take time off work, without pay, in order to parent.

Kate agreed, as she had just returned to part-time work and was having difficulties:

> I've gone back to work and I'm tired all the time now and feel guilty about, whether I've made the right choice. I had to return to work so we could cope with the financial burden of parenting.

Dean was sympathetic to this view:

> Parenting has taken over our lives. When our child was very young, I wasn't able to help that much, but now I can help out more. Dealing with situations when you're really tired has pushed us to breaking point on a number of occasions.

This was a concern shared by Colin, noting that lack of sleep and tiredness are two of the major challenges for post-birth couples. Like a number of post-birth females Stef reported having many sleepless nights and Dawn had issues with her child screaming continually throughout the night until the early hours of the morning. The reality of parenting it seems that most post-birth couples described indicates that their new role was more challenging than they expected. Marie spoke in some detail about her approach to her mothering role:

> It's just takes time to adapt, your whole life focus has to change and is determined by the demands of your child. Balancing childcare with the rest of life is demanding and certainly tests your resolve.

Sharon seemed sympathetic to Marie's comments as she had had doubted her ability as a mother and become more stressed and frustrated. Kate expressed similar concerns. "You just doubt what you're doing more and if you're doing enough for your child". Sandy reflected on the same issue in relation to the reality that parenting was more challenging than post-birth woman thought it would be. "Coping with the demands that early parenthood brings would test most people's resolve". Clara expressed similar misgivings:

> It's tougher than I thought it would be, the sleep deprivation catches up with you and your own interests have to take a back-seat. The reality is that parenting brings the best out of you and you become more resourceful. You learn 'on the job', so to speak, and you just learn to cope by 'muddling' through somehow.

Developing coping mechanisms was a management strategy a number of post-birth couples alluded to in meeting the demands and expectations of parenthood. Meg suggested that parents needed to be "organised and plan their use of time more effectively". Steve suggested compartmentalising time into functional areas, with the allocation of non-baby time to relax and spend time with partners. Fay had attempted to establish a regular sleep routine for her baby as she had been feeling shattered and worn out, due to the many sleepless nights she now had to endure. Her experience as a parent had made her realise how difficult it is for parents with little assistance or help from friends and family. Sharon had similar experiences to Fay as she'd had many 'bad' nights with her young baby, which had resulted in her experiencing severe stress, feeling like she couldn't cope. On the contrary, Marie and Stef had been inundated with offers of help and support from relatives which put extra pressure on them from the constant flow of visitors and the need to entertain them and take on board their perspectives on how best to parent.

Many other post-birth mums reported feeling tired and lacking energy to engage in any other activity, other than childcare. In order to cope with the financial burdens of parenthood, Jan continued to work on a full time basis and Olga on a part-time basis, which meant they were always tired and both of them indicated that this arrangement was impacting negatively on their own relationship and their relationship with their child. However, a number of others reported that the pressures of parenting had brought them closer together, as collectively they worked together in finding solutions and strategies to cope with the demands of parenting.

5.5.6 Defining leisure

Post-birth couples discussed this topic at some length and it seems that male and female partners hold quite opposing views on what constitutes leisure. For Olga leisure was simply "free time to enjoy". When she was prompted to give more details, she emphasised that her view of leisure did not include household chores. Moreover, she had great difficulty relating to leisure as a viable concept as she did not have any spare time available:

> I don't really get any time for myself anymore, as I've got my job, my daughter, my housework and my husband to look after. Sometimes, I watch the TV, but can't really concentrate, as I'm thinking all of the jobs, I should be doing, instead of watching TV. (Olga)

The demands of childcare on parenthood have been well documented in the parenting literature. In their research on the negotiation of couple time in families, Dyck and Daly (2009, p.188) report that many of the parents they studied felt pressured by, "the wider culture to always place the needs of children above the needs of partnerships and for some couples this prioritisation had become a way of life". This appears to be the case for Olga, but her partner Jan still participated on a regular basis in the same activities he had done previously at the pre-birth stage. Jan's leisure was concerned with doing something active and the antithesis of his work, which involved sitting down all day. He was clearly able to distinguish between time set aside for work and time for leisure, whereas Olga had no time to call her own. A number of mothers worked full time, which further restricted their time available for leisure:

> With the demands of my job, things to do around the house and dealing with the baby, I simply don't have any spare time you could call leisure. So, because I have no free time, I have no leisure. (Marie).

Yet, Currie (2004) has identified that leisure can be an important source of recuperation and renewal for mothers. Also, mothers that work can legitimise their own time out for leisure, as they have earned the 'right' to leisure (Bryson *et al*. 2007; Beck & Arnold, 2008). Warren (2010) disagrees, as when she compared the effect of working hours on women's well-being she demonstrated that women that worked longer hours (full-time) had very low measures of well-being, due to the lack of time to call their own.

For Greg, leisure was about getting on his bike and escaping the demands of parenting and work. "When I'm at leisure, I need to feel a sense of personal freedom. Being on my bike in the outdoors gives me this". Nevertheless, when he went for a run with his daughter in the buggy he described this activity as part of his parenting role and not leisure. He enjoyed the exercise and his wife (Dawn) appreciated him spending time with their daughter in an activity they both enjoyed. Once Dawn arrived home from work Greg would go for a run, whilst Dawn attended to the needs of their young child and made dinner. This arrangement benefited both partners to have some time on their own. Furthermore, sharing parenting duties in this way gave Greg and Dawn some independence of their own and an element of choice in their solo leisure. Their use of time was specifically segmented into own time, couple time, work time and baby time.

As a result, their lives were now highly structured and organised in dedicating specific slots of time into the four categories of time highlighted above. Shared parenting is what Crawford *et al*. (2002) recognise as a positive shift in father involvement in parenting, where the father role is more involved in sharing household and childrearing tasks. However, the 'actual' time men spend with their children when compared to women has not increased, which is further supported by Craig's (2007) research on the use of time in families.

The common thread emerging from concepts of leisure for both males and females in this group appeared to involve an element of self determined choice in the use of their time. This was summarised in what Dawn had to say. "Leisure is my time, when I have exclusive control of time that I can call my own". An element of freedom to do as one chooses was evidently important for most post-birth females.

Leisure for Syd had to involve exercise to help him, "unclog his soul", to stop him "cracking up". For his partner Kate, leisure was simply time to relax and recover from the demands of parenting. "I just get very tired these days to do anything else". Tiredness was a concern shared by many post-birth women and placed limitations on their access and time for leisure:

> Sometimes you're just too tired to think about doing any kind of activity. Most of the time I just want to take it easy. So having a night out with mates is beyond me at the moment, I don't think I'd last the night and I've not drunk anything since I got pregnant. (Sharon)

Stef was similarly frustrated by restrictions that motherhood had placed upon her:

> Since I've had the baby, I haven't been able to get back on the scooter or go walking up hills. It seems that I've lost my confidence in my ability to ride the scooter safely and don't have enough energy to do strenuous walks. Some activities are just too dangerous at the moment for me and my leisure has become more sedate and in some ways, quite boring and predictable.

What Sharon and Stef indicate like other mothers in previous leisure research is that the 'ethic of care' impacts upon women's feelings of obligation towards the family. This has been recognised by a number of key researchers in family leisure (Kay, 1996; Thompson, 1998, 1999; Miller & Brown, 2005). The 'ethic of care' is connected with women's primary caregiver role and acts as a constraint to their leisure, as they place the needs of their family first before their own needs.

Not surprisingly, safer and simpler forms of family leisure that didn't require much effort and planning and could be undertaken around the home were more common amongst mums with younger children as they placed less demands on them physically and emotionally. Consequently, time out for many mums with younger children involved more passive forms of leisure such as watching TV or chatting with friends and relatives. Since the birth of their child, most couples' leisure had changed to involve their child. This collective form of leisure (family leisure) impacted upon their concept and meaning of leisure and this form of leisure was highly valued and recognised by most couples.

As a result three forms of leisure were discernible in the data that emerged with post-birth interviewees. Firstly, solo leisure primarily for the self, secondly, couple leisure with their partner and thirdly, family leisure with their child referred to in the literature as family based leisure. All these forms of leisure were important for post-birth couples but for most, solo leisure was the most highly valued as they had less of it now. This was especially true for most women who pined for a return to leisure without children and relates to findings reported by Tanba (1999) cited in Nomaguchi (2006) involving 50 young Japanese mothers, who desired the free time activities they had enjoyed before parenthood. These comments signal a significant shift to earlier research on family leisure, where there is little mention of the right to leisure for mothers in the early stages of parenthood.

Involvement in different forms of leisure gave Kate more balance in her life:

> My own leisure is time when I can decide what I want to do, whereas family leisure is more concerned with spending time with the people I care about. It's difficult to separate out leisure from parenting.

This observation supports the work of Orthner and Mancini (1990) and later work by Zabriskie (2001) where leisure is viewed positively as a form of parenting. Nonetheless, it has been argued by Shaw (1994), Green (1998) and Kay (2003) that in many cases, family leisure has negative connotations for many women in heterosexual relationship, as it reinforces traditional and conservative family values which constrains women's leisure choices and time, where family activities become a kind of family obligation (see Shaw & Henderson, 2005).

5.5.7 Provision for childcare

A number of post-birth couples raised the issue of provision for childcare to allow time-out from parenting duties and to use this time as an opportunity to partake in leisure. This is related to Kay's (2000, p.253) concern that the "relative availability of childcare directly influences the work roles of mothers with younger children". Childcare support and help came from a number of sources, but principally from other family members or friends that lived nearby, which Kay (2000, p.260) refers to as "non institutional forms of childcare". For example, Denny had parents that lived locally. "I didn't want to rely exclusively on my dad as he volunteered to help as he was out of work, so my wife's sister helps out at the weekend when she's in Christchurch". Meg's mum lived close and was on hand to help out at anytime. Also, Kate had her mum and other family members that lived locally to help out:

> Having family to help out with our child has enabled me to get on with the practicalities of life, such as going shopping, visiting the dentist or going for a haircut. I've even started to feel human again and now get out of the house on a regular basis" (Kate).

Sharon's parents had travelled from the North Island to stay with her for the first three months of birth to give them what Sharon described as 'breathing space'.

Likewise, Denny's parents had spent the early months of parenthood with them to provide him and his partner with some time for each other. This finding is consistent with Daly's (2007) work on the importance of childcare in enabling couples to spend time together, away from their child, albeit for brief periods of time.

A number of post-birth couples had become part of informal baby-sitting clubs to provide childcare support for each other. This arrangement worked well and provided flexibility for post-birth couples in how they used their time. "I'm not into paid childcare or play centres, so a few of us, who were part of the same antenatal group have joined forces and started our own baby minding club" (Tina). Paul and Fay were involved in a similar arrangement with their Plunket group (South City Parents Centre). "We take it in turn, with our friends to baby-sit for each other". (Fay).

Olga and Jan, Greg and Dawn and Alvin and Sandy saw no need to use friends to help with childcare and viewed this role exclusively as the birth parent's role, especially in the early stages of parenthood. "A parent at home is best, to nurture and communicate with the child" (Alvin). Jan agreed. "When children are young

they need familiarity, to feel safe and secure and to know that their parents will always be close by". Likewise, Greg was keen to emphasise that he was the main caregiver and did not require any assistance with responsibility for childcare. "I am the main caregiver and it's my job to look after our child so we self-manage and don't need any external help" (Greg). This finding supports the work of Wall (2001) cited in Shaw (2010) who asserts that such intensive forms of parenting are recognisable in such families that take on a multiplicity of roles associated with parenthood without any external assistance.

In summary, it appears that the majority of post-birth couples arranged childcare support with close family members that lived nearby and with friends who already had their own children. Only a few of them mentioned accessing help from childcare agencies and organisations, due primarily to additional costs associated with using such services, noting that any spare cash they had would be spent on their child. Furthermore, a number of post-birth women felt uneasy with leaving their child with 'relative strangers' and if need be, in case of an emergency, would only use females. Shared child caring duties were evident amongst post-birth couples which supports the work of Shaw (2010) when recognising that fathers are now more emotionally connected with their offspring. Potentially, this could relieve women of their traditional responsibilities associated with parenting. Nonetheless, Craig (2007) urges caution as she recognises that women still undertake the majority of duties associated with childcare.

5.5.8 Constraints in leisure

During the solo and joint interviews it became clear that the nature of leisure was significantly different before pregnancy, during pregnancy and after the birth of their child. Pre-pregnancy couples had more time and opportunity for leisure, whereas during pregnancy many women experienced a range of constraints that impinged upon their leisure, especially during the latter stages of their pregnancy. During the early stages of parenthood women still faced a range of constraints, but for men leisure continued at similar levels to the pre-pregnancy stage. Once they become mothers, women tended to re-focus their energies and attention on their own child. Women found it difficult to put their own needs first and if they did, they felt guilty. In addition, as Sayer and Mattingly (2006, p.216) have observed, "the unpredictability of child-related responsibilities may also heighten mother's feeling of time pressure".

An evaluation of the post-birth data indicates that women tended to be involved in more active forms of leisure pre-pregnancy, yet in more passive forms of leisure, during pregnancy. This trend is evident in what a number of women had to say. "I used to play lots of netball and then have a few drinks, but this all stopped when I got pregnant and I'm still not back into any regular physical activity routine, as yet" (Tina). Sandy reported a similar shift in the nature of her engagement in leisure:

> I used to bike everywhere, but with a three month baby, it is impractical. When the baby is older, I could consider a baby seat to have more freedom. Also, getting out with the baby requires so much pre-planning, but it's important that we do escape the confines of home, every now and again.

Alvin supported his partner's views and added that they had purposively undertaken "a binge on leisure trips" as they anticipated their time and opportunity for leisure outside the home would be limited in the latter stages of pregnancy and when their baby was born. Dawn reflected on similar changing patterns to her leisure:

> Greg and I used to go out for long runs together, but during the pregnancy I'd often run out of energy and I got tired easily. In the first trimester, I was very sick, so did not really do that much and during the second trimester, I engaged in less active leisure, such as swimming and walking. In the third trimester, I did not do much physical activity, as I felt very tired all the time.

For Kate strenuous activities ceased during pregnancy as she considered herself a "precious vessel with precious cargo". She then explained her transition into parenting. "I used to be a night-bird and was always out late with friends having a few drinks in a bar, that all changed dramatically when I became pregnant as I stayed at home more and did not really venture outside my local community that much. The baby was five months old, before I ventured out with the buggy". Stef also missed the nightlife and her pre-pregnancy friends:

> It was a great 'buzz' going to clubs, but that stopped when I was pregnant. Since having a baby, we now mix more with other couples who have babies and we have moved on from our single friends, as our circumstances have changed.

Her partner Dean also expressed his views on this topic:

> We both really miss the atmosphere of being out socially with friends. Now there is so much to do to meet the needs of our child. We get little time for ourselves and there's no chance now of a lie in at the weekends and we don't stay up late anymore.

Sharon had witnessed similar changes to her lifestyle. "I really miss my nights out on the town with mates and get annoyed when my hubby would still get out". Tina identified similar restrictions on her leisure:

> I used to enjoy physical activities and socialising with mates, but during pregnancy that all changed. I don't really have the courage and enthusiasm to get out of the house now that much, but my husband's life doesn't seem to have changed that much.

Many other post-birth mums were concerned that strenuous activities during pregnancy could be damaging to their unborn child, although many were confused about the benefits and dangers of physical activity during pregnancy as the advice given was often conflicting. A number reported that they simply didn't have the energy or motivation to engage in more physical demanding types of leisure. "During pregnancy I was so tired. Sometimes I just used to come home from work and go straight to bed. I was often so tired, I just and forgot to eat anything".

Cora had become what she described as a "TV junkie" to help her relax from the chores of motherhood. "My child sleeps a lot, so we're mostly housebound and if we get out, we often don't go for long". Meg expressed similar concerns. "I used to go to the gym 3 times a week and used to socialise and meet up with people in the evenings. It's so different now, as I need to be around all the time for the baby". During the joint interview Colin, Meg's partner nodded in agreement to this comment as the house renovation he was undertaking had now stopped due to lack of time. This was also mentioned during interviews with Greg, Ben and Paul, signifying the importance of time together as a family. "Everything we do in our spare time is focused on our child" (Greg). Ben gave a similar account. "We have a lot of fun, just playing together as a family". Paul was more adventurous. "Weekends are family time, which means we're out of the house early to go for a walk in the botanic gardens in Christchurch or go to Sumner for a walk on the beach". A number of men remarked that their patterns of free time use changed to spending more time with their partner during the pregnancy than they had before the pregnancy and as a result of parenthood less opportunity to engage in solo leisure. "Before the wife got pregnant, I'd spend more time on my own seeing friends, going surfing and having a few drinks. I still get the time to go out surfing, but more of my time is now spent with my wife and child" (Fred). Syd had a similar story to tell:

> Pre-pregnancy it was pure freedom as far as leisure was concerned. That all changed during pregnancy as I was responsible for preparing meals and helping out with cleaning and shopping. I still went climbing and tramping though and it was easier for me.

It appears that during the pre-pregnancy stage, post birth couples had more opportunity to engage in solo forms of leisure, albeit women's leisure was still more constrained than men's leisure, which is consistent with Wearing's (1984) study, who reported that women accepted their mothering role as natural and instinctive. However, in later studies, Wearing (1990, 1997) provides evidence to support the claim that some women were challenging the dominant mothering discourse and resisting societal expectations by refusing to undertake household task and taking time out for themselves. This claim is supported by Green's (1998) study, where women's leisure became a site for their personal identity, empowerment and resistance to traditional discourses around motherhood. Leisure costs money and leisure preferences were often determined by their financial viability and many post-birth couples had to rely on one income.

"We're now on one income and my hubby sometimes has to work longer hours and often at the weekend to make up the shortfall" (Marie). This practice was common to a number of post birth couples and the ensuing financial restrictions curtailed their choice of leisure activities due to less disposable income to spend on leisure. As a result, this restricted their access to a narrower range of leisure activities that were often cheaper (Evenson *et al*. 2004). This view is consistent with the literature, as Bittman (1999) reports that household leisure expenditure is reduced by 29% with the arrival of pre-school aged children. Consequently, many post-birth couples reported that their leisure tended to involve activities that required minimal planning usually around the home (core leisure) with little or no costs.

When post-birth couples were asked about their leisure and use of time, a number identified that finding time for each other had been a major challenge for them, since parenthood. "Since we've become parents, getting time for each other has just not happened, it's eight months now since the baby was born and in that time, we've not been out together at all" (Meg). This was a concern shared by a number of other females in the group. "We really don't get much time for ourselves. We need time out as adults away from parenting" (Sharon). Fay had similar concerns, "we don't do much as a couple anymore".

This observation was shared by Kate. "We need time out from childcare, so we can rediscover that we're still a couple and it would be good for our relationship". Lack of time together, without the baby was an issue many post-birth couples alluded to.

In their study on marital leisure Crawford *et al.* (2002) reported similar concerns from parents, as undertaking leisure activities together (companionate leisure) improved marital satisfaction. So, where couples are more likely to have companionate leisure activities that both of them enjoy, they were more satisfied with their relationship, but when couples pursued more independent leisure activities, they reported lower levels of marital satisfaction (Crawford *et al.* 2002). Furthermore, a number of women were prepared to delay their own personal time, until the child was older. Delaying self-time for leisure was a strategy practiced by women in Davidson's (1996) study, where seeking time for oneself was deemed as irresponsible parenting by some women. This was evident in what both Tina and Clara had said, as any free time they had was used as an opportunity to catch up with baby chores and domestic duties and not on something that they wanted to do.

This finding reflects Dyck and Daly's (2009, p.189) study where a mothers' identity was primarily related to child caring and household work: "There are always meals to prepare, or cleaning up to do or the washing to get finished". When I asked Clara how this impacted on time with her partner, she explained that she'd had no time to catch up and talk with her partner, as most evenings her partner had office work. "He's always busy in his home office after work and the lack of time together is starting to affect our relationship and putting extra pressure on me" (Clara). I know he's under stress at work, but what's more important his job or us"? Both Tina and Sharon reflected on the same issue of lacking adequate leisure time. "Not having time together to be a couple, could seriously affect our marriage and we don't want that to happen (Tina). Sharon had her own views on this issue:

> We need to do more things together as a couple without the baby, but life as a first-time parent is unpredictable, as when you think you got time, it just get used up. The problem is we never get the time to sit down and talk. I'm not so sure if I can sustain this way of life for much longer, without time for myself?

Many parents in this study were greatly concerned about the lack of free time and this experience often led to frustration due to lack of time. Many reported they didn't have time for each other as they were too busy with seeing to the needs of their child and this experience often led to frustration due to the lack of time.

"It's difficult to think about getting out of the house at the moment as our focus has had to be on the baby at the moment. Free time is not really an idea we can relate to at the moment, as our main concern now, is with our child" (Dawn).

After analysing the interview data from post-birth couples, it became apparent that two strategies were adopted to make the best possible use of any spare time. A number of parents attempted to instill regular and predictable sleep patterns for their child and other parents adopted a number of time management strategies. "We planned ahead to ensure that we allocate time for the baby, time for each other and time each for ourselves" (Ben). When I asked Ben how this worked in practice he explained that it was "a work in progress" and it was relatively easy to allocate time to different activities, but much more challenging to create a balance between the competing demands for self time, couple time and baby time. When compared to other post-birth couples Marie and Ben were organised in terms of allocating specific periods of time for each other and the sharing of household and parenting tasks. "He's out Monday and Wednesday and I'm out Tuesday and Thursday. It's working well so far, as we've been able to establish a routine that suits us both" (Marie). Similarly, Shaw (2001) recognised that shared parental duties between men and women can help build the potential of leisure to enhance individual empowerment and bring about positive social change. Working collectively as an effective partnership enabled Colin and Meg to successfully establish a sleep routine for their child where they could now plan, to make the best use of time periods they knew were free from parenting:

> I get up at 5 in the morning to go for a run or cycle, to have time for myself; it's worth it. Whilst, Meg can go out in the evenings now or we can spend time together at home to just 'chill out', as our child is 'sound' asleep by 7 pm, most evenings. (Colin)

From the interviews conducted with post-birth couples it appears that the only time couples spend time together is in the evenings, once the child was in bed and asleep. However, even this time could be compromised by work related duties that often carried over into the home environment for many men and domestic/household tasks for many women. Also, from the interview data it is evident that most post-birth couples had less time now they were parents, but made better use of any available time they had. Using time effectively was a practice endorsed by many couples and it emerged that any time set aside for leisure had competing demands from different forms of leisure, namely solo leisure, couple leisure and family leisure.

These different forms of leisure were identified by Greg, in relation to the various activities he engaged in and included gardening as couple leisure, going out with his mates as solo leisure and going swimming or walking as family leisure.

5.5.9 Family leisure values and practicalities

During both the solo and couple interviews, post-birth couples were asked about the extent to which they engaged in leisure together as a family and the value of this form of leisure. The data generated from this line of questioning suggest that many families were already spending a significant amount of their spare time together as a family at leisure. Furthermore, it seems they were aware of a number of constraints that impinged upon their leisure as a family, and the collective benefits associated with family leisure. However, from the data collected it seems that this form of leisure was highly valued by many post-birth couples, including Meg, Syd and Denny. "Family leisure is important...to spend time together to bond…. to do 'things' together for the sake of my relationship with my partner and daughter" (Meg). "Family leisure has huge benefits for the families in keeping them engaged and working together as a functioning family" (Syd). Denny provided a similar perspective:

> Family leisure provides the family as a unit with time set aside for their collective benefit and this will be more important for us, as our child develops. Setting aside time for us all has required pre-planning and has meant that our own leisure time has had to be compromised.

His partner, Cora agreed: "We now do more things together rather than separately for the benefit of all the family". It is evident that a number of parents used family leisure purposively as a vehicle to improve the quality of family life and develop a sense of family, which is a view supported by Shaw & Dawson (2003/2004), and Harrington (2009). In order to create time for family leisure, other plans have to be curtailed. For example, post-birth couples' own leisure had to be compromised to make way for time for family leisure, which often led to tensions between personal time for leisure and family leisure. This was more evident amongst post-birth women as many post-birth men had still been able to maintain their own time for leisure as a parent. This finding is consistent with much of the feminist based work on family leisure, where women are unlikely to have individual or self directed time, because of gendered inequity, which reflects the importance of their familial role, rather than opportunity for self directed leisure (Thompson, 1998; Daly, 2001; Shaw & Henderson, 2005).

Post-birth females' perspectives on family leisure seemed to be focussed on the benefits for all family members as expressed by Clara:

> Time together at leisure has given us time to realise the family is important and has given our child a sense of belonging. In leisure we've had fun together and we've bonded better as a family.

Sharon gave further support to what Clara had said:

> Family leisure has created a family bond between us and helped us understand each other's needs. I have fond memories of my own childhood at leisure and want to replicate this for my own child.

Kate added to the issue with her own comments:

> It's incredibly important to introduce the child to a world of leisure through a shared experience of leisure as a family. It helps break up the routine of daily life and provides the child with many different experiences, which will help them develop as an adult.

Alvin discussed the topic of family leisure enthusiastically in his 'solo' interviews. "I've got 'big' plans for family leisure, where we can spend time in each other's company. What's most important is that our child will have the time to play and develop as an individual in a safe and secure environment, under our guidance". Fred provided similar feedback. "We're already doing lots of 'things' together and are seeing the benefits. This has created harmony in the household and the feeling that we're a 'real' family". In addition, to highlighting the positive outcomes of family based leisure, many post-birth couples discussed a wide range of restrictions and limitations to their engagement in family leisure. A number of constraints acted against them finding time and opportunity to experience leisure time as a collective family unit.

Many of the constraints they identified have already been well documented in the 'constraints' research literature evaluated in chapter two (Jackson & Henderson, 1995; Jackson, 1997). Indeed, they are the same constraints that restrict and limit individual leisure participation. Planning time for family leisure compromises time for personal leisure for both post-birth men and post-birth women. The key difference here is that post-birth women had less personal time than post-birth men due to other time commitments to domestic and caring tasks (Choi *et al*. 2005). At the time of interview many post-birth males were undertaking major renovations to their homes to save money, because of tighter financial circumstances.

Furthermore, time set aside to renovate the household after work limited any free time for family leisure for many:

> My first priority is to try and finish 'doing-up' the house. So, I've become tired with little energy to play with our child. Weekends are the only real time I get with our daughter. It's not ideal, but the house needs finishing before the winter kicks in (Colin).

His partner, Meg supported what Colin had to say:

> There is a lot of pressure on families to engage in leisure pursuits such as theme parks and the like. For us, that's 'fake-fun'. We're more into natural activities like going swimming or tramping (walking).

Greg also, avoided commercial forms of family leisure:

> There are lots of activities that are cheap, that families can do together such as, going to the beach or going for walks. I think most commercial leisure facilities are over-hyped.

Dawn, Greg's partner joined in the discussion:

> Yes, we have less money now and can't afford to pay for activities that are expensive such as, going to leisure facilities were there's significant costs involved. So we keep our family leisure simple as our child is young and tend to visit public leisure facilities that are relatively cheap compared to commercial leisure facilities.

Lack of control over time was a constraint to family leisure for many. "The lack of time and the fact that our child is young restricts what we can do as a family together" (Ben). Meg had noticed similar changes in her use of time:

> In order to have family leisure time, we have to compromise other time, it's just a fact of life….I have noticed that since we've become parents we're both less active in our own leisure time, as often we just end up watching TV as we're just both too tired to do anything else.

The change to more passive forms of leisure in parenthood was evident in what many post-birth couples had to say about compromising their own time and leisure for family based leisure. Any time left over for family leisure was further constrained by the demands associated with childcare, although for Fay, care giving sometimes felt like play which she considered the basis of future adult leisure, but only when she enjoyed it. Fay's view is consistent with the play literature that identifies different facets of play and the importance of free-play (Play England, 2006). This gives children the opportunity to fulfil their natural desire to play which potentially can lead to a more diverse and active life in leisure, as an adult (Sutton-Smith, 2010).

Post birth couples mentioned that their child's irregular and unpredictable sleep patterns meant that it was often difficult to plan family activities in advance. Time was often taken up with dealing with 'teething' and feeding the child further limiting opportunities for family leisure. A number of parents made reference to the unpredictability of weather in Christchurch, due to the different seasons. "It takes such a long time to get organised, to get out of the house with the baby and by the time you do, the weather has often changed" (Denny). His wife, Cora continued the conversation, "…and by the time you return home to change, you have to start all over again".

Lack of time and the inability to control time frustrated many parents. Consequently, the nature of activities engaged in for parents with young children tended to be activities in the home or within a short distance from home, often in the local vicinity. As a result much of their leisure as a family was spatially constrained and involved activities that were relatively easy to organise, could be undertaken in a short space of time and involved minimal pre-planning. Walking was the most popular family based activity often planned with a purpose to visit local facilities, such as swimming pools, cafes, libraries, shopping malls, playgrounds and parks. Many families walked as it was easier to organise, was relatively simple and involved no costs.

"At the weekends we go walking and we visit a number of local playgrounds. Our child is all smiles and really enjoys all the colours and sounds of the park" (Dawn). Walking enabled many families to make use of local facilities to spend time together with relatives and friends that lived close by for coffee and a chat:

> We enjoy walking as a family, as it gets us out of the house and walking becomes part of the activity that involves walking to a particular walking track close to home, going to the local park or visiting friends or the local library. (Dean).

Many other post birth couples made use of local facilities that were within 'walkable' distance of their home. "We go for short walks around the neighbourhood. We're lucky as we can walk to the nearby mall, go to the local swimming pool or visit friends" (Syd). His partner Kate added to the conversation. "We take the dog with us for walks, it's quite liberating and it calms me down and our son just loves it". Marie recognised other benefits of family leisure, away from the home:

> We've started adventuring further and last week found a 'family friendly' park. When our child is old enough we're keen to go away camping on family based holidays outside of New Zealand.

Also, Sharon mentioned family camping trips, but her partner was not a keen camper and it would take some effort persuading him to change his mind. "When, I was young, I used to go camping with my mum and dad". Whereas, Dean and Stef were experienced campers and were in the process of planning a family camping holiday in the near future. A number of post birth couples planned to take holidays abroad as a family, once they considered their child was 'old' enough.

In summary, the data generated from the post-birth couples study adds further evidence to Shaw and Dawson's (2003/2004) theory that much of family leisure is 'purposive', in that it has a purpose, is objective driven, and planned. It seems that, involvement in family based leisure activities enhanced relationships between children and parents as time spent together in purposeful activities provided post-birth couples with the opportunity to interact, bond and spend time with their child. However, there was a downside, as time spent together in collective activities such as family leisure might not be enjoyable for everybody and engagement in family leisure, often meant that other forms of leisure were compromised. This finding supports Wearing's (1993) view that family leisure activities might not benefit all family members in a positive manner and family leisure can have negative ramifications for family members, as highlighted by one of the male parents in this study who did not want to go on a family camping holiday.

5.5.11 Leisure facilities in Christchurch

In order to uncover their perceptions towards the extent of local provision of facilities for family leisure in Christchurch, post-birth couples were asked a number of questions in the joint and solo interviews. Post-birth couples discussed their use of leisure facilities before and during pregnancy and presently as parents. Most voiced the opinion that leisure facilities provided by Christchurch City Council such as swimming pools, parks, playgrounds and walking tracks were adequate and relatively easy to access and within their budget. Many had enjoyed a number of free events organised and funded by the council such as 'Sparks in the Parks', 'Teddy Bears Picnic' and the 'Santa Parade' staged in Hagley Park in the city centre. When I asked how they found about these events most mentioned the Christchurch City Council event website 'www.bethere.co.nz' or promotional leaflets they'd seen in local libraries. The most popular leisure activity amongst post-birth couples was walking but couples were frustrated by a lack of adequate infrastructure:

> I enjoy the walking in the Port Hills, but they're not buggy friendly and walking in the city with a young child is dangerous at times. The footpaths are in a mess and you have to stop every few hundred yards to cross a major road. Christchurch is dominated by cars and there needs to be more thought about the needs of those that walk.

Kate also used walking trails in the Port Hills and the dog parks provided in Victoria Park. "We're really lucky in Christchurch to have the hills on our doorstep, so we can get our kids in touch with nature, relatively easily". Greg offered a similar view to Kate:

> There are great opportunities for walking around Christchurch and the Gondola family ticket to access the hills is such a great initiative and only costs $90 a year. The ticket includes free rides on the tram and cheaper access to other facilities such as Willowbank.

In analysing the post-birth interview data on usage of public leisure facilities a pattern emerged which suggest that usage is linked to proximity of facilities to the family home. What this means is that post-birth couples who live within close proximity of local leisure facilities are more likely to use them and more importantly, are more aware of what is available. Therefore, one of the major constraints for families using leisure facilities seems to be lack of awareness of what is available within their local vicinity. Lack of information on leisure facilities was a concern expressed by a number of post-birth couples that could be improved relatively easily. This was recognised by Dean who lived quite close to a number of leisure facilities:

> I didn't know that we were so close to Pioneer Recreation Centre and Pool, or indeed so close to Library South in Beckenham, until we started going for family walks in the local area. The library is great for families as they have a cafe for parents and an outdoor play area for kids and at the recreation centre there's a baby pool and somewhere you can sit and have a coffee.

His partner Stef joined in.

> I agree with Dean. We've just moved to Christchurch and compared to living in London, access to facilities for leisure is much easier and cheaper and Christchurch seems to be much more of a child and family friendly city.

However, sub-standard and inadequate changing facilities for babies at a number of local swimming pools within the study area concerned many post-birth couples. "It's very frustrating to change the baby at Waltham Pool as it's dirty; too small and too cold, so I end up changing her outside on the grass outside" (Fay). Paul recalled a similar experience at Pioneer Pool:

> You stand there half changed in the corridor, freezing cold waiting with the baby. When you leave the pool you have to wait again, but it's even worse, because now you are both wet and cold and the wait for a changing cubicle is even longer. It's just not good enough.

When compared to public leisure facilities for changing babies, some of the shopping malls around Christchurch especially Riccarton Mall, Northlands Mall and The Palms Mall, were described as having excellent facilities, but Barrington Mall and South City Mall were deemed to have poor facilities. There was even evidence to suggests, that access to clean and adequate baby facilities often determined which shopping mall parents used:

> We go to Riccarton Mall, because there are free nappies and lots of changing stations with tissues and a microwave. There's always somewhere to sit in comfort and breast feed. At Barrington Mall, all you get is an 'old' changing table in the women's toilets, with not much room and nowhere to sit, it's totally inadequate. (Kate)

In summary, it appears that many post-birth couples use a range of public facilities for leisure provided by the Christchurch City Council. The most popular facilities for leisure include: swimming pools, recreation centres, public parks, walking tracks and libraries. Also, many post-birth couples frequent shopping malls and cafes that they described as child friendly with quality changing facilities. However, they use other commercially provided leisure facilities less frequently.

5.5.12 Improving leisure provision for families

Post-birth couples suggested a number of practical recommendations to improve leisure provision for families in Christchurch. They proposed that organisations responsible for leisure provision and family support organisations such as Plunket and Parent Centres needed to work together more effectively, rather than in isolation from each other. Both types of organisation served the needs of families, but there was little or no evidence of joint working or communication. Family support organisations could then be a conduit in which information provided by leisure providers on opportunities for family leisure could be accessed by parents. Access to information for families was a concern expressed by the majority of post-birth couples. Post-birth couples recognised the need for personnel involved in leisure provision and family support services to work closer together and in partnership to improve and enhance leisure provision for families. Meg supported this initiative and suggested this could be achieved through the compilation of a web based booklet, detailing the range of leisure facilities and programmes for families in Christchurch.

Similarly, Marie proposed the idea of developing an events website for families, where parents could access information on events that catered for families exclusively. At the time when the interviews were conducted, most post-birth parents claimed that events provided by Christchurch City Council tended to be adult orientated or for families with children over the age of 5 and often planned in the evening.

Sharon suggested leisure programmes specifically for fathers with babies, which could act as a useful support group for first time fathers to share their ideas and concerns about parenting and to engage in active leisure together. Colin had similar ideas and had already raised this issue with his local leisure centre manager to promote a pilot programme to help first-time fathers better engage with their child through active recreation. Kate had a number of more specific ideas to put forward, to improve leisure provision for families at public leisure facilities in Christchurch:

> We need better changing facilities in pools and recreation centres as most are inadequate, poorly designed and unpleasant. Some are not safe or are in a bad state of repair, as changing room doors are often broken and never fixed. Also, places to park for families are inadequate and parking bays are too small and dangerous for children.

Fred, Colin and Paul all shared Kate's concerns about poor changing facilities and inadequate parking for families at local recreation centres. "The pool staff are very friendly, but the changing facilities are bloody awful and often very smelly" (Fred). Colin recounted a similar experience. "The changing areas at the pool are a complete mess and it's not a pleasant experience changing the baby there, so we don't go that much" (Colin). Paul often took his child swimming at the weekend, but to QE2 pool which was often very busy. "All the changing rooms are always full, so I use the disabled room, but that's always locked which means I have to walk all the way back to reception to get the key, with a cold and crying baby" (Paul).

Clearly from the comments above and other feedback referred to in earlier sections, there is an urgent need to upgrade and improve changing facilities for families at public leisure facilities in Christchurch. Cora, Dawn and Denny suggested that public leisure facility managers could learn from the good practice highlighted earlier in some of the shopping malls in Christchurch in terms of adequate and quality provision for family parking and changing facilities.

Only a small number of post-birth mentioned commercial providers for family leisure such as cafes and shopping malls in and around Christchurch as many remarked that when compared to public facilities for leisure they were either too expensive or not suitable for very young children. However, a number of parents alluded to the fact that they had used commercial forms of leisure when on holiday as special treats for their children.

In summary, the majority of post-birth couples reported that there was adequate provision for leisure in Christchurch. However, most facilities offered a limited range of programmes for families. QE2 Recreation Centre was the exception, with a mums and babies exercise class that was described by Cora as "good family practice and very popular". So, it seems even where innovative practice in programming is evident it is insufficient to meet the needs of families. In terms of facilities for family leisure, many reported that a number of public leisure facilities in Christchurch were in urgent need of either renovating, upgrading or in some cases needed permanent replacement with the required specific infrastructure to meet the needs of families.

5.6 Pre-Birth, now Post-Birth Interview Study

Within this section, the pre-birth now post-birth interviewees are re-introduced and then the key themes from the interviews are discussed and interpreted.

5.6.1 Pre-birth, now post-birth interviewees

At the time of the second interview, Alan and Rhian had a son aged three months and Alan still worked in video production and was involved in renovating the house. Rhian was a full time mum and based at home. At the time of the second interview, Vera and Marty had a daughter aged two months. Vera was now based at home on maternity leave and Marty still worked as a Production Manager. At the time of the second interview, Pete and Sue had a daughter aged three months. Sue was now on maternity leave at home and Pete was still in the same job. At the time of the second interview, Rory and Ria had a son aged one month. Ria was now based at home and Rory still worked away during the week, but was at home most weekends to help with household and parenting chores. Within the following two weeks, they planned to return to the UK on a permanent basis and both intended to return to work on a full-time basis, once their child could be looked after by Ria's parents.

5.7 Interview findings for pre-birth, now post-birth interviewees

Pre-birth now post-birth couples were asked a number of questions to determine if and how their life had changed since they became parents. All the parents answered in the affirmative, which supports Siegenthaler (1998, p.39) claim that the "arrival of a child leads to a significant change in the lives of first-time parents". The interview questions (Table 5.4) were composed in light of the key themes that emerged from the data from both the pre-birth and post birth focus group studies and interviews.

Table 5.4 - Interview schedule for pre-birth, now post-birth couples

Couple Interview Questions	Theme
Is your experience of parenting different to what you expected?	Expectations and realities
Compared to pre-birth, has your use of time changed, if so, how?	Time use
What time do you dedicate to the baby, each other or to yourself on a typical day?	Time management/childcare
What strategies have you adopted to deal with looking after the baby?	Childcare
What roles do both of you play with regards to meeting the needs of your baby?	Parenting roles
Do you have more or less leisure time now compared to pre-birth?	Leisure time
Has your leisure time changed since the arrival of the baby, and if so how has this changed compared to pre-birth?	Nature of leisure
Is family leisure important to you both?	Value of family leisure
Are there any significant barriers to family leisure?	Barriers to family leisure
What leisure facilities/activities do you make use of as a family?	Leisure provision
Do you have any suggestions to improve family leisure in Christchurch?	Leisure facilities

5.7.1 Expectations and realities of parenting

It's interesting to note that most of the men that were re-interviewed with the exception of Pete, reported that their expectations of parenthood had been largely met. During the pre-birth interview, Pete was concerned that he would encounter sleepless nights and difficulty adapting to parenthood, but in the post-birth interview he described the experience as "easier than expected". He was at ease with his new role and had begun to help his wife Sue with preparing meals, cleaning the house and bathing the baby. Sue responded that she was pleased that her partner was beginning to take an active interest in such task which helped spread the load of housework and childcare. It was Hochschild (1989) who first pointed out that when males are willing to share domestic labour, it has important symbolic meaning for their partner.

Rory expressed his approach to parenting as simply "getting on with it" even though he had "no reference points on how to parent". Rory and Ria's major challenge since the birth of their child was keeping their old weatherboard house warm and coping with the demands of childcare, without any family members available to help out. This experience had prompted them to a decision about their future:

> We've decided to move back to the UK to be near family and friends and to live with Ria's parents in a warm house. We'll both have better job prospects, as living in New Zealand has not really worked out for us. (Rory)

Ria supported her partner's view. "Not having family close by has been a problem for us". Alan shared a similar reality to Rory's perspective on parenting. "I've just learnt to cope and parenting has not felt like an imposition as my fathering genes just kicked in". The only concern Marty reported was broken sleep and adapting to parenthood had been easy for him. The experience of most of the women re-interviewed was quite different with the exception of Rhian:

> I've been much happier than I thought I would be, and it's been a positive experience for both of us. All the worries and concerns I had beforehand, have just not happened. We were happy as a couple before we became parents and we're even happier now, as a family.

Other women re-interviewed described a different experience of parenting as more difficult than they expected. Even though Vera was a Plunket nurse and was well informed of the challenges of parenthood, she found the transformation to parenting difficult as the actualities far superseded her expectations:

> I've just been so tired and without much sleep. I'm in bed by 9 pm, up at 1 am, 3 am and 7 am to feed the baby so I only get short burst of sleep. So I can now begin to understand what many of my clients have told me about real life parenting, as I'm now, living it! The lack of any personal time and sleep has been major concerns for me.

In summary, it appears that most couples were happier and excited about being parents and they spoke very positively about having a child. Likewise, Warner (2006, p. 72) has recognised that becoming a parent makes people more responsible and makes them think more about 'things', and "presents opportunities for parents to experience social worlds they never imagined".

5.7.2 Time use/management

During the interviews couples were asked how they spent most of their time as parents and what they did during a typical day. All of the women reported constraints on their free time due to the multiplicity of demands including work, childcare and household duties associated with parenting. The same observation was made by Cartwright and Warner-Smith (2003). They studied young women's health and their leisure in Australia where the majority of women reported being dissatisfied with the amount of free time they had because of other duties, highlighted above. When women had time, they joined coffee groups with other mums. Joining such groups enabled women to leave the confines of their home to meet and discuss common concerns with raising a child. Rhian described this as a positive experience:

> I do spend more time around the home, but enjoy any excuse to escape the confines of home to socialise with friends or other mothers, drinking coffee at local cafes.

This suggest that some mothers purposely plan time out to escape the obligations of parenting which supports Wearing's (1994) claim that some women use leisure as a form of resistance to male domination and masculine hegemony. Mothers in this study used a range of strategies, including father's care of the baby for periods of time, sharing care with other mothers, friends and relatives, and reduced input into housework and cooking, to resist the dominant discourse of motherhood. Thus, they made space and time for themselves, and some autonomy to pursue leisure activities or non-activities, which are just for themselves and need not include the family. Nevertheless, where mothers were able to make time, there is still a 'nagging' guilt that they should be attending to other duties, rather than their own interests. As Psifer (2001, p.80) recognised that the: "lack of time is often connected with feelings of guilt as mothers perceive that they do not have enough time for all their responsibilities". For Vera, any other spare time meant catching up on household duties or taking a shower to relax or remembering to eat, before the baby woke up. Sue reflected on her own experience in more detail:

> The baby is fed at 5 am and at 8 am. I then have a bath with the baby, do some washing, read the paper with the baby on my lap, have some lunch and then if I can, get the baby to sleep, I'll do some cleaning, then it's feeding time and changing time and if I am lucky we'll go for a short walk and coffee before my husband arrives home.

She continued on the same topic:

> Then, it's time to prepare his dinner and the baby's food and think about changing the baby and getting her to bed and then I've got to think about getting all the other jobs done I didn't do earlier.

Life for her partner Pete had not changed that much. "I wake up and eat, go to work and when I'm not out in the evenings I help out with the baby, when I can". Marty's day followed a similar pattern as he started work at 9 am and returned home at 5 pm. He was still able to play tennis, go out with mates and go to the gym on a regular basis. Marty described his typical day:

> I wake up at 6 am for a shower on my own, then breastfeed and between 10 am and 12 noon, I'll try to get out of the house to meet for coffee with my antenatal group, then get dinner ready in between lots of domestic jobs, if I can get the baby to sleep. By 8 pm, I'm shattered so if the baby's settled, I'll go to bed. (Vera)

When comparing men's use of time with women's it appears that men had more by control and flexibility in the use of their time use, with women's time constrained and regulated by their domestic and childcare responsibilities. Kay (1998) argues this is largely due to the dominant societal ideologies related to motherhood, that constraint woman from accessing time for themselves and make them feel guilty if they do. So in practice women had less opportunity than men and this problem is compounded when women are employed and suffer what Hochschild (1989) has referred to as the "second-shift" in their daily lives, where they need to manage and accomplish both family and work roles.

In terms of making effective use of time, many couples had devised routines around the needs and demands of their child, but that meant the only time they had together as a couple was in the evenings when women just wanted to relax and many of the men had to attend to work duties in readiness for work the following day. Many couples remarked that their time was now scarcer, a phenomenon alluded to by Schor (1999) as 'time-famine' which results from the faster pace of life we now live, which means activities that fill our life have to be cramped into a smaller time-frame. This is similar to Kay's (1999) identification of 'time crunched households' and is relevant to couples who were involved in this particular study. In other words, they simply don't have enough time to do everything they would want to, so they have to rationalise and compromise the time they have available.

5.7.3 Childcare

When pre-birth couples were re-interviewed at the post-birth stage, they discussed how they managed their time to deal with the demands of childcare. Through the data that emerged, it was possible to ascertain gendered parenting roles. Nonetheless, it is important to appreciate as Holden (2010) claims gender is only one of many determinants of parenting and it is important to appreciate that cultural, individual and interpersonal factors are just as likely to impact upon parenting. In most cases women assumed the primary care role and men the support role, even when involved in a shared leisure opportunity where ultimately women still took prime responsibility for childcare (see Thompson, 1995).

This was evidenced in what couples had to say about plans and strategies they'd put into place to deal with the demands of childcare. "I work full time, so the wife does most of the childcare. I'm simply not around, but I suppose I need to help out more to give her a break" (Marty). Rory was already helping out where he could, but again only had intentions, to do more to help. "I'm just so tired, when I get home from work and anyway Ria has usually bathed and fed the baby, so there's not much I can do" (Rory). Ria nodded her head in agreement, "that's right, I'm the milk machine". Both Pete and Alan had positive intentions to help with childcare and had suggested to their partner's that friends could help, but they did not want to interfere with what they considered as their partner's key role. Alan then gave his thoughts on their approach to childcare and the options available to them:

> We do have friends who could help and now we're part of a privileged club of child minders. We have planned to share childcare as I am completely flexible in terms of when I need to be at work. (Alan)

Rhian nodded in agreement: "yes, this is mostly my job and the baby club is a good idea and we're more likely to use friends than 'so-called' professional babysitters". Sue also intended to use friends to help with childcare:

> Some of our friends with young children have offered to help, but we'll have to find out what works and what doesn't and then decide what's best for us. We've been given conflicting advice about baby care and I think we need to work it for ourselves through trial and error.

Her partner, Pete agreed with Sue's sentiments and re-iterated their approach to childcare as "go with the flow" to remain relaxed and to be flexible.

5.7.4 Leisure pre/post birth

The data indicates that couples define and re-define leisure as they transition into parenthood. When they become parents they experience more stress and free time becomes more child-centred (Daly, 2001). This view has been supported by Sayer and Mattingly (2006, p.218) who have argued that "parents have replaced adult orientated leisure with child–centred activities such as, organising, attending and supervising children's activities".

When couples were asked, if they had witnessed any significant changes in their leisure now they were parents, a number of patterns emerged in terms of their access to time for leisure and the nature of leisure activities they now engaged in. All couples reported having less leisure time during the latter stages of pregnancy, but more leisure time before they were pregnant and during the early stages of pregnancy. Much of their leisure time was now used for collective leisure as a family to engage in activities around the home (core leisure) or less frequently outside of the home (balance leisure) which required planning, organising and managing.

During the early stages of parenthood, it seems that in order to spend more time together as a family couples had to compromise their own time for solo leisure. "We take the baby with us wherever we go and most leisure activities involve our child, so we've had to adapt to our life situation" (Rory). Pete provided a similar view:

> When we have free time, we involve the baby. The only time we have for ourselves is when the baby is asleep, but a lot of this time is spent catching up with jobs we did not get to in the day. So even though we're in the same physical space, we could be doing completely different jobs around the house and often don't really get the time to even talk or relax together.

Pete's partner, Sue, added her comments: "Having a baby has encouraged us to get of the house and do more 'things' and we now have to manage our time very carefully, whereas before we did not so we make better use of the time now". These comments provide some evidence to suggest that many couples feel pressured in their use of time. Dyck & Daly, (2009, p.188) recognize this as the wider culture places, "the needs of the children above the needs of partnerships and for some couples this prioritization had become a way of life". Rory and Ria provided support to the suggestion that 'new' parents, time manage to make the most effective use of their 'available' time.

"We get out more at the weekend, we feel we have to, and we're really enjoying our time with the baby" (Rory). Ria gave an example of a shared activity they intended to undertake: "we'd love to go to the indoor climbing wall together and take turns to climb ourselves and look after the baby". This view was supported by Rhian:

> Leisure time for us, involves the baby. When I was pregnant there were so many 'things' I couldn't do. Now we do lots of things around the house like cooking, making cards and spending time in the garden.

Marty and Vera presented their own perspective on this issue:

> Before, we used to spend lots of time with friends socialising in clubs and cafes. Now we tend to go for coffee and meals at friend's houses with baby 'in tow'. I still get to play tennis and go to the gym, and going out with mates for a few beers. (Marty)

Vera's personal time for leisure was more restricted:

> Time for myself, are you joking? My free time has changed dramatically, as I don't have any at the moment. I've had to accept that any time for leisure has to involve the baby. I do miss running and going for a long walk for fitness. Also, I miss going out for meals and having a wine to relax without the baby.

5.7.5 Family leisure

During the interview a number of pre-birth (now post-birth) couples referred to the importance of healthy family relations through family leisure. Research on this topic has shown that family leisure requires parental commitment, time to be organised and is primarily constructed for the benefit of children and secondly for the family as a whole (Wearing 1993). In this study, family leisure held contradictory meanings and outcomes, on account of the commitment and difficulties of organising and facilitating such collective leisure experiences. Couples talked about their involvement in family leisure from a very positive perspective, but also noted that family leisure impinged on their own time and commitments. This theme is related to research undertaken by Trussell and Shaw (2007) with rural based families who identified the same dualities surrounding engagement in family leisure. Many couples saw family leisure as a parenting duty, but also as an opportunity to engage and connect with their child. This work fell disproportionately on women involved in this study limiting their own time for leisure where family leisure was often described as a continuation of their mothering role (Hilbrecht *et al*. 2008).

This finding is related to gender differences in the meaning and experience of family leisure (Trussell and Shaw, 2007). In this study men's and women's experience of family leisure was quite different. For women, family leisure had less autonomy and a different quality to their own solo leisure, but for men family leisure was seen as enjoyable time out with their child. In order to make time for family leisure many parents had to micro-manage their time and plan ahead for family activities around the home and out of the home. This involved allocating specific periods of time to be together as a family, to make the most effective use of their available time they had. Brown *et al*. (2005) have argued that such a strategy is linked to Taylor's ideas of scientific management, where micro-managing time for efficiencies takes on an industrial tone and as a result, parents succumb to the cult of efficiency associated with the workplace. In effect, their leisure mirrors the same characteristics as their work, but there is no flexibility in the model for contingencies and the realities of parenting make it unpredictable.

Three couples had mentioned their plans for family leisure during their pre-birth interviews and it was evident that during their second interviews they still placed 'high' value on this collective form of leisure. Many of their plans had come to fruition and many couples spent much of their free time with their first born child engaged in a range of activities, which included: walks around the neighborhood; swimming at local pools; visiting libraries; spending time at the beach and in play-based activities. The more adventurous couples had already started the process of planning camping trips to different regions within New Zealand, with other like-minded families as this type of holiday was more affordable than going abroad, which for many couples due to their financial situation was not possible at the time of the interview. The data emerging from this study indicated that balance leisure took greater precedence over core leisure. Balance leisure mostly involved out of home activities and events that had to be scheduled in advance were more formal and required more time, resources and planning. Core leisure was described as informal, based around the home, required less time and energy and could be organised to fit into more specific periods of available time (see Zabriskie & McCormick, 2001; Poff *et al*. 2010a). In promoting balance leisure, parents drew attention to the benefits of getting out of the home, introducing their child to the 'big-outdoors', where opportunities for leisure were more numerous and potentially more beneficial for the 'whole' family (Agate *et al*. 2009).

For most couples, family leisure was enjoyable as this was an opportunity to interact with their child and helped confirm family identity and togetherness. Harrington (2006b, p.426) identified similar outcomes of family leisure, when referring to Shaw and Dawson's (2001) study, where parents made the effort for family leisure to be purposeful, "to provide opportunities for children to learn what parents hope will become life-long values". For a minority of couples family leisure acted as a constraint reflecting the tension between their individual needs and the needs of their family. Shaw & Dawson (2003/2004) recognised this as the 'idealised notion of family leisure', which increases the guilt, burden and sense of responsibility of parents. In these cases, family leisure was less enjoyable and more of an obligation, in what Shaw (2008b) recognized as an 'ethic of work', where family leisure activities are planned and organised to meet the needs of their child.

Couples also gave their views on specific leisure facilities in Christchurch in terms of which facilities they deemed as 'family friendly'. Library South in Beckenham was judged to be "very child and family friendly" (Rhian), because of the wide collection of books and activities for young children, and the café area where parents could relax whilst their child entertained themselves in the designated play area. However, Alan was concerned that most of the play equipment in the Parks around Christchurch was poorly designed, boring and needed replacement:

> I'd like to see more play equipment made from natural products were kids can use their brain and not just their body. I would advocate play facilities that are themed to reflect New Zealand culture and designed with community input to meet the needs of the local community. Play spaces outdoors should be designed for kids to have fun and to stimulate their imagination in discovering their natural environment.

Alan's concerns are consistent with the philosophy of the nature play initiative in Western Australia, which is a Department of Sport and Recreation Department funded scheme aimed at making unstructured play outdoors part of the everyday life of West Australian children (Department of Sport and Recreation, 2011). Play England (2006) has a similar philosophy in supporting the wide ranging values identified above related to the benefits arising from children's play in natural areas. This philosophy is built upon solid foundations as a wide range of evidence exist within the play literature, to confirm that in most western countries children's access to play freely in their natural surroundings in severely limited.

Unfortunately, in New Zealand there are no such plans to introduce a similar scheme, which could be facilitated by Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). Vera suggested that those responsible for planning and designing public leisure facilities in Christchurch could learn from what she considered "good practice" at suburban malls at the Palms and Riccarton. According to Sue, these particular malls had "really good changing areas and wide aisles and easy access to shops". Ria's experience of shopping in the Christchurch City centre was quite different:

> The shops are awful and the aisles are too narrow for getting buggies around. It's often difficult to find a lift to access and I have had to use the disabled toilets to change the baby. This is unacceptable to both parents and disabled people.

With regard to improving leisure facilities for families in Christchurch, it comes as no surprise that the four couples re-interviewed suggested that those responsible for leisure facility design needed to incorporate the basic infrastructural elements. Some of their recommendations included: adequate space to move in and around leisure facilities; specific provision for parking for parents with young children; social areas for parents to relax with other parents and baby changing/feeding areas to meet families' expectations. Couples identified conflicting perspectives in the reality of family leisure as it was crucial for family identity, family bonding and satisfaction with family life. However, time dedicated to family leisure caused a shortage of time for couple and solo leisure. In summary, involvement in family leisure was highly valued by the majority of couples, and played a purposive and pivotal role in enhancing coupled relationships and child-parent relationships. These findings are consistent with a number of other studies (Milkie *et al.* 2004; Kay, 2009; Poff *et al*. 2010a; Shaw, 2010) who report that family leisure is crucial for family identity, family bonding and satisfaction with family life. However, it should be noted, that family leisure requires time, resources, planning and parental supervision and has the potential to impact negatively on couple leisure and solo leisure.

5.8 Summary of Chapter

In this chapter, the pre-birth couple and post-birth couple and four couples re-interviewed were introduced and interpreted. In the next chapter the findings from the interviews with leisure facility managers in Christchurch are discussed in relation to the themes that emerged as a result of the data generated. In the penultimate section of Chapter 6, the final version of the conceptual model will be presented and explained, after all the findings on which this study is based have been reported.

CHAPTER 6 – Interview Study of Leisure Managers

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the pre-birth, post-birth and pre-birth now post-birth interviews were introduced. The details of the interviewees were then given, using pseudonyms to keep their identities unknown. The findings of all three sets of interviews were then presented, interpreted and compared with each other.

To ascertain their views on the need for family leisure generally and to evaluate the extent to which they provided opportunities for family leisure, twelve leisure facility managers were interviewed using an interview guide. The key aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which leisure facilities in Christchurch could be considered 'family-friendly'. This led to a second research question: How do leisure facility managers in Christchurch plan, provide, and manage opportunities for family leisure? Managers' perceptions regarding the constraints on family leisure were then sought and managers also gave feedback on the extent to which their facilities could be considered family-friendly. This discussion led to other areas of enquiry concerning any future plans to improve and enhance leisure for families.

In this chapter, personal details are given below for each manager to add context to this study. However, the majority of this chapter is devoted to the interview findings which are presented and discussed according to the themes that arose from the interview data. In the penultimate section of this chapter, the final version of the conceptual model on which this study is based is presented, in light of the focus group and interviews studies with pre-birth and post-birth couples and the interview study with leisure managers. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings from the interviews with managers.

6.2 The Interviewees

Manager 1 was a senior manager for a shopping mall in the study area. He had sole responsibility for marketing, managing and maintaining the extensive grounds of the mall and the business clients that operated in the mall. He faced difficult challenges in maintaining the customer base of the mall due to competition, but believed the mall had potential due to its location and growing local population.

Manager 2 held a senior manager position in a state-funded leisure facility in Christchurch. He was an experienced manager, responsible for over 200 staff, some full-time, part-time and casual, at middle, junior, team leader and supervisory levels. He was based at a multi-purpose facility that served the sporting and recreational needs of the wider Christchurch community.

Manager 3's role was to develop recreation programmes throughout the study area in which this research is based. Much of her work was concerned with creating and facilitating community engagement in sport and recreation and she had specific responsibilities for working with schools. For this purpose, she worked with existing facility managers in the public, private and voluntary sectors involved with sport and recreation provision.

Manager 4 had a senior management role in a major cultural/heritage attraction in Christchurch. The facility was funded by both state and voluntary sources. His key role was to attract visitors to the facility and supervise part-time staff and volunteers.

Manager 5 managed a privately funded health and fitness facility. Her key role was to manager a number of staff that maintained the facility and other staff that undertook health and fitness classes for members. She also had management responsibility for marketing the facility to potential and existing customers.

Manager 6's key role was to manage a suburban library within the confines of the study area. She managed a large number of full-time (professional) and part-time staff and was responsible for an extensive library stock. Her other major task was concerned with community liaison and promotion of library services in Christchurch.

Manager 7 described her position as 'middle management'. She worked in a major cultural attraction funded by Christchurch City Council and was one of several managers with specific responsibility for volunteers and had direct management responsibility for relationships with all educational institutions in Christchurch.

Manager 8 was responsible for a voluntary-funded sport and recreation facility in a Christchurch suburb. She managed a number of duty supervisors, both part time and casual staff, and instructors and tutors in sport and recreation. She had key responsibilities for promoting the services of the facility and for community liaison.

Manager 9 was responsible for managing a privately funded play facility for young children up to the age of pre-school. The facility was funded from private sources and offered parents with young children a place to take their children to have fun and play in a safe indoor environment. Many parents used the facility to have time out or as a venue for their children to play during poor weather.

Manager 10 had direct management responsibility for six duty managers and the major cinema complex in which he was based. He had specific responsibility for the marketing, maintenance and management of the complex. The facility had very high usage, especially at the weekends, and was frequented by a large number of visitors who used other leisure facilities located next to the complex.

Manager 11 managed a tourist attraction, which attracted a significant number of visitors locally, regionally and internationally. The facility was privately funded and had witnessed significant investment and growth over the last decade. She managed a small number of staff and frequently travelled overseas to promote the facility to attract tourists to visit a number of Christchurch 'attractions'.

Manager 12 had specific responsibility for the marketing and promotion of the facility where she was based. The facility was privately funded and offered a range of sporting, health and fitness programmes to the wider community of Christchurch and to local business clients. A number of corporate events were held at the facility and the site was also used as a training establishment by many local organisations.

6.3 Findings of Leisure Manager Interview Study

The interviews with leisure managers raised a numbers of themes that are discussed in more depth in the remaining part of this section. The first theme, 'philosophy of provision' and the second theme highlights the importance of 'facility design', and design considerations for families. The third theme, 'engaging with users', highlights that managers must strive to meet the needs of the customers they serve. This links with the next theme, 'meeting family leisure needs' where managers suggested a number of practical examples to meet family leisure needs. In the remaining part of this section, managers talked about 'facilitating family leisure' using a range of strategies and initiatives and finally, 'suggestions for improvement' to improve service and provision for families, within their facility.

6.3.1 Philosophy of provision

A number of managers were able to relate to the lived experiences of pregnant couples and 'first-time' parents, as during the interviews they talked about their own experience as parents and the challenges that they faced. A number of them talked more specifically about the problems and challenges they faced in accessing leisure facilities for their family. Manager 2 described becoming a father as a "journey into the unknown", especially with his first child. This observation was supported by what Manager 5 had to say. "When we had our first child, I decided to take a year off. Becoming a parent was a shock to the system for me, but somehow we managed, we had no choice, we had to." Manager 6 expressed similar concerns with her first child. "I muddled through and coped. I just didn't realise, how challenging having a new addition in the family was going to be". It is apparent from these comments that a number of managers sympathised with parents and had some understanding of the difficult task faced by first-time parents.

Indeed, a number of managers claimed that they purposely took the time to talk to their customers in order to have some understanding of their needs and concerns. This happened informally when managers had the time and opportunity to get to know their customers, but most of the time managers were time pressured and had to arrange a formal means for this to occur, which did not give them the opportunity to discuss issues informally with customers. As a result, Manager 1 and Manager 6 had arranged a number of formal discussion groups to provide their customers with the opportunity to reflect on the service they provided. This initiative was open for all customers to contribute.

However, Manager 6 noticed that few pregnant women or parents took part in such discussions as, ironically, they did not have the time or confidence to contribute. Manager 3 actively encouraged feedback from families and provided a range of experiences for the family at the facility he managed. "Our theme is about play and this involves young people interacting with other family members and other families".

Manager 10 expressed a number of useful insights concerning the difficulties families face when visiting leisure facilities, as she had personally experienced problems:

> It's important for us not only to talk and listen to families, but also to act on what they suggest. We have a number of staff with young children, so we have a good baseline to work from. We have learnt that the two most important considerations for young families are to keep activities low cost and to fit activities to their time schedules.

Manager 6 had a similar philosophy to Manager 10. "This facility is an environment for kids, where mums can mix with other mums and relax while their children read books or play on computers, and know that their kids are safe". When I asked her about how this philosophy impacted upon other users of the library, she noted that a number of complaints had been received from other users about noise levels in the library created by young children running around and generally being noisy. A number of other managers commented that prioritising family use could potentially undermine the service that they provided to other members of their community. Hence the philosophy of provision that most managers in the public sector alluded to was a philosophy to serve all sectors of the community. There was no mention of specific policies they had in place to encourage families to use their facilities.

6.3.2 Facility design

This issue was discussed more generally and not many managers talked about how the specifics of design impacted upon family use or were aware of any literature that would help them improve design to facilitate family use. In most cases, managers were not involved at the design stage of the facilities, as most of them were appointed once their facility had been built. There was one exception to this trend, as Manager 2 was involved in the design stage of the facility he managed. His involvement in meetings with designers provided him with the opportunity to stress the needs of the community:

> This is a place where people engage in leisure in a multitude of different ways. At the design stage it was important to get this message across to the designers of the mall. Shopping is only one of many activities that our customers engage in at this facility.

A number of managers expressed the view that appropriate design was a key component for encouraging families, but few gave real-life examples or practical suggestions how this could be put into practice. Design was a problem 'area' that most felt powerless to change due to the huge expense that might be involved, but a number of managers realised that poor design discouraged use and limited the flexibility of what activities could be offered to families. A number of managers recognised the need for childcare facilities at their facility in the form of a crèche, though some appreciated that provision of such facilities could be expensive and fraught with legal difficulties. However, such a solution would not solve the problem of inappropriate design and the access problems faced families with young children.

Staffing and finding space for childcare was a major concern for many of the managers. "Providing a crèche is a great idea, but is not financially viable and there are licensing issues, legal difficulties, and health and safety considerations" (Manager 2). Manager 1 had similar concerns: "Having childcare facilities is just not viable or economical". At the facility where Manager 4 worked, childcare facilities were provided, but there was no room for casual bookings. Manager 7 noticed that at leisure facilities where childcare facilities were provided, "they were often booked well in advance by expectant mums as soon as they knew they were pregnant". The major problem for Managers 8 and 9 concerned the fact that their crèches were often used only as a childcare facility, rather than a place where people exercised or played sport to have a break from their children:

> Many people, who work in town as we're close to the city centre, just use our crèche and not the gym. This causes issues with some of our members with young children, as there's often no places left for them. We really need to review this policy and think about the needs of our members, before others. (Manager 9)

Manager 4 planned to offer free childcare facilities on specific days of the week, in order to involve first-time mums. This idea seemed problematic, as she had previously mentioned that such facilities were already over-subscribed. Manager 4 had plans to employ a dedicated childcare manager, whose key purpose would be to liaise directly with mums and dads, but he did not provide any details of how this initiative would be funded or realised:

> We have heaps of little kids in and out of the facility all the time and offer programmes to encourage parents to bring their children with them. Provision to include children less than two years of age is just too problematic due to safety concerns.

When Manager 7 had her first child, family support was critical and enabled her to continue her involvement in competitive running and working part-time:

> I did try a crèche, but after the first time, I just couldn't leave my child there. Having a supportive family around me was more important to me. Simply providing childcare facilities may not be the answer for many families with young children, as some parents don't use them.

Although Manager 2 argued that providing a crèche at the facility he managed was a "great idea", later in the interview he acknowledged that the crèche was not commercially viable, even though the idea was popular among his customers. To some extent, Manager 4 had a similar view to Manager 2:

> The biggest problem with providing leisure opportunities for families is the childcare issue. We used to have facility staff looking after children in a safe area of the facility. You just can't do that anymore with the new legislation. To run any kind of childcare facility now, there's lots of hoops to jump through and lots of conditions to meet, so in the end it's not really worth all the hassle and it's expensive.

Manager 2 prioritised parking for families with young children at the facility she managed, but not for pregnant women. Specific parking provision for families and pregnant couples was an issue that a number of managers suggested, but only Manager 2 had taken any affirmative action and set aside specific parking places for parents with young children. Infrastructural elements were also important for Manager 5. She had recently introduced a café area to the facility which offered a refuge for parents to rest over a coffee, while their children played and entertained themselves with other children in the play area set aside within view of the café:

> It suddenly dawned on me that if you entertain and meet the needs of adults, kids are quite happy to play on their own or have fun with other kids. Obviously, some kids are too young to be left on their own, but playing with other kids is so important for their personal development and to prepare them for becoming part of a wider community. Informal play is really important for kids. (Manager 5)

Working with the community at the planning and design stage was important and often linked with a successful build of a facility, according to Manager 2:

> We consulted early on with a variety of user groups, which included different parenting groups. This process was enlightening and I believe a success. We now have a facility designed with, and for, the community.

Both Managers 12 and 10 would have liked more input into the design of the buildings that they managed. Manager 12 had recently been allocated funds to redesign the entrance areas to the facility and was keen to increase the flow of traffic in the reception area, which included a children's play area and wider aisles for buggies. When the plans were presented for community consultation, the response was disappointing as there was minimal feedback from families with young children. Manager 2 described the facility he managed as a "community leisure facility" and with the help of planning experts he had redesigned the facility to make it easier for parents with buggies to move around and access all parts of the mall. This was not possible in public-funded leisure facilities as managers did not have access to such expertise and capital.

6.3.3 Customer focus

Probably the most important concerns that managers shared involved the community or market they served. When they were asked for clarification about what they meant by the term 'community', a number of responses were given. The managers of public and voluntary leisure facilities described their community as the people they served. This was clearly demonstrated by Manager 3:

> It's the whole thing of community that we're here for. That includes everybody, regardless of age or background. We make an important contribution to the community in terms of the heritage we display, the education we provide and the economic contribution we generate to the city. Our mission is to be inclusive rather than exclusive, although we don't have a specific policy for the groups you mentioned.

In contrast, the managers of private leisure facilities described their community as their identified market which could change and needed monitoring. Managers were keen to listen to the needs of their customers, but most had not put in place any process to record customer feedback, other than routine complaint procedures. In reality, managers suffered from a lack of time to introduce such systems which led to frustration and the realisation that they were limited in what they could achieve for families. Manager 1 spoke to his customers on a regular basis through what he termed "shopper focus meetings". From what he described this seemed more like a commercial monitoring process on how customers spent their money and was not really a forum to discuss issues and problems they encountered within the facility, from the perspective of families. He claimed that such customer feedback was utilised to better meet the needs of customers, which included families.

6.3.4 Meeting family leisure needs

Managers interpreted the leisure needs of families in a number of different ways and during the interviews it became evident that they had experienced problems with putting their ideas into practice. The key reasons cited by managers were lack of time and funds to adequately research customer needs. However, Manager 4 claimed that the needs of such groups had been put into practice:

> Some of our classes are designed for pregnant women and we even put changing tables in the men's toilets, to encourage dads to come to the facility with their kids. So we're much more child-friendly than we used to be. We encourage families to get together, and have plans for a family room to encourage families to mix. We've got soft toys and have consulted a number of our parents with younger children to ask them what they think we could do better.

Similarly, Manager 6 argued that children were considered as a key user group:

> Children are our future. It's important that they're interested and excited about libraries. One of our key policies revolves around provision of resources for children. We've got a 'books for babies' scheme, where we focus on pregnant mums and provide a promotional package that includes a first-born book and a library membership form for their child. We don't charge young children less than two years old for damage to books or for late returns. Our baby-times programmes are very popular and well attended by parents and their young children. It's mostly mums that attend though.

As a result of the above initiatives, Manager 6 claimed that the library was now more child-friendly and other managers provided similar evidence:

> We provide a safe and supportive water environment for young children and have an area dedicated just for them. We also offer exercise classes for mums, but I appreciate we could do better and we must not forget the dads. We hope to introduce more specific classes for parents with young children, but first we need to consult with them in designing suitable family friendly programmes. (Manager 1)

None of the managers discussed the process of meeting family leisure needs through consultation, identification, and the design of specific programmes. A number of family-type activities that might meet their needs were suggested, but managers did not give any indications on how they would prioritise families and provide meaningful leisure for all family members.

6.3.5 Facilitating family leisure

Managers identified a number of different strategies in order to meet the needs of the community they served, but in the case of pre-birth and post-birth couples it appears that existing policies and programmes lacked focus on these groups. This was evident in what Manager 2 had to say: "we don't provide any specific programmes or activities for families, as it's the wider community that we serve". When Manager 2 was asked to qualify what he had said, he remarked that "policies are decided upon on what's best for us and the whole community and not specific groups". He further elaborated that "the management decide in terms of what's best for this place, but we do include them as part of our marketing mix". This was in contradiction to what he had previously said. Manager 4 had introduced mother and baby yoga sessions as a result of several requests from first-time mothers, whereas Manager 8 had plans to introduce family passes with discounted prices to encourage more families to visit and use the facility she managed.

During the interviews with managers it became apparent that a range of initiatives had been considered by some managers to facilitate family leisure, but few of them had been put into practice. When Manager 4 was questioned on this matter, he agreed that families were a key market for the facility, but he commented that "many parents with younger children were restricted due to not having any childcare provision and a lack of access to the main areas of the facility". Manager 6 described the facility she managed as family-friendly, as a large collection of materials existed for young children and parents were actively encouraged to bring their young children with them. Also, the library had plans to stage musical and reading events at no costs to families, but these ideas were still subject to community consultation.

> Mums use our facility as a meeting place to meet with other mums and enjoy the fact that they can relax and have a coffee with some adult conversation, whilst their children entertain themselves with books. We've just purchased some toys for children to keep them entertained, which will give parents even more time for themselves, something they probably don't get much of at home. (Manager 6)

Manager 10 had recently introduced 'mums and bubs' movie sessions:

> When we first introduced the scheme about a year ago, we publicised them very strongly through various parents groups in and around Christchurch. Initially the take-up was slow and we got a poor response. We persevered and in the last few months, through word of mouth, mums are now coming. They're not hugely profitable, but they get mum and baby out of the house and I think it is important that we support these families.

In her interview Manager 3 also emphasised the importance of families:

> Most of our core marketing activities are aimed at families; they're our best customers, and they're often our most frequent visitors. Our families really enjoy the free rides we offer on the tram and the kids love the interaction with the animals, especially the little ones.

Manager 1 was involved in formulating policy development for leisure on behalf of the City Council. This provided him with the opportunity to be involved with key decisions regarding leisure provision at a number of leisure facilities managed by Christchurch City Council. He suggested that leisure managers needed to do more to engage their users by seeking out their opinions and engaging with key parent groups in the community on a regular basis. According to Manager 1, understanding and knowledge of family needs were key principles that underpinned good quality service for families:

> If places where people go for leisure are really serious about providing for families, they have to get the basics right. They need to provide activities and facilities that will appeal to all family members. They need to do this collectively and individually, so that all family members are entertained. Provision for leisure in Christchurch presently, is too concerned with the needs of those who already use leisure facilities.

The interview data collected shows that a number of managers are making positive moves to be more inclusive of families. They are beginning to realise and appreciate that families are an important user group and are making some positive, if slow, progress to be considered as a family-friendly facility.

6.3.6 Improving family leisure provision

During the interviews managers made a number of suggestions that they believed were both practical and realistic in improving provision for families. The major barriers to putting their ideas into practice were reported as a lack of adequate funds and time to plan and facilitate the changes. A number of managers acknowledged that a lot more effort was needed to better meet the needs of family groups.

To facilitate such changes, managers needed a 'new' perspective in relation to a change in their thinking and their management philosophy, suggested Manager 5. In essence, Manager 5 believed that "a more family centered and focused approach was necessary, with management firmly focused on meeting needs and providing a service". As a result, a number of practical suggestions were given to improve service and provision for families from a number of managers. Provision of adequate childcare facilities was considered a priority.

However as already noted, provision of adequate childcare facilities is fraught with difficulties and limitations, due to complicated licensing requirements, stringent rules governing their operation and prohibitive set-up and running costs. So in reality there are many challenges and problems to overcome in providing this type of service, some of which were outlined in what Manager 4 and Manager 3 had to say on this issue. "We'd love a crèche, so that parents could get away from their child for a change, but economically it's just not a viable option, it just wouldn't work for us" (Manager 4). Manager 3 had similar misgivings and expressed her concerns:

> A crèche would give parents more options. A crèche would give parents time for themselves, but some would argue that family leisure is meant to be about the 'whole' family engaging together. We don't have a crèche on site at present and we don't have any future plans to provide such a service.

The provision of play facilities for younger children was suggested by a number of managers. Manager 1 and Manager 9 noted that this would require a safe, enclosed place for children to play with toys. Manager 1 and Manager 9 agreed that this could be achieved with some ease and would involve minimal capital and be beneficial for many families with small children. "Kids get bored very quickly so, you need to provide them with stimulation. Some toys and an area to play would be a good starting point" (Manager 9). Manager 1 had similar ideas:

> We've thought about providing a play area for young children within the mall, but it would create a lot of noise in the mall. Before I did this, I'd have to speak to the various business partners I represent. I really like the way in which the IKEA superstores in Europe do this. They have a play facility located at the entrance, where parents can leave their children to play in a supervised enclosed space that is safe, whilst their parents can enjoy shopping without their children.

A number of other improvements were highlighted by managers to better engage families and were primarily concerned with improving accessibility and improved aspects of family and child-friendly design. Specific parking provision was an idea put forward by a number of managers:

> We need a bigger and better entrance that's on the flat. Car parking needs to be much closer to the entrance and we need to re-think our strategy in terms of how we allocate car parking space. Presently there's no specific provision for families and that needs to change. We can't do a great deal about the car parking space, but could better manage how we use it. (Manager 2)

Manager 10 suggested that family changing facilities could be improved in most leisure facilities:

> When I used to visit sport and recreational facilities with our baby, I used to get really frustrated because the men's changing area never had anywhere where you could see to the needs of your baby. There was no changing room or changing table, so I often ended up changing her on the floor out of necessity, which is probably not the most hygienic place.

In summary, leisure facility managers in Christchurch still have a lot more work to do, in encouraging family groups such as those in this study, to fully utilise their local facilities. Initially, this requires managers to engage with families and facilitate their involvement with plans and strategies to meet their needs, in terms of leisure. A more family focused approach is suggested with positive programming, aimed specifically at families.

6.4 Summary of Chapter

The previous chapter presented the key findings from the interviews with leisure facility managers. This chapter presents and explains the final version of the conceptual framework of this study based upon all the findings from the focus group studies and interviews. The key themes that emerged from the findings are then related to the relevant literature on family leisure and the questions upon which this study was based. Personal reflections and challenges involved in undertaking this study are then presented to give the reader an insight into the researcher's journey. The limitations of this study are then highlighted and a number of recommendations are put forward for improving family leisure provision. To conclude, a number of suggestions are given for future research.

CHAPTER 7 – Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the key findings from the interviews with leisure facility managers. The final chapter presents and explains the final version of the conceptual model, which was compiled once all the findings had been analysed. Key themes from the data sets are drawn together and form the basis for the conclusion. Reflections on the research process are provided and a number of limitations are identified. Next, a number of recommendations are given: for parenting and family support organizations; employers in the workplace; leisure facility managers and the leisure profession. The final section of this chapter presents a number of suggestions for future research in family leisure, from the issues that were raised in this study.

7.2. Key Findings of this Study (in relation to research questions)

The findings that emerged from three sets of data are discussed as themes and include the focus group and interview data from both pre-birth and post-birth couples, and interview data from the leisure manager study in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. One of the strengths of this study is the comparability of families studied and the inclusion of both mothers and fathers and the temporal dimension of research, in that the focus of this study was on both pre-birth and post-birth stages. The aim of this study has been to examine how significant life events such as pregnancy and first-time parenting impact upon access, opportunity for and experiences of leisure, including the nature of constraints during this life stage. To achieve this, I undertook a detailed study of heterosexual couples utilising previous research in the area, and focus groups and interviews with both pre-birth and post-birth couples. Unlike previous research, this study traces new ground in that a specific phase of family life was investigated. Secondly, the perspectives of number of leisure managers were sought to gain a provider perspective, as well as a user perspective. This research offers a unique glimpse into the life of the people involved in this study and makes a number of important contributions. This study adds to the existing literature on family based leisure and also contributes to the parenting/family based literature. Put more simply, leisure impacts upon family life, and changing family circumstances impact upon one's own leisure.

Even though the subject of this study was principally focused on 'leisure', issues around parenting/family life emerged from the data. This data helped give a much clearer understanding of transition into first time parenthood. In revisiting the key findings, the purpose is to highlight how the findings relate specifically to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. In the following sub-sections of 7.2 the 'post-findings' version of the conceptual framework (Figure 7.1) is illustrated which provides a visual representation of the key findings of this study. The findings are later discussed and elaborated in later sub-sections with reference to the key research questions posed in Chapter 1.

7.2.1 Conceptual Framework (post-findings)

The final version of the conceptual framework (Figure 7.1) takes into account all the data that emerged as a result of this study from the focus group studies, interviews with both pre-birth and post-birth couples, and the interviews undertaken with leisure facility managers. The framework provides a visual representation of male and female leisure from pregnancy through the various stages of early parenthood. In terms of the quality and quantity of leisure, male leisure is reminiscent of a 'pint-pot', whereas female leisure over the same period could be described as a 'cocktail glass'. In effect, male leisure is less subject to constraints, when compared to female leisure, represented by the shape of each type of glass. As the birth of the child looms, opportunities for leisure narrow as indicated in the narrowing of each glass, but this is more evident for females as the funneling of the cocktail glass indicates.

The conceptual framework highlights how the key constraints identified in the research findings impact upon both the quantity and type of leisure engaged in during pregnancy and the early stages of parenthood, which include: 'couple leisure' (partners engaging in collective leisure activity); 'solo' leisure (leisure engaged in alone); 'family leisure' (leisure engaged in as a collective family unit with a child) and 'other leisure' (leisure engaged in with friends and others). It is also possible to identify from the framework, the impact of each constraint during pregnancy (Trimester 1, 2 and 3) and during the early stages of parenthood recognized in the framework, as three stages. This includes a period of 'challenge', (the first six months), a period of 'coping' (six to 12 months) and a period of 'establishment' (12-18 months post-birth).

It is evident from the data that the first six months of parenthood was 'challenging' as parents were coming to terms with being a 'new' parent. After six months, parents were developing strategies to cope and after 12 months parents had sufficiently developed their expertise as parents to feel comfortable in their role as a parent, when their role as a parent had become established.

In explaining the characteristics of different forms of leisure, Figure 7.1 illustrates that for women, coupled leisure pre-birth and post birth is important, but during the early stages of parenthood couples struggle to find time to be together without their child, curtailing the opportunity for couple leisure. Pre-birth women in this study spend most of their available time in solo leisure activities, but this diminishes as the 'significant life event' looms. The other form of leisure women engage in pre-birth is time spent with friends or members connected to their extended family networks. This is similar for men, but to a lesser extent. Once the baby arrives, 'solo leisure' for women diminishes and time out to socialise with friends reduces dramatically. It is only in the coping and later establishment phase that opportunities for solo leisure see some improvement for women.

For men time for solo leisure is curtailed, but not to the same extent as women's solo leisure. For post-birth men and women there is now more emphasis and commitment to family leisure time, which limits all other forms of leisure, including time for solo leisure and couple leisure and time out with friends. Nonetheless, it seems as parenting becomes less onerous and parents move into the coping stage and later, the establishment phase of parenting they are more able to cope with the demands and challenges of parenthood. This allows them to plan and manage their time more effectively, to engage in leisure collectively as a family and to a lesser extent find time for couple leisure and solo leisure, although family leisure still takes precedence over all other forms of leisure.

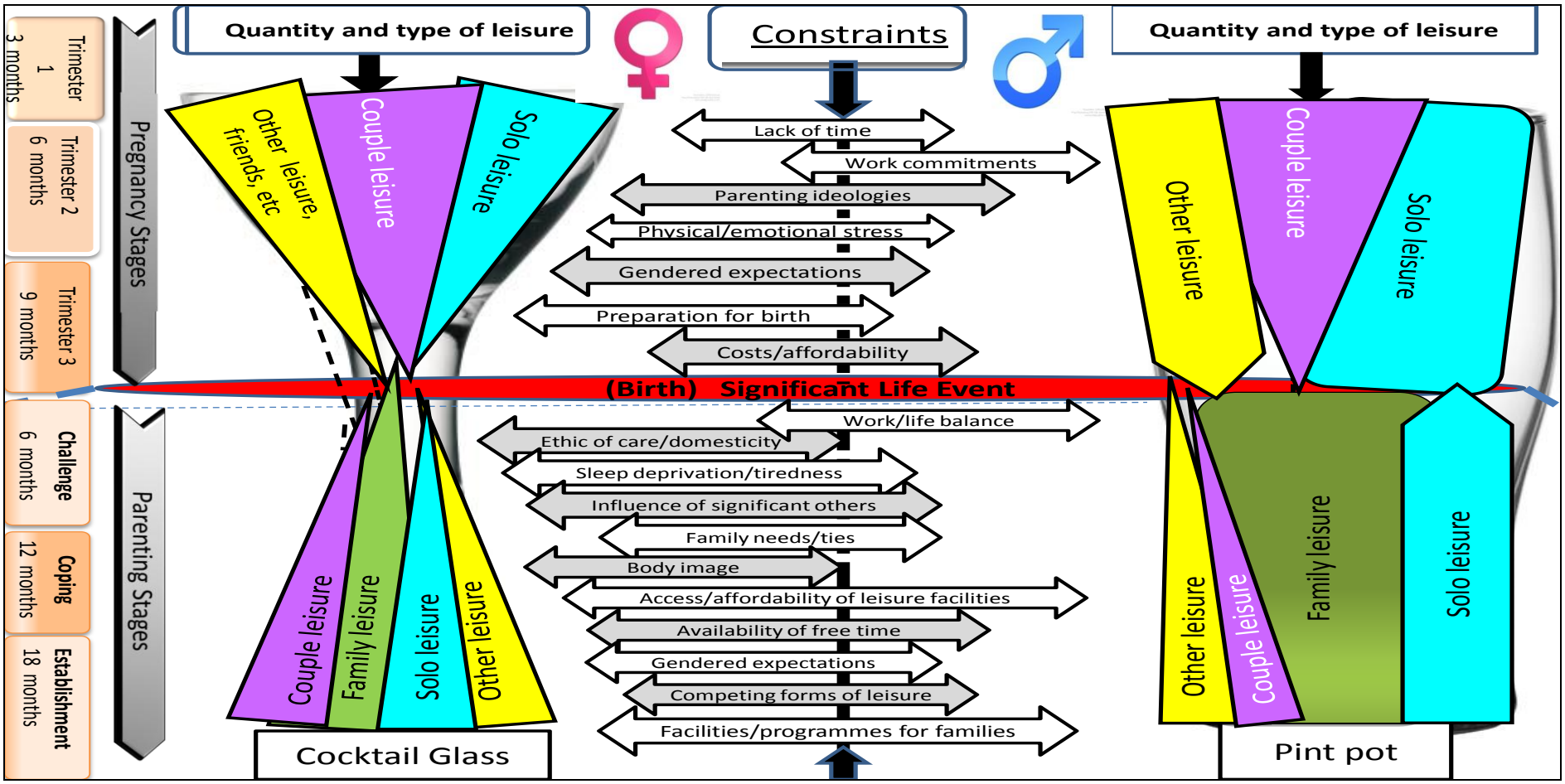
In Figure 7.1 it is noticeable that men followed a similar pattern to women, in terms of the different forms of leisure they engaged in, but the significant difference is that men do not witness a dramatic reduction in their solo leisure just after the birth of their child, whereas women do. However, solo activities for men may be curtailed due to the demands of work and the need to engage in other forms of leisure.

The conceptual model (Figure 7.1) shows that women's leisure is more constrained than men's, both during pregnancy and once their child is born. During pregnancy women have less time than men, suffer more emotional and physical stress, often due to tiredness, lack of sleep and gendered parenting ideologies. For men during the pregnancy stage, work commitments and the availability of funds are the two major constraints which shape their involvement in different forms of leisure.

After, the birth of a child the 'ethic of care' discussed in the literature review in section 2.5.7 and findings severely curtails women's involvement in leisure, particularly in 'solo leisure' and leisure with friends. Also, other constraints such as sleep deprivation, childcare, domestic obligations, body image and maintaining a healthy work-life balance act to limit women's involvement in leisure. The major constraint for men in the same period that curtails their involvement in leisure appears to be their commitment to work (ethic of work) and to a lesser extent childcare responsibilities, domestic obligations and securing a healthy work-life balance.

Within Figure 7.1, it is important to note that leisure providers have a role to play in encouraging and facilitating leisure opportunities for both, pre-birth and post birth couples, and the nature, extent and quality of leisure provision in the study location had a critical impact upon their access, opportunity and engagement in all forms of leisure.

7.1 Conceptual framework (post-findings)



7.2.2 Transition to parenthood (pregnancy and first-time parenthood)

How does first-time pregnancy and first-time parenthood, impact upon heterosexual couples in terms of their access, opportunity and experiences of leisure as individuals, as a couple and as a family?

A significant number of post-birth parents expressed the opinion that their partnership underwent significant changes when they became parents. The antecedents of such changes can be recognised throughout the three trimesters of pregnancy. Closer to the birth date, it seemed that intimacy declined but the partnership and relationship improved as both partners had a common objective in sight, the birth of their child.

Both pregnancy and parenthood could be viewed as significant life events that have the potential to cause stress and psychological upheaval, as it is evident within the data that men and women had quite different expectations about and realities of becoming parents. In terms of their pregnancy, women's experiences were quite divergent as some had felt quite lonely and isolated, yet others described their experience as pleasant and fulfilling. Nevertheless, all of them shared concerns about their changing body shape, body image and weight management. In the data, there is evidence to suggest that women curtailed and 'softened' their leisure activities to safer forms, so as not to damage their unborn baby, especially in the third trimester.

Females involved in this study reported that they were often subject to conflicting and misleading advice about what activities were safe and which were not. This caused some females to experience stress and a lack of confidence to participate in more active forms of leisure. This was not the case for all women as a couple of women did challenge the dominant discourse on which traditional motherhood is based and continued to participate well into their third trimester in active leisure. This did cause a number of problems for these women, who were subjected to ridicule by others in what Lupton (2006) refers to as stigmatisation by moral judgment. These same women were very active pre-pregnancy and maintained their participation albeit, less frequently as they sought to keep fit throughout the pregnancy. For most women, it became apparent that they lacked guidance on the 'real' risks involved in more active forms of leisure.

In Miller and Brown's (2005) study, pregnant women were similarly confused and Allender *et al*. (2006) study provides further evidence to support this observation. On the contrary, most men involved in this study continued to participate at the same level and frequency in their chosen leisure activities during trimester one and trimester two.

Moreover there was minimal discernible difference in their leisure pre-pregnancy and during pregnancy, other than having to work more hours to supplement the family income or to help out around the house especially in the third trimester, by which time women were less mobile. Many fathers saw their role as economic provider for the family, but still wanted to be identified as an 'involved parent', reflecting a cultural shift in the image of fathering, recognized by a number of researchers involved in studies on fathering (Daly, 2004; Lees, 2007; Shaw, 2008b; Such 2009).

Most of the parenting literature assumes that parenthood is shaped by tradition, but the data that emerged from this study suggests that some couples shared parenting duties. This finding provides further evidence that some couples were challenging the beliefs upon which traditional parenting is based by developing new ideas and responsibilities. There is evidence to suggest in this study that satisfaction with couple leisure equated to increased marital satisfaction as recognised by Johnston *et al*. (2006). Time together in couple leisure was useful to build, maintain and help rejuvenate coupled partnerships and inspired them to work as one dyadic unit. Moreover, couple-time meant adult-time together without their child. With the arrival of their child, this all changed as it is clear from the data that most post-birth couples spent less time together compared to the pre-birth stage and this is compatible with the narratives from couples explored in Edhborg *et al's*. (2005) study. Childcare was discussed as an option to give couples more time together, but most reasoned that their child was too young to be away from them and that using childcare services would be a waste of money.

In analysing the findings from this study it became clear that creating couple time was a challenge for many families, as a number of couples did not manage to free up time for themselves or each other. Couple time was considered important and as Dyck and Daly (2009, p.188) have shown it is a time where couples can re-connect and focus:

> On establishing a sense of couple…a time when partners hoped to maintain or rebuild a couple's identity as friends, lovers, and companions as well as co-parents and household/financial partners.

Many couples reported positive change in having children as this strengthened their relationship and couples worked more in partnership and became more committed to each other. The duty of parenthood was stronger in women as they had ultimate responsibility for the care of their child, whereas men's responsibilities were more flexible and infrequent. Research evidence from this study is consistent with Craig's (2007, p.132) international comparative work on childcare where first time mothers accumulated 3-4 hours extra workload per week, yet for men only 1 hour of extra workload per week. This evidence supports the claim that childcare is still gendered and in reality, men play a back-up and supportive role in parenting.

The transition or period of change that resulted as a consequence of parenting was quite a challenge for many couples, because the female partner shifted her focus from her partner to her child, which impacted negatively on the couple's intimate and sexual relationship. Draper (2003) has described this as an 'in-between status' involving an event for which many did not feel fully prepared. This is an area of family life that this study did not delve in too deeply. Nevertheless it is issue that requires further exploration as recognised by Herridge *et al.* (2003). As parents, couples were subject to a number of pressures, which included their own expectations and how these matched the realities and the views of significant, others such as family members and close friends. The media has a tendency to idealise parenting, which puts extra pressure on parents to reach expectations are almost impossible to achieve. Women identified more with their parenting role and the desire to improve their parenting skills through experience, whereas most men were more concerned with 'making ends meet' assuming the 'breadwinner role', by working longer hours and working away from home more, which put even more pressure on the couple's relationship.

Financial concerns were evident amongst many couples involved in this study as they described parenting as 'expensive'. Many felt pressured to purchase 'new' baby clothes and equipment, to be seen to be 'doing the best for their child', which put extra pressure and strain on their relationship and household income. Most of the men would have been happy with 'hand-me-downs' from relatives and friends, but most women wanted the best for their child and were prepared to pay the price. A number of women suggested that money could be used for this purpose, which would help them be seen as the 'best' parent they could be. This finding is reminiscent of the work of Kahu and Morgan (2007) who report that women are prepared to give up their time selflessly for the benefit of others.

The realities of parenting for many meant more stress and anxiety, the loss of personal time, freedom and flexibility and the fact that there was now another person to consider in all matters. The realities of parenthood far superseded expectations in the majority of cases and many remarked on the difficulties of adequately preparing to meet the 'unknown' challenges that lay ahead. As a result, a number of couples said they were unprepared and naïve about the realities of parenting and most expected some change. However, many were 'bowled over' by the fact that everything changed when they became parents. When I asked parents how they felt about becoming parents, a number of contradictions were evident. Many experienced what they described as euphoria and manifest joy when they became parents. They talked about joy and hope for the future and were more optimistic now they were parents, but a number of parents struggled to adapt to the parenting role and this created stress and tension in their marital relationship.

For the primary caregiver, in most cases women, being a parent meant sacrificing their own time to meet the needs of the family, in particular responsibilities associated with childcare and housework. In a positive sense, a number of couples remarked that the arrival of their child helped fuse and improve their relationship and confirmed them as a recognisable 'family' unit, amongst their friends and extended family members. Nevertheless, there was some evidence in the data from this study to support Kelly's (1995) concerns that parenthood and can be tiresome and demanding and can bring bitterness and division in a relationship. Indeed, many post-birth couples suffered tiredness and lack of sleep during the later stages of pregnancy and the early stages of parenting, when it was a matter of coping with babies crying and dealing with unpredictable sleeping patterns, which took some time to adjust to.

As in previous research, the ethic of care was prominent in this research study as there is evidence within the data to suggest that women experienced strong feelings of guilt being away from their children. This was very much dependant on their relationship with their partner and whether they practiced shared conjugal roles. Within the post-birth focus group study there was minimal evidence of shared parenting and the influence of 'ethic of care' was strong. Amongst post-birth couples that were interviewed, the data confirms more egalitarian forms of parenting where household and caring tasks were shared more equally and stereotypical masculine and feminine gendered roles were less evident. Nevertheless, the overall responsibility for domesticity and childcare still firmly rested on the shoulders of the female, restricting her freedom and independence in leisure.

Some of the data from this study suggest that more men are participating in domestic work and sharing household duties. Indeed some men such as Greg have challenged the conventional wisdom on which traditional ideas about parenting are based, by fully immersing themselves into the parenting role normally prescribed for the female. Nonetheless, most men in this study played a supportive role in parenting through shared activities which Lupton and Barclay (1998) recognise as important in developing a loving and close relationship. Craig's (2007) work in using time use diaries has been instrumental in this respect, as it has helped us understand how couples divide their time between leisure, children and employment and how gender structures couples use of time and the numerous competing demands involved in contemporary parenthood.

In terms of philosophies surrounding parenting, the data from this study confirms what Cowdrey *et al*. (2005) have observed, in that couples often hold contradictory ideas and approaches about parenting. There is some evidence in this study to support Craig (2006) and Sayer *et al*'s. (2004) concerns that on average, mothers spent more time with children than men, which primarily involves childcare and maintenance of the household. Fathers spent more of their time playing with their child, using their leisure time to connect with their child. It is encouraging to note that in this study, a number of couples intentionally spent time with their child, primarily through play activities to instill family values and virtues, identified as purposive leisure in the literature (Shaw & Dawson, 2001). More formal support in preparing for parenthood involved couples' attendance at antenatal classes. The comments provided by pre-birth and post-birth couples indicate that such classes were of minimal benefit in helping them prepare for parenthood. However, the fact that couples had time out together was important and attendance at antenatal class provided couples with the opportunity to meet and share experiences with other like-minded couples to discuss their concerns and worries.

7.2.3 Gendered leisure

In what ways does gender impact upon and influence men's and women's access to personal leisure and family leisure opportunities during pregnancy and early parenthood?

Gender had a significant impact upon men's and women's access to different forms of leisure described earlier and this is evident within Figure 7.1. The findings of this study indicate that women undertook the primary role in parenting and men the supporting role. As a result the ethic of care emerged as a prominent theme in females' description of their leisure experience. Men were more involved in the fathering role than their own father, primarily through play activities in the context of family leisure.

Women adopted a more laissez faire approach to parenting and reported being more prepared for the parenting role, than men. However, a number of men in the post-birth interview group shared the parenting role as they wanted to be more involved as a father.

Gendered perspectives were evident in the data, in that time, opportunity and access to leisure was more problematic for women compared to men. This was largely due to the number of constraints that impacted upon women's leisure (see Figure 7.1). As a result, the nature of leisure in the same relationship was quite different for men and women. Nonetheless, where couples shared parenting duties there was a more equal distribution of time available for leisure, but in nearly all cases, women's time for solo leisure was more compromised than men's. Yet it was noted by a few women that leisure was an area of their life that gave them the opportunity to experience freedom and a temporary escape from parenthood.

A large proportion of the women involved in this study felt rushed, pressured and stressed as parents and desired more time to undertake solo leisure pursuits or time out with friends. A couple of mothers also had to care for elderly parents that lived nearby, being part of what Hilbrecht *et al* (2008) refers to as the 'sandwich generation' which further constrained their access to free time. Consistent with other studies of family leisure, this study uncovered that women in the child rearing stage of their life in a coupled relationship encounter restricted access to personal leisure time (see Hochschild, 1989; Bittman, 1999; Brown *et al*. 2001; Brown *et al*. 2005; Currie, 2009). The birth of a child is often a turning point for the re-establishment of more traditional and recognisable gendered roles for some couples. Most men and some women embraced these roles which often resulted in the legitimisation of gendered leisure in terms of the quality and quantity of leisure time and is illustrated in Figure 7.1.

The findings from this study in many ways support much of the gendered-based literature which identifies leisure as an important site for the construction of gendered differences (Freysinger, 1994; Hochschild, 1998; Wearing, 1998; Aitchinson, 2005). However post-birth women in this study that were employed managed to negotiate time out for themselves as the status of employed work gave them self confidence and the opportunity to legitimize their own leisure. This finding is substantiated and consistent with Kay's (2000, p.252) research study on women where "paid work has the capacity to bring about a positive shift in gender relations between men and women".

However, in reality, most working mothers had insufficient energy for leisure, and much of their spare time was taken up by other responsibilities around the home. The working mothers in this study provide support to Thompson's (1995) concerns in the contrasting conditions of men's and women's leisure. She argues that such conditions are embedded in patriarchal relations and institutionalised in heterosexual marriages, which in practice means women are accountable for a number of roles, including worker, housewife and housekeeper.

The majority of post-birth females that worked in this study were subject to the double burden of paid work (first-shift) and unpaid work (second-shift), so had less time and opportunity for leisure compared to mothers who did not work. For some employed mothers paid work was debilitating, although it gave them a sense of worth and time out from parenting, but in reality only in work time. Furthermore, parenting ideologies surrounding motherhood placed child care responsibilities with the mother at the cost of their own time for personal leisure.

Time-out for leisure was stressed as important by women in this study, as this gave them a sense of empowerment and control in their lives, and in some ways helped them overcome gendered expectations (Aitchinson, 2005; Currie, 2009; Shaw, 2010). In relation to the gendered construction of family leisure, the findings suggest that in most families, women serviced the family leisure experience, whilst men described family leisure in a similar way in which they had described their own leisure. This was quite different for women who had described their own leisure as diametrically opposed to family leisure.

Gender has the potential to play a significant role in family leisure as many studies indicate that in more traditional families, where the family ideology of 'familism' is more dominant, women experience less leisure than their male partners (see Harrington, 2006b; Mitchell & Chapman, 2006; Shaw, 2008a). This was not the case for all post-birth families in this study, especially those families that practiced shared parenting where leisure was planned and negotiated between both partners on the basis of what's best for the 'whole' family, where in most cases priority was given to the child's needs.

7.2.4 Constraints

Are there constraints that operate upon personal leisure and family leisure during pregnancy and once couples become parents, other than those imposed by gender relations?

The data that emerged as a result of the solo and joint interviews with pre-birth and post-birth couples indicated that the nature of leisure was significantly different, before pregnancy, during pregnancy and after the birth of their child. However, similar constraints to leisure that were reported at the pre-birth stage were also evident at the post-birth stage. The data confirms that pre -pregnancy couples had more time and opportunity for leisure, whereas during pregnancy many of them experienced a range of constraints that impinged upon their leisure, especially for women during the last trimester of their pregnancy and the first six months of parenthood, where resting and sleeping were their main concerns and free-time was a difficult concept for them to grasp, as they had very little of it.

During pregnancy a wide range of constraints operated significantly reducing women's access and opportunity for leisure, which is consistent with Bittman (1999) and Brown *et al*. (2001) research. In this study, the key constraints identified were: a lack of time; parenting ideologies; physical and emotional stress; gendered expectations and preparations for birth. Similar constraints impacted upon men's leisure, but less significantly, except for commitments associated with their work. Women's leisure in this study was constrained, due largely to the ethic of care, related to women's role as caregivers (Shaw, 2008b) and a lack of entitlement to leisure (Thompson, 1998). Their leisure was further constrained as many post-birth females reported that being a mother was tiring, emotionally draining and physically demanding.

During the first 18 months of parenthood, women's access and opportunity to take part in leisure was impacted upon by a range of constraints and it was evident that women were more constrained as the significant life event (birth) loomed and even more limited just after the birth of their child. Constraints that limited leisure participation for women included: the ethic of care; sleep deprivation; influence of significant others; family needs and ties; women's own body image; gendered expectations about motherhood and parenting; lack of free time; competing time demands for couple leisure and family leisure and the lack of suitable facilities and programmes.

For men, leisure continued at similar levels to the pre-pregnancy stage and this finding is supported by research undertaken by Silvers (2000). In this study, men were subject to the same constraints as women, but they had minimal impact upon their access and opportunity to leisure, except for their concerns in achieving a satisfactory work-life balance, the lack of funds for leisure and the availability of appropriate programmes and facilities for leisure (see Figure 7.1)

The constraints identified above both shaped and determined women's and men's engagement in different forms of leisure (solo leisure, couple leisure, family leisure and other leisure) at the pre-birth and post-birth stages. In the early stages of pregnancy, couples enjoyed more opportunity and time for both solo leisure and couple leisure and engaged in a wider range of leisure activities. In the later stages of pregnancy, women 'toned' down their activities and engaged in more passive and less risky forms of leisure, which included time with friends, relaxation and time out alone. This finding is similar to research conducted by Auster (2002) where pregnant women expressed concerns about their active engagement in leisure and as a result tended to engage in less active and safer forms of leisure. Also both Bialeschki (1999) and Currie (2009) in their research witnessed a decline in women's solo leisure during the same period.

The difference was less discernible for men as many still maintained an active leisure lifestyle throughout pregnancy, but their leisure was more subject to change and constraint just before birth and in the early stages of parenthood, a similar pattern to women's leisure. Post-birth tensions were evident between the various forms of leisure identified above, which resulted in solo leisure and couple leisure being compromised for family leisure, which many families argued was one of the main contributors to a healthy family life. A number of couples remarked that undertaking solo leisure constrained couple leisure and vice-versa. Also, the need to spend time with the family had negative consequences for solo leisure and couple leisure and both these forms of leisure were important for parents to de-stress from parenting duties. The findings in this study are consistent with other studies (see Harrington, 2005) in that leisure plays a significant role in family life and parents have a responsibility to spend as much time with their child as possible. Consequently time out for leisure with children acts as a constraint for both solo leisure and couple leisure or other leisure, such as time out with friends.

In terms of solo leisure, there was evidence in the data to support Sayer *et al*. (2006) investigation that men's solo leisure was less constrained and was less likely to be interrupted by parenting demands. In this study, to have real meaning, solo leisure for couples needed to be relatively free of constraints and undertaken in time set aside, which was distinct and different to couple leisure and family leisure. A number of post-birth women in this study were successful in securing time out for solo leisure as they were forthright in claiming their right to do so. In reality, women experienced problems in accessing time for solo leisure, due to the time constraints associated with parenthood and the feelings of guilt connected with being away from their child. In addition, women were constrained in accessing time for their solo leisure as they suffered time scarcity as their time was often interrupted by household and childcare demands, reminiscent of the work undertaken by Kay (1999) in 'time crunched households'.

Women in this study described their solo leisure as time to get away from the family, to re-connect with friends, which required them to be more resourceful than men, in negotiating their own time for leisure. This is recognised as a form of empowerment by Samuel (1996) who acknowledges that many women assert their autonomy through leisure, to gain independence. Women in this study would have liked more control over their own time and opportunities for solo leisure and felt that having the opportunity to engage in solo leisure could potentially improve their own wellbeing (Hilbrecht *et al*. 2008) and their relationship with their partner. These findings verify the work of Such (2009) who reported that men's solo leisure tends to be organised and timetabled whereas women's solo leisure has to be more flexible, to meet the unpredictable demands of parenthood, where time is rarely quantified (see also Craig, 2007).

Solo leisure for men and women was quite different in this study, as men's leisure was primarily related to the demands of the workplace. In contrast women's solo leisure was less active; more constrained and took place in shorter periods of time, often sandwiched between other activities. The evidence from the data in this study aligns closely with findings reported by Shaw (2003, p.11) in that, "men are more able than women to preserve personal activities within intimate relationships", even though men's participation in leisure is subject to similar constraints to women, such constraints have less impact on men's leisure. The range and impact of constraints identified in this study have the potential to better inform future researchers in understanding and determining the forces that enable and constrain men's and women's access to leisure opportunities in heterosexual relationships, during pregnancy and early parenthood.

7.2.5. Parenting expectations

How do couples prepare, and what are their expectations for, parenting and how do such expectations relate to the realities of parenting?

The dominant discourse of motherhood evident in this study is consistent with intensive styles of mothering and some women felt overwhelmed by their mothering responsibilities. A number of fathers expressed the desire to be more involved in parenting their child, as this would give their partner some time to undertake activities that they desired. Expectant parents used a range of strategies to prepare for parenting, including reading literature, watching instructional DVDs and videos, talking with friends and family, attending antenatal class and reflection on their own experience of being parented. Post-birth couples reported that antenatal classes did not help them prepare for parenting and found parenting more demanding than they expected.

For most women, parenting meant a change in priorities to focus on the needs of their child which is a responsibility that demanded their full commitment. Post-birth couples described parenting as enjoyable and rewarding, but at the same time challenging and stressful. In this study, being a mother gave women an identity with their role as a mother and parent. However, this 'new' identity meant with responsibilities which resulted in less opportunities for leisure and such changes impacted more on mothers, than fathers, due largely to parental role expectations (Horna, 1993). Even when there was evidence of shared parenting, women still undertook the majority of work, but struggling to maintain a healthy work-life balance was a concern mainly for men. However, there is some evidence to support the claim that a number of mothers in this study resisted traditional notions of motherhood, by securing personal leisure time, in negotiation with their partner.

Ideologies of motherhood argues Pfiser, (2001, p.76) place "powerful, emotional, social and physical responsibilities on women" as they are constructed, performed and re-enforced through the media, state, religion and medicine and work to constrain women (see also Raddon, 2002). Essentially, engagement in leisure provided women with the opportunity to re-build a 'sense of self' as a number of women in the pre-birth focus group reported a loss of self-identity in becoming a mum as the needs of the family took precedence (see Namaguchi, 2006). It could be argued that these women practised an updated ideal of motherhood, acknowledged in Wearing's (1990) research on new mothers in Australia and thereby in some way resisted the repressive aspects of motherhood. This strategy is evaluated in much greater detail by research undertaken by Craig (2007).

With regards to fatherhood in this study there is some evidence to suggest that fathers considered themselves not just as economic providers for the family, but also as important players in providing care for their child. This finding is consistent with the research by Kay (2009) and has lead to a better understanding of contemporary fatherhood. Sayer *et al*. (2004) concur with this observation, but Craig (2006) stresses caution as fathers may be involved more in childcare, only when their partner is present and men often don't have sole responsibility for their child, which was the case for most post-birth males in this study.

Many mothers in this study dedicated the bulk of their time to their child, whereas fathers practiced different styles of parenting which ranged from being more involved to less involved, but spending more time in play than mothers (see Lees, 2007). The findings of this study indicate that a number of fathers wished to share the parenting role, to approach parenting as a partnership and to be seen as a father in their own right, not just as a support person. This became very clear in the contributions from a number of post-birth males including Greg, Ollie, Alan, Rory and Eugene.

The majority of other post-birth men described themselves as the 'silent partner' in parenting as they ascribed to more traditional ideologies, where parenting was assumed as a female domain. This was tempered by some men who wanted to be more involved that their own fathers and this finding is consistent with the work undertaken by Dienhart (1998) and a nearly a decade later by Gatrell (2006).

The debates surrounding contemporary fatherhood as being more active and involved are ongoing and have in some way confused men with regard to their expected societal role as a father. Harrington (2006a, p.169) has realised that this confusion has created 'two worlds of fathering':

> Fatherhood is a contested area in the now bourgeoning body of work on fathers in contemporary society and family studies on how to capture fatherhood both as an ideal and a lived reality.

In terms of parenting style, the data in this study identifies that some mothers/fathers seek to replicate their parents approach to parenting as this was the most direct and sustained experience, while others actively sought to parent differently, precisely because of their own experience. Consequently, many couples referred to what they believed to be good practice, whilst others talked about bad practice to avoid, described in more detail in earlier chapters.

7.2.6 Family friendly leisure

How 'family friendly' are facilities for leisure in Christchurch, as perceived by heterosexual couples in Christchurch?

Most pre-birth and post-birth couples argued that the choice and range of leisure facilities in Christchurch was adequate for families and they mostly used leisure facilities provided by Christchurch City Council, which they described as inexpensive, local and accessible on foot or via public transport. Leisure facilities frequently visited by pre-birth and post-birth couples included local parks, sport and recreation centres, libraries, swimming pools, walking tracks and church and community halls. To make leisure facilities in Christchurch more 'family friendly', pre-birth and post-birth couples suggested a number of practical suggestions which included specific policies and strategies for family leisure, improved infrastructure for families, more effective dissemination of information to families by various means, better promotion of facilities available for families, specific activities and programmes for families and a range of family themed events.

In general most couples expressed the opinion that the choice and range of facilities for family leisure in Christchurch was adequate and in most cases good value for money, in particular public leisure facilities, such as swimming pools, libraries, parks, playgrounds and walking tracks that were relatively easy to access and within their budget. Consequently, the responses given by couples regarding the suitability of leisure facilities for families were primarily based upon couples' use of public facilities provided by Christchurch City Council.

A number of couples did refer to a range of commercial leisure facilities in the study area, but not many used them for purposes of family leisure, as they were described as either too expensive, based outside of Christchurch, and often busy and overcrowded. Many couples viewed facilities for leisure in Christchurch with a critical 'eye' in terms of whether they were suitable for families. These purposive observations provided couples with some idea of the suitability of existing facilities for family leisure. However, many of the leisure facilities provided by Christchurch City Council were in urgent need of either renovating, upgrading or in some cases needed permanent replacement with the required specific infrastructure to better meet the needs of families. Furthermore, couples reported that most leisure facilities offered a limited range of programmes for families and a number of couples expressed their concerns about poorly designed leisure facilities for families, in particular the lack of adequate infrastructure for parents with young children.

To make leisure facilities more 'family friendly', couples suggested a range of initiatives that facility managers would need to consider. These included involvement of families at the design stage, adequate space to move in and around leisure facilities, adequate changing and crèche facilities, lifts and wide aisles for ease of access for strollers, specific provision for parking for parents with young children, social areas for parents to relax with other parents and baby changing/feeding areas to meet families' expectations. Post-birth couples suggested that for this to happen, leisure providers in Christchurch needed to firstly engage with families directly and then consult with parenting organisations proactively and find ways in which they could better promote and provide information on family leisure facilities in Christchurch. Therefore one of the major limitations for families using leisure facilities was their lack of awareness of what was available, within their local vicinity.

Designing for family friendly leisure was a recurring theme in both the pre-birth and post-birth focus groups and in the pre-birth and post-birth interviews, in that many of them identified that a lack of planning and appropriate provision for families was evident in the study area (Christchurch). Many pre-birth couples mentioned that the provision of an affordable crèche and allocated family parking spaces at leisure facilities would be considered good practice in making leisure facilities more 'family friendly'. Similarly, provision of crèche facilities and specific parking for families was an issue that a number of managers alluded to. However, providing a crèche was fraught with legal difficulties, prohibitive set-up and running costs and subject to complicated licensing requirements and stringent rules governing their operation. So in reality providing a crèche was often a complex, costly and time consuming issue according to managers

7.2.7 Leisure manager perceptions

To what extent do leisure facility managers in Christchurch firstly, understand the leisure needs of families and secondly provide for these needs in the facilities they manage and the programmes they offer?

This study instigated a 'new' look at the issue of family leisure from a provider perspective and managers perceptions helped provide a voice for those charged with the responsibilty of providing leisure opportunities for families. During the interviews most of them spoke enthusiastically about making their facilities more family friendly, by providing more family orientated information and promotion, which they argued would appeal to all family groups. However they appreciated that their knowledge on specific family groups and their needs in terms of leisure was lacking.

Most managers agreed they needed to be more proactive and engage more effectively with families. Managers claimed that they were constrained by policy, outdated management styles and philosophies that emphasised a paternalistic management style and a facility oriented approach.

Managers were restricted as their key role was to meet the needs of the 'whole' community, rather than specific communities (families) and to manage within set budgetary targets. To attract families, managers proposed more suitable infrastructure for families, such as a crèche and specific parking provision for families and programmes and activities targeted at families. To learn from good practice, managers suggested that they needed to establish more effective working partnership with other sectors of the leisure industry, parenting interests groups and parenting support organisations.

At a practical level, managers suggested that facilities for leisure needed to be more accessible, welcoming and safe for families. They argued that childcare provision needed to be a minimal requirement for their facilities to be considered family friendly. However facilities need to be available and affordable, have adequate parking and accessible public transport to encouraging family use of leisure facilities. Some managers appreciated that it was often the lack of access to appropriate information on leisure opportunities for families that limited their scope and use of facilities. To be more family friendly, a number of specific ideas and practical suggestions were suggested by managers. These ideas included introducing specific programmes and activities for mums and dads, family based classes with activities for all, an open day for mothers and fathers and their child, reductions on entry fees for families and subsidised leisure passes for families. Managers appreciated that taking risks might be necessary in effecting change, by trying out new initiatives and schemes aimed at families, but they did not suggest a means for this to happen.

Managers noted that working with families at the planning and design stage was considered important and often linked with a successful build of a facility. Nonetheless, design was a problem 'area' that most felt powerless to change due to the huge expense that might be involved, but a number of managers appreciated that poor design discouraged use and limited the flexibility of what activities could be offered to families. A number of managers claimed that they had considered a range of initiatives to make their facilities more 'family friendly, but none of their ideas had been put into practice, so in reality some were making positive, if slow, progress to be considered more family-friendly.

7.3 Reflections on the Research Journey

In this section, I reflect on my journey from the time, I had an idea that was viable for an intensive study of family leisure that warranted enrolling as a PhD student, and through the various stages of the research processes, that I experienced.

7.3.1 Getting into the field

My initial interest in this area of study can be traced back to my own personal experience when becoming a parent and the impact, this significant life event had on my life and leisure. As a 'first-time' parent, I was able to easily establish rapport during the focus group studies and interviews to establish context, which built trust and confidence, enabling this study to progress (Cresswell, 1998). In this research study, I have been able to gain insight and glimpses into the lives of couples experiencing a similar life event.

I do not claim to have uncovered the 'real truths' about parenting and family leisure, but to have contributed to the literature and debates surrounding family leisure and the experiences of parenting for heterosexual couples. As part of my journey through the process of completing this study, I kept a journal that documented and recorded my experience as a researcher undertaking a study on family leisure. I recorded my own feelings and thoughts in note form, from the time of compiling the research proposal, to the completion of all data collection.

Writing the reflective journal allowed me to acknowledge the thoughts and emotions I was experiencing, and in some cases shared with the people I spoke to in the focus group studies and in the interviews. In many ways, the reflective journal allowed an outlet for my observations that were not recorded elsewhere.

At the conclusion of the pre-birth and post-birth focus group studies I took notes and tried to replicate this at the end of each interview I undertook with pre-birth and post-birth couples and with leisure facility managers. This was a difficult and challenging task at times, as my primary purpose during the focus groups and the interviews was to concentrate on the participants' feedback. Taking notes immediately after the focus group discussions and after each interview was at times inconvenient and impractical. I appreciate there may have been some memory lag in the recording of some of my observations. However, it was a useful exercise to analyse my own thoughts during the research in a systematic way, by recording them in a self reflective journal. The detailed contents of the journal are obviously confidential to the researcher, but the process was worthwhile and enlightening.

7.3.2 Rationale for mixed methods

In this study, as proposed by Mittelstaedt (2001/2002, p.152), I used a mixed method approach to the research design to make it "possible to assess each method used, providing information on their limitations as well as their strengths and clarifying their presuppositions and their consequences". By adopting a mixed method and qualitative approach to seek out the perceptions of couples, I sought to add to the research methods literature and offer additional insights into the lived experiences of couples, from a male and female perspective. The focus group studies combined with the interviews from a user and management perspective facilitated an understanding into family leisure.

The qualitative tools used provided a means of questioning at a deeper level that led to a better understanding of the lives of couples involved in the study, but I appreciate that I was only able to tell part of the story. This story is obviously selective, as ultimately I needed to make decisions about what would be included in the final version of the study.

7.3.3 Accessing research participants

Gaining the confidence and trust of those selected as research participants was initially problematic, in the early stages of the research. However, prior to the design of the methodology, I engaged in early meetings with both men and women.

Consequently their trust and willingness to participate in this study was acquired, which is a key factor in motivating people to give up their time to take part in research studies (Kenny, 1996). Also, I had empathy with their experience as I had personally encountered many of the same challenges that expectant couples and first time parents face. Assembling the focus groups took a lot of time, effort and energy and although many participants had initially given their consent to take part, they still needed further encouragement, persuasion and reminders. This was achieved through regular email contact and a number of personal phone calls to encourage their full commitment to the study. Therefore regular and constant communication was the key to elicit their involvement in the study.

During the recruitment stage of the research, many practical problems had to be overcome. Identifying a suitable venue, time and date to suit everybody in the focus group studies caused some difficulties and required extensive consultation and negotiation and as a result was time consuming and sometimes very frustrating.

For example, many post-birth couples involved in the focus group meetings had difficulties arranging babysitters, so that both partners could be present. Some focus group participants had to be contacted on several occasions to confirm their attendance, especially couples in the pre-birth focus group who were at the latter stages of their pregnancy. Both pre-birth and post- birth focus group participants were concerned that they might be discussing highly personal and sensitive matters with people they might not know in the focus groups.

Consequently, some individuals needed re-assurance of the processes involved and the fact that the research findings were confidential. For this purpose, they were given further guidelines on how the focus group conversations would be evaluated and analysed and were reminded that their comments could not be identified in the write up of the discussions. Also, all pre-birth and post-birth focus group participants were sent a summary of the findings of their discussions by email and asked for comment, before the findings were confirmed in written form as part of this study.

7.3.4 Pre-birth and post-birth interviews

The justification for using interviews was based on the premise outlined by Behringer (2006) as interviews are capable of producing rich, detailed information about the meaningful dimensions of lived experience that is central to this study, the dimension being family leisure. My objective was directed towards allowing interviewees to describe the world as they perceived it, to be described in their own terms and to highlight what 'things' and events mean for them. The interviews with couples took a lot of time, negotiation and were more problematic than the individual interviews. During the couple interviews, I had to be conscious of one person dominating the other and be careful not to cause offence or conflict between couples on sensitive issues that arose. Nevertheless, a number of couples did argue with each other during the interviews, but fortunately disagreements never got out of hand. The couple interviews offered insight into the interactions and nature of the relationship between couples, but I had to be mindful that the couple interviews were more likely to produce consensual data, where they might be an attempt to generate a unified reality (Paul, 1989). Also, as a researcher I needed to be aware of possible inconsistencies in the data, in that the construction of events during individual interviews might be quite different within the couple interviews. Fortunately these concerns did not eventuate, but during the couple interviews I had to encourage men to be more engaged in contributing to the interview discussion. This was due to women often dominating the interview conversation as they were generally more vocal in both the couple and individual interviews.

I was very grateful that both pre-birth and post-birth couples were generous enough to give up their time and for both partners to be there at the same time for the 'couple' interview and post-birth couples arranging childcare so the interviews could go ahead. I had to be flexible in terms of times and date and not get to upset when parents cancelled at short notice. When arranging the interviews for post-birth couples it became clear that I had to plan for contingencies, as the realities of parenting as reported in the findings of this study are unpredictable. As a result, some of the interviews had to be re-arranged for a number of post-birth couples at relatively short notice, as they had other demands to deal with.

Likewise, I had to re-arrange a number of interviews for pre-birth couples that were in the last trimester of their pregnancy, as a number were very tired, stressed or simply did not feel like talking. I quickly realised and appreciated that looking after a young child or dealing with the demands of pregnancy were a lot more pressing than undertaking a study on family leisure. Nevertheless, most couples were accommodating and did their utmost to meet pre-arranged interview dates. Some interviews took longer to undertake than I had at first anticipated, which impacted upon my time management plan for the rest of this research study.

Fortunately I had put into place a number of contingencies that allowed extra time for the interviews to be completed in ensuring that my research plan was flexible to meet the needs of couples. Generally, families were very generous with their time and most spoke openly about their feelings and thoughts and most interviews became a kind of conversation, where interviewees were able to speak for themselves (Tolich & Davidson, 1999, p. 60). The majority of the interviews took place at the home of the interviewees, where they were intimately familiar with their surroundings and where most felt relaxed and comfortable. Throughout the interviews I was concerned with the guiding principles outlined by Tolich and Davidson (1999, p.109) where effective interviewing should be concerned with "asking the right questions, in the right way, while ensuring you accurately record people's responses to these questions".

A number of interviews were undertaken at the workplace of the interviewee, as I presumed they were more comfortable with this arrangement. I really enjoyed the interviews and found involvement with pre-birth and post-birth couples stimulating and a source of motivation to help progress and give impetus to this research study. On many occasions after the interviews were completed, I often stayed for some time discussing a range of different issues, not all necessarily linked to the topic of this study, but still interesting.

I was offered food and drink during the interviews and on one occasion was served a three course meal while on another occasion offered a bed for the night, as the interview has progressed into the early hours of the morning.

At the end of each interview, I asked those involved to reflect on their interview experience. The majority described their experience as relaxed, comfortable and interesting. During the solo interviews, individuals remarked that they had enjoyed their interviews, especially the one-on-one interaction with the interviewer which they said they had enjoyed. The open-ended nature of the interviews they were involved with gave them the flexibility and opportunity to express themselves freely in their own words.

7.3.5 The manager interviews

Completion of the manager interviews took a long time, because many of the managers were very busy and had to cancel interview appointments I had made with them on several occasions. This was frustrating in terms of advancing the research, but I realised I would need to be patient as managers had given up their time freely to be involved in this study.

Many of them had to cancel initial interview appointments, as they had other priorities that had arisen between the time I had first contacted them and the original date we agreed for the interview to take place. In order to plan for this contingency, I asked each manager to offer two dates for a possible interview. If the first date was cancelled, which it invariably was, I still had a second date to fall back on, which in some cases was confirmed. This risk management strategy in using contingencies seemed a good idea in practice, but in reality a number of managers had to cancel both dates. In the majority of cases the 'actual' interview took place on the second or third date that we had agreed upon. However in the case of two managers, the actual interview took place on the fourth arranged interview.

7.4 Limitations of the Study

My study was located in a particular social context and within the geographical boundaries of Christchurch. I would have liked the opportunity to expand this study and gone countrywide and compared the findings of such studies with other countries, but this was not feasible due to limited time and resources that were available. The selection of Christchurch as my research area for this study could be regarded as a limitation in this regard.

There is a 'real' need in future research on family leisure to emphasise the importance of context as my study did, for understanding meanings of family leisure and to explore family leisure in a range of social, environmental and cultural contexts. Some of the findings reported in this study may have implications for leisure policy, and I realise that these implications will need to be tempered and applied in the local contexts, where economic, cultural and environmental factors will need due consideration. Nevertheless, I am aware that the findings of this study may not be directly applicable to couples in other social, economic or cultural contexts. There is much work to be done in extending the boundaries of this particular research.

The study of family leisure could be extended to other cities and regions of New Zealand and undertaken in different countries and cultures, to develop the theme of this study internationally to gain a more global perspective of family leisure. I realise that New Zealand is a multicultural society and future research in family leisure needs to consider the diverse array of families in New Zealand society.

I realise my interpretation of the raw data and the coding process I adopted in this study is a limitation. Also, I am mindful that my interpretations are shaped by my own personal experiences and indeed that my assumptions could be influenced by what I thought might be important and not so important in terms of organising and classifying the findings that emerged from this study. As a researcher, I needed to make decisions about the data in terms of level of importance and what data to include and omit in order to produce the findings. However I was aware that the data needed to be trustworthy. Therefore, in order to meet the research objectives outlined in Chapter 1, I compared my findings with other research undertaken on family leisure outlined in some detail in Chapter 2, 'the literature review'.

Also, it is important to realise that this study was limited to the experiences of those that agreed to take part and it should be noted that the families who participated in this study, might not be fully representative of all New Zealand families undergoing the transition into first time parenthood. Future researchers need to be mindful that a diverse range of family types exist and the meaning and importance of leisure may differ greatly to that of a traditional family type. In much of the previous work on family leisure as reported in more detail in Chapter 2, leisure researchers have principally concerned themselves with women's perspectives and all phases of the family lifecycle (Freysinger, 1991; Deem, 1995; Kay, 2003).

This study focused on both genders and based on a life changing event, the birth of a child and the transition into to parenthood. This research only focused on one specific group (heterosexual couples) within a defined area (Christchurch) who co-habit, often described as the traditional family. I do appreciate that this could be seen as a negative aspect of this study, as the sample used in this study does not fully represent the many different types of families in New Zealand, other than co-habiting heterosexual couples. Furthermore, it could be argued that my focus on the typical nuclear family of husband, wife and child was limited compared to a fuller analysis of family leisure across a range of families. Also, it needs to be mentioned that I only focused on the transition stage from pregnancy into parenthood with couples with very young children and as a result could only provide a 'snapshot' of what people thought at a specific time in their life. Nonetheless, this study breaks new ground in the family leisure literature in interviewing the same couples at the pre-birth and post birth stages. Also this study focuses on first time parents with children under the age of two, where the role of family leisure in everyday family practices is still not fully understood. The justifications for using this group of people was explained in some detail in Chapter 1 and according to recent New Zealand based census data over 30% of families with children in New Zealand are two parent heterosexual families making this the most common family type with children (Lees, 2007).

Therefore, the pre-birth and post-birth couples recruited for this study represented a large number of people that presently reside in New Zealand. I was acutely aware that the institution of marriage is changing and children now live within an increasing range of family types. Clearly, it is very important that future research in family leisure is able to capture the views and opinions of these and other types of families.

Another limitation of this study was that most participants involved in this study were predominantly New Zealand Europeans although compared to local and national averages, there was some representation from a number of cultural groups in this research study, from Pacific Islanders and Maoris. I appreciate that the research participants involved in this study were composed only of immediate partners and I did not seek the views of other family members or indeed significant family members who were not related by blood lines to the family, but who could still be significant in terms of their leisure undertaken collectively. Also, it has been well documented in family leisure research that children's views and thoughts about family leisure are mostly absent in the research. For practical reasons it was not possible to seek the views of the children whose parents were involved in this study, as they were too young.

This research study focused only on two critical life stages, pregnancy and first time parenthood, although I realise that we experience many critical life stages in our lives (see Rapport & Rapport, 1975). Due to the time and resources available, investigating the nature of family leisure across a wide range of life-stages was simply not possible. As a result of my own personal experience of witnessing the stages of pregnancy as an expectant parent and experiences as a 'first-time' parent, I decided to focus my energies on these two key life stages.

In terms of the interviews with pre-birth and post-birth couples, I was aware that females may have reacted differently to being interviewed by a woman and both sexes may have responded differently in the couple interviews, compared to the individual interviews. Also, I appreciate that my own gender may have impacted upon the responses given by men and women and I found it much easier to discuss intimate and emotive topics such as parenting, marriage and relationship with women in comparism to men, who were often reluctant to talk about sensitive issues. As a male interviewer, I felt more at ease talking to women in both the individual and couple interviews.

This may be due to my own personal experience of growing up with three sisters in the same household or the fact that women were more communicative during interviews and seemed more relaxed about discussing personal issues. In this study men were more guarded and less relaxed as compared to women.

As an interviewer, I attempted to adopt an enquiring approach to seek out feeling and attitude, rather than simply questioning to determine facts to elicit 'rich' data (Long, 2007). Also, during this study I did not determine the socioeconomic status of pre-birth and post-birth couples which other research has indicated can be a significant factor in determining one's access and opportunity for leisure. For example, a study by Ester and Eva (2008) investigated differences in leisure time activity across several socioeconomic groups, assessing socio-economic status based on educational attainment, household income and household size. Ester and Eva (2008) concluded that more studies were needed in understanding leisure opportunities and access in more disadvantaged sections of the population.

One of the methodological issues that potentially limited this study relates to the nature of focus groups. Although they worked well within this study to gain a foothold into the research subject and helped indicate the way forward in terms of issues and topics worthy of further exploration at the interview stage, I am mindful that group processes with focus groups may not always yield a positive dynamic. As Long (2007) reports, some individuals within the focus group may feel uneasy and intimidated within the group, and as a result feel inhibited from expressing their true feelings and emotions. Also, they may be unwilling to express perspectives that are divergent to the majority opinion. As I had a note taker, I was able to focus on the role of the moderator to involve all participants in dialogue and at the same time manage the conversations to ensure that everybody present had their say. This role was crucial in facilitating all those involved to be active and motivated to contribute to the discussions that unfolded.

Within the focus groups my objective was to ensure that all voices were heard and consensus on an issue did not lead to participants experiencing a lack of conviction and confidence in what they had to say. The nature of qualitative techniques means that research always has an effect on what is being studied (Tolich & Davidson, 1999). During this research study, I was required to immerse myself fully in the qualitative researcher's process. My approach was inductive rather than deductive, where the emphasis was on interpretation and subjective experience. However, this study has the potential to make a significant contribution to the body of knowledge that exists on family leisure in helping us understand the role, importance and function of leisure in family life at specific stages of the family lifecycle.

7.5 Recommendations of this Study

As a result of the literature review, my own observations throughout the PhD research process and suggestions made by those involved in this research study, I provide a range of recommendations that are meant to be both practical and realistic. The recommendations are presented here in three sub-sections: parenting support organisations; employers in the workplace and leisure facility managers and the leisure profession.

7.5.1 Parenting organisations and support groups

At the outset, it seems clear from the data and literature review that families need to be valued more for the contribution they make to family life and society at large. Parent support organisations can help promote the benefits of family life and provide more specific support in helping couples prepare for the realities of parenting. In particular, reflections from pre-birth couples concerning their engagement in antenatal classess, indicated that not enough is being done to help them prepare to parent.

Many pre-birth men in this study voiced the opinion that they were inadequately prepared to parent. Some men described their experience as 'being lost in the wildederness' and a number of them did not attend antenatal class as they assumed the course was just for pregnant women. Attendance at antenatal classes has the potential to encourage expectant fathers to be more involved in parenting as they can make a difference to a child's life in many positive ways. This may be as a vehicle in enhancing the role of fathering as an important parenting role in its own right, rather than just as the support person.

Parents need more direct guidance and instruction on how to parent from examples of good practice. Feedback from pre-birth couples indicated that antenatal courses were too prescriptive and did not allow enough opportunities for them to discuss concerns about becoming parents. Yet, there is great potential to learn from each other in such classes. Similarily, a number of post-birth couples remarked there were given little opportunity to engage with other couples during their antenatal classes, other than in time set aside for coffee-breaks. The evidence provided in this study indicates that antenatal classess need improving to provide more opportunity to encourage participants to share experiences through informal discussion. Tutors need to better faciltate class interaction and debate on parenting issues which impact on couples once the baby is born, rather than on the pre-birth experience, where the emphasis was upon preparing for the birthing process and the biology of birth in an instructional manner.

Parents called for more information and specific guidance on the post-birth stage, especially the early stages of parenthood, where it seems most parents need help. Many expectant parents remarked that they were confused as they were often subject to conflcting advice which caused them stress and worry. Government agencies need to provide financial support and help in facilitating 'introductory parenting courses' staffed by experienced and knowledgeable people, who can communicate good practice in a simple and clear format and provide useful tips and advice in dealing with the eventualities of parenting.

Parenting support organisations can be a repository for information and advice to enable expectant parents to form alliances, to share experience and good practice, form friendships and network support groups for both expectant mothers and fathers.

A range of educational tools and courses that focus on parenthood and on roles of mother and father need to be developed that expectant parents can access electronically and utilise in their home environment. A number of couples suggested that courses need to better prepare them for real life parenting, rather than impressions of family life, falsely portrayed in the media. Parenting courses that are easily accessible for expectant parents and parenting courses based at the place of work were an innovative suggestion. Attendance at such courses could give couples the chance to talk to each other informally about issues that concern them all, and could be done collectively or by gender. The subject matter of such courses needs more negotiatiation and aspects of family leisure could become a key component of such courses in helping parents plan, organise and enjoy the benefits of family leisure. This would be relatively straightforward and involve local leisure staff input into existing courses and the possible development of a leisure guide of community facilities that are deemed family friendly.

7.5.2 Employers (The workplace)

Many parents commented that the responsibility of employers should include showing and educating parents on how they could achieve a better work-life balance in their lives. Couples mentioned a number of strategies that could help them achieve this, through the introduction of family friendly workplace policies, family care leave and job sharing, where it was financially viable for couples and where they had the option of working from home. The key message here is that employers had to be more flexible in offering families with young children a number of alternative methods of working, otherwise without flexible working patterns, parents would find it difficult to cope and leisure would remain restricted.

A range of suggestions were provided by both pre-birth and post-birth couples which included: allowing parents extra unpaid leave to deal with parenting contingencies; giving parents the option of buying additional leave; allowing more flexible work patterns such as, allowing parents to start and finish work in line with the demands of parenting; offering parents a limited/reduced working week; offering parents special leave; employers giving parents support with childcare, either providing financial support or a work crèche; policies of leave based on family requirements; more extended and supported paid maternity and paternity leave and allowing parents to work from home with subsidised help for childcare.

In essence, the examples given above relate to what Pool *et al.* (2007) refer to as family friendly workplace policies. The New Zealand Families Commission (2010) has called on employers to instill a 'family friendly' approach in the workplace where employers need provisions and systems in place to support families in the workplace in adopting a positive approach to becoming a parent inclusive organisation. The New Zealand Families Commission could provide an interactive website with information and advice for first-time parents. They have the remit and the power to promote the profile of parenting throughout New Zealand and the capacity to break the myth of stereotypical assumed gendered roles in parenting, often portrayed by the media and assumed in much of the parenting literature. At the community level, they have the resources to promote the importance of parenting through local agencies such as Plunket New Zealand and Parent Centres referred to in the findings and the capacity to change outdated workplace cultures, through local employers and agencies.

The real key to successful work-life balance for first-time parents that work is to reduce the tension that exist between work and other parts of their lives (see Hilbrecht *et al*. 2008). Such tensions have negative consequences for families and their leisure, impacting upon opportunities for families to spend more time together.

7.5.3 Leisure profession and providers

Many couples thought collaboration and consultation was important in enabling leisure managers and the leisure profession to engage more effectively with families. This would require leisure managers to work in conjunction with health and parenting organisations to promote the family leisure agenda collectively and engage co-operatively in developing schemes and initiatives to help families use their free time together to enhance and enrich family life. This approach could be facilitated by the professional body for recreation in New Zealand, the New Zealand Recreation Association (NZRA), and the outcome could be a range of schemes and initiatives to be offered at local leisure facilities, and disseminated through parenting support groups and the medical profession. Training could be offered to leisure professionals to put these ideas into practice, by providing workshops and short courses. Simply offering family based leisure programmes is not the answer as leisure managers will be required to be more proactive in selling their message and securing resources to meet the objective of providing for the needs of families with young children.

Although a number of leisure managers involved in this study recognised the family as a viable leisure market, few offered specific opportunities or schemes for this specific group. Leisure managers need to be more imaginative and creative in giving families a wider range of choice in different forms of leisure and they have an important role to play in educating families and making them more aware of the leisure opportunities they provide. For example, leisure managers could facilitate a wider range of options to families such as, activities with a heritage/cultural theme and provide places where children can play 'naturally' (Play England, 2006; Department of Sport and Recreation, 2011). It seems that a number of leisure managers are beginning to seriously consider families with young children as a viable user group. A number of leisure managers who contributed to this study intended to be put their ideas into practice. Their first task would be to better understand the heterogeneous nature of families and realise that each family group and each individual within that family group may have both individual and collective needs for leisure.

More collaborative management strategies are required to include families and to foster collobarative working with other leisure facility managers. This would require more joint working and consultation with other leisure providers from the commercial and voluntary sectors in sharing innovation and good practice in family leisure programming and provision.

Encouraging the private/public and voluntary sectors in leisure provision to work closer together to better co-ordinate family leisure provision has many potential benefits in improving and co-ordinating family leisure provision in Christchurch and beyond. All interested parties have the capacity to work together in promotions and marketing aimed at family groups, providing information and an array of opportunities to encourage families to more effectively utilise all types of facilities available for their leisure. Leisure organisations could work together in compiling a range of booklets and information in print form and web based, that are usable and specifically designed for families with a young child in mind. This task could be co-ordinated by the NZRA and one of the key outcomes could be a leisure facilities inventory where family friendly facilities are assigned a quality rating as examples of good practice to better inform families of suitable facilities. Rating leisure facilities in terms of provision for family leisure would need to involve the compilation of a set of guidelines and standards that each leisure facility would have to aspire to, in order to meet the criteria of family friendly status.

The design of leisure facilities in Christchurch was an issue many parents raised in the focus groups and interviews with little or no consultation with parents concerning the planning and design of leisure facilities. To meet this objective, leisure managers could involve family groups in needs assessment exercises and feasibility studies. Once built, leisure managers need to re-think how their facilities could be made more accessible, welcoming and safe for families, which may require renovation to existing leisure facilities.

Specific childcare provision would help a number of families with older children as most of the couples with very young children seemed reluctant to leave their child with other people, whether they were a qualified childcarer or not. Parents with younger children preferred to engage in activities that involved their child and a number of leisure managers interviewed assured me, they had intentions to introduce such schemes. For example, a number of managers that worked in commercial leisure were trialing 'mother and baby' sessions that were received enthusiastically.

A number of practical examples were suggested to encourage families that included: family discount cards; family passes to leisure facilities bounded by local geography and communities; provision of family orientated information that appealed to families; well lit and designated parking provision with wide bays for ease of access and public transport accessible to leisure facilities, that are parent friendly with provision for strollers/prams.

From the data that emerged in this study, change seems necessary as existing leisure provision in Christchurch fails to meet the needs of families with young children, even though public facilities for leisure in Christchurch were commended by many parnets. To help fill the gap in provision a range of specialised courses and programmes could be offered. The work of Horna (1993) supports this initiative when arguing that leisure managers need to concern themselves principally with educating the family in leisure education and encouraging them to participate in leisure activities by whatever means possible. This directive could be facilitated through courses and programmes that were appropriately scheduled and timed to suit the demands of parents with young children. Examples of such courses and programmes suggested were: specific activities for mums and dads; family based classes; open day for mothers and fathers and family 'come and try' it days.

7.6 Suggestions for Future Research

The design of this research study was emergent in that it focused on both male and female perspectives and on two specific stages of the human lifecycle, where significant life events impact upon the nature of leisure and family life. In order to uncover personal meaning, this research study raised questions about what would be worth exploring in the future. The study of families and their leisure has attracted academic interest over a number of years and has included critical approaches, functionalist approaches and the recognition of the diversity of types and forms of family. In this section, sugggestions for future research are given, which emerged as a result of the findings of this study and to encourage a more innovative approach in researching family leisure.

7.6.1 Methods

I would encourage leisure researchers to adopt different methods such as the diary technique, a methodological tool that have been relatively neglected in the social sciences (Elliot, 1997) and in most studies involving families and their leisure. The exception was in research conducted by Shaw (1992) involving fourty six married couples and their children.

Diaries have the potential to uncover meaning and insight for family leisure researchers. Diaries involve people writing personal journals where the participant records information independantly, which could be combined with an initial advisory interview and a follow up more in-depth interview, once diaries are completed (see Kvale, 1998). Diaries can be 'highly' structured involving a pre-determined list to write notes to, or unstructured where the content is determined by the writer, but where analysis can be more complicated (Alaszewski, 2006). Diaries provide an alternative means of gathering rich data and diaries have the potential to be therapeutic for families, as exploring their thoughts on paper can release stress and tension and give the researcher a feel for the emotions of the person writing it (Elliot, 1997). The diary technique would give individual family members the chance to write their thoughts and opinions in their own context when they want to or have the opportunity to do so. Convincing them whatever they write is useful may be problematic, but it would be necessary to give them some support. Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004, p.185) adopted the use of family activity diaries on a daily basis, by parents which "allowed for analysis of time spent in family leisure, the types of activities participated in and the nature and composition of family groups involved". In their study, the diaries acted as a vehicle to stimulate discussion in later interviews, but the diaries were only completed for one complete week.

It is important to note that once diaries are written the participants still have the right to seek assurances from the researcher that at any stage of the research process, their entries can be changed, altered or not be published. Craig's (2007) work in using time use diairies with families has been useful in a number of ways. Her work has been instrumental in helping us understand how couples divide their time between leisure, children and employment and how gender structures couples use of their time and the many competing demands involved in contemporary parenthood.

In terms of methodological approach, this study followed a number of couples from the stage of pregnancy (9 months) into early parenthood (24 months), providing critical insights concerning significant life events, namely pregnancy and childbirth. If more time and resources had been available the experience into parenthood could have been followed further, to chart the journey of how leisure is shaped throughout the different stages of the family life cycle, over a significant period of years.

Using both joint and solo interviews in this study resulted in a range of interesting findings from both a coupled and individual perspective. Yet much of the research literature on leisure is dominated by specific analysis of individual leisure activities and in family leisure by research dominated by analysis of activities undertaken collectively. Couple interviews brought out couple dynamics, whereas individual interviews brought out personal perspectives. This was a useful research strategy and I would encourage future studies on family leisure to adopt a similar strategy as using both types of interview holds great potential.

Also, I would suggest that researchers consider using male interviewers for males and female interviewers for females, which according to Thorpe and Daly (1999) may help overcome gender bias in reporting findings. I would advocate seeking the opinions of older children through the use of pictures in a technique referred to as 'photo elicitation'. This method would be useful in helping children actively interpret their own experience at leisure and aid researchers in comprehending and explaining the different facets of family leisure.

Harrington (2009, p.52) acknowledges this when referring to family leisure research: "the empirical work almost exclusively focused on the married couple, rather than the family as a whole". The key question we need to ask ourselves as researchers is, how are we better able to communicate research findings to those that matter and how can we more effectively use the outcomes of our research, so that it doesn't sit on the shelves of academic libraries, gathering dust? Academic research on family leisure needs to better inform those who can act on the findings of research and make a real difference to the lives of families in improving and enhancing leisure provision.

7.6.2 Research priorities

The study of families and their leisure has attracted academic interest over a number of years, but the multitude of dimensions of family leisure have not been fully explored as yet. This study focused only on two specific life stages and on heterosexual couples in a local context and sought to understand how issues and concerns in family leisure played out locally within the study area.

In this study, it was not possible to seek the view of all family members, but I would encourage future researchers to ascertain the views and perceptions of all family members. This should include the views of children, which may help us understand how leisure is planned and practised and how decisions about family leisure are made and processed. However for ethical and practical reasons children were too young to be involved. Also, I would recommend research using a longitudinal approach in focusing on family life across the different stages of the family lifecycle. Using this approach would help us better understand the impact and importance of leisure throughout the family life cycle and how leisure is shaped through the different stages of family life both positively and negatively.

I would suggest that further studies on family leisure may consider the impact of 'family type' to consider other types of families, which may help accommodate for changing family structures in New Zealand, such as: same sex couples; married step families; de facto unions; multigenerational families; non-European families and single parent families. The analysis of family types needs to extend to families from different socio–economic backgrounds, in particular more financially disadvantaged family groups. This study did not specifically focus on socio-economic status and its impact on family leisure, but I would advocate further research in this area.

There is a lack of research evidence detailing the experience of extended family networks and on generational perspectives and voices of extended family members who may play important supportive roles in family leisure. More specifically in terms of the intricacies of family life, future researchers need to consider the importance of family decision making in terms of how they utilise time, how they parent and how they determine how and in what types of leisure they engage in, based against other competing priorities and demands on their time.

For example, how might the relationship between couples and the way in which they parent, impact upon their own solo time for leisure or time set aside for more collective forms of leisure such as 'couple' leisure or family leisure? More work is required to fully understand the purpose of family leisure in identifying what parents are trying to achieve in this collective form of leisure. According to Shaw and Dawson (2001) family leisure is concerned with bonding within the family, communicaion and life-long development and involves individual, relational and family benefits. In future research, for example, it might be worthwhile asking the question, what is the impact of family leisure on the well-being of family members. Secondly, how does family leisure impact on family life, both positively and negatively and affect family leisure patterns and behaviours? Research in this area holds great promise, in uncovering the relationship between parenting and the different forms of leisure evident in this study. It is evident that a number of forms of leisure were practised including solo leisure, couple leisure, family leisure and other leisure with friends and family. This type of research has the potential to lead to a more comprehensive understanding of how parents negotiate and distribute their time between different forms of leisure, and parenting.

More research is needed on how gender impacts upon family leisure and the contribution that both men and women can make to family leisure and family life as mothers and fathers. For example, how do females hold influence over their partner's leisure pursuits and visa-versa, and why is it that the role of the father in family leisure is often very different from the role of mother? So, even though we know there is a difference, we still don't fully comprehend why this is so?

There is still work to be done to better comprehend the transitions to fatherhood and motherhood and the relationship between motherhood, fatherhood and leisure, and how parenting styles and ideologies impact upon family leisure. More research is needed to recognise the impact of involved fatherhood and intensive styles of mothering.

I suggest that researchers in the future need to consider the impact of changes in work culture and parenting practices. Further investigation into the impact of flexible working patterns and home based working to better manage time for leisure as a family, needs further investigation. Research is needed on changing work structures and patterns and how they influence parenting and opportunities to be involved with family leisure. In particular how new work forms are impacting upon parenting.

Research that considers specific forms of family leisure such as informal and more formal family leisure and out of home (balance leisure) and home-based leisure (core) using qualitative techniques would be useful. In this respect, it is encouraging to note that important work is being done on many other forms of family leisure, that are often neglected in the literature, such as families on holiday (see Davidson, 1996; Spowart *et al*. , 2008).

Future research in family leisure needs to be more fully aware of the contradictions of family leisure in identifying both the benefits and difficulties involved. Shaw and Dawson (2003/2004) realise this is likely to lead to a more realistic picture of contemporary family leisure. Future researchers need to fully appreciate that family leisure is multi-faceted and impacted upon in significant ways by a number of factors, such as: gender; lifecycle stages; social class; age; race; ethnicity and family life. Moreover, researchers need to consider the potential and importance influence of the social context of family leisure in terms of power, culture, constraints, expectations and locality.

One of the fundamental limitations to future research in family leisure is the lack of funds available and on accessing information on research funds. In the context of New Zealand, it is encouraging to note that the New Zealand Families Commission as part of their 'blues-skies' funding campaign has funded a number of local based research studies on different aspects of family life, but none on family leisure. Essentially, future research in family leisure needs to build more capacity in a number of specific dimensions: in expanding research at different life stages of the family lifecycle; at significant moments/events in peoples' lives; expanding the geographical boundaries of location; expanding the scope of research to include all generations of expanded families and in encouraging studies exploring more diverse family types. Encouraging the continuation of family studies of leisure is necessary and is likely to lead to a greater understanding and appreciation of the factors that impact upon family leisure, as this study and other research has demonstrated that family leisure can have both, positive and negative outcomes for family members.

7.7 Summary of Chapter

In this final chapter, I conclude this study on 'family leisure and parenting involving heterosexual couples in Christchurch, New Zealand'. This is accomplished by outlining the final version of the conceptual framework and identifying the key findings that emerged as a result of this study, which are then summarised in relation to the research questions posed in Chapter 1. This leads to a detailed reflection on my journey through the PhD process, and to an explanation of the limitations of this study. A number of recommendations were then suggested based on the outcomes of this study and in the final section of this chapter, a number of key research priorities were identified based on the findings that emerged from this study.

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Appendices

1 Research information sheet for volunteers (Pre-birth and post birth).

2 Research information sheet for managers of leisure facilities.

3 Consent form for focus group participants/interviewees.

4 Parents Centre newsletter article.

5 Flyer to recruit pregnant females and partner for interview (pre-birth).

6 Pre-birth interviewees.

7 Post-birth interviewees.

Appendix 1 Research Information Sheet for Volunteers (Pre-birth and post-birth)

Title of the Research Project - *New Parents, Family Life and Leisure.*

Why am I interested in this area of Research?
The origins of this research developed mainly from my experience as a 'new' parent and the impact this significant life event has had on family life and leisure.

Aim of the Research Project
The specific aim of this project is to research and investigate the nature of leisure activities and experiences for both partners in families with either an expectant child or a young child (1-24 months) in the Christchurch region. The aim of this project is to focus the research around childbirth as a significant and key life event. It is an opportunity for you to discuss and share your experiences, confidentially and contribute to a new and important area of research.

Participation in the Research
Your participation in this project will involve being interviewed alone and later with your partner, to discuss how changes in your personal life situation, due to pregnancy or the recent birth of your child, may have impacted upon your leisure experiences and opportunities. Your participation in the project will involve about one hour of your time as an individual and an hour of your time as a couple, to determine your views and experiences. I have a number of general ideas to lead the interviews relating to the above topic to ask you, which can often lead to subsequent more in-depth discussion for the purposes of clarification and better understanding. Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and if at any time you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you are under no obligation to answer them, but may choose to sit out this part of the interview. Complete confidentiality of material will be ensured throughout the project and no participant will be mentioned by name.

The Interviews

The interview subject matter is based upon previous research in the area and on two focus (discussion) groups, I have undertaken with a Pre-birth group of parents and a Post-birth group of parents in late March 2007. The interviews will give you the opportunity to express your views and opinions on the topic with the intention of better understanding how changes in our life (childbirth) can impact upon our life and leisure. The last stage of the research will involve a number of interviews with leisure providers in the Christchurch region, utilising the ideas that emerged from the focus groups and the interviews to better plan and provide recreation for families with expectant or young children.

How do you take part? – Very simple, just Contact

David Lamb (Principal Researcher for the project)

(Senior Lecturer in Sport and Recreation Management, Lincoln University)

Tel - 325 -2811 ext 8099 (leave message on answer phone)

Email lambd@lincoln.ac.nz

Appendix 2 Research Information Sheet for Managers of Leisure Facilities

You are invited to participate in an interview as a Manager of a leisure facility in a research based project entitled;

New Parents, Family Life and Leisure in Heterosexual Couples

As a PhD student I am under certain limitations as to how extensive my study can be. Therefore, I have decided along with the support of my supervisors to concentrate on heterosexual couples, which is in no way is intended to minimise the validity of the parenting choices of same sex couples. In reality there are many different meanings of what constitutes a family and different types of families exist within New Zealand such as lone parents, interracial families, families with disabled children and families with at 'risk' adolescents. Hence, I am aware of different family forms and that this particular study is restricted to heterosexual couples. This is because, I have limited time and resources available and the focus of this research is on comparing male and female perspectives within the same families, hence the focus on heterosexual couples.

The aim of this project is to focus the research around childbirth as a key life event and a specific phase of family life. More specifically the focus of this project is to research and investigate the nature of leisure activities and experiences for both partners in heterosexual families with very young children in the Christchurch region. This is an under-developed area of research as previous approaches have tended to concentrate on all phases of family life, rather than on specific periods such as childbirth. The emphasis of this study has been on parenthood, an important time in our lives, when key life changes can have a marked and dramatic effect on the nature of leisure for all family members. I have already undertaken focus group research and individual and joint interviews with selected couples in Christchurch with young children, recruited through day care centres, nurseries and antenatal groups. As a result of this research a number of important issues have been raised concerning leisure provision in Christchurch.

I would like to discuss these issues with you in person through an informal interview directed by the feedback I have had from couples in the study. In particular, I would like to discuss your philosophy of approach/management with respect to provision for family members as a group and as individuals.

During the interview I am will be keen to seek your views and opinions on problems and solutions of providing for family leisure as a leisure facility manager and the specific programmes you have in place to provide for families. I will be interviewing a number of leisure facility managers in the Christchurch area from the public and private sectors to ascertain the extent to which the facility provides for and meets the leisure needs of families. Your participation in this project will involve being interviewed at a location of your choosing, whether that is the facility where you work or the University or some other place is entirely dependent on your decision. Involvement in the research is entirely voluntary, but important and will involve one to one and half hours of your time. I will have a number of general questions to ask you, relating to the issues from the research already undertaken, which could lead to subsequent more in-depth type questions for the purposes of clarification and better understanding of the issues.

If at any time during the interview, you are uncomfortable with any of the questions, you are under no obligation to answer them. The results of the project may be published, but you may be assured of the complete confidentiality of data gathered in this investigation (the identity of leisure facility managers will not be made public). Your participation in this research project is highly valued and very much appreciated. The data (information) from the interview will be kept in a lockable filing cabinet at the home of the principal researcher or in his office at Lincoln University. The data will only be accessible to the principal researcher, his research supervisors and yourself and will be shredded 6 years after the collection date. The project is being carried out by:

Name of Principal Researcher – **David Lamb**

Contact details – Email: lambd@lincoln.ac.nz

Appendix 3 Consent form for focus group participants/interviewees

Name of Research Study:

New Parents, Family Life and Leisure in Heterosexual Couples.

I have read and understood the description of the above-named project. On this basis I agree to participate as a subject in the project, either as a focus group participant or as an interview participant and I consent to the publication of the results of the project with the understanding that anonymity will be preserved. I understand also that I may at any time withdraw from the project.

Name: ……

Signed: ,,,

Appendix 4 Parents Centre Newsletter Article

"Research volunteers needed for study on family leisure"

Title of the Research Project
New Parents, Family Life and Leisure in Heterosexual Couples

Why I am interested in this area of research?
The origins of this research developed mainly from my experience as a 'new' parent and the impact this significant life event has had on family life and leisure activities and experiences of my wife and I.

Aim of the Research Project
The specific aim of this project is to research and investigate the nature of leisure activities and experiences for both partners in families with an expectant or a young child in the Christchurch region. The aim of this project is to focus the research around childbirth as a key life event and a specific phase of family life. It is an opportunity for you to talk about, discuss and share your experiences confidentially with other similar couples in a relaxed and 'none' threatening environment.

Participation in the Research
Your participation in this project will involve being part of a (focus) group of about 5 or 6 couples, to discuss how changes in your personal life situation, due to pregnancy or the recent birth of your child , may have impacted upon your leisure experiences and opportunities. Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and at anytime during the (focus) group discussion you will be allowed to withdraw from the group. Your participation in the project is highly valued and important and will involve about one hour of your time as a couple, to determine your views and experiences of your leisure pre or post the birth of your child. I have a number of general ideas to lead the discussion relating to the above topic to ask you, which can often lead to subsequent more in-depth discussion for the purposes of clarification and better understanding.

If at any time you are uncomfortable with any of the discussion, you are under no obligation to contribute to it, but may choose to sit this part of the discussion out, if you so wish.

The Focus Group Meetings

For the Pre-birth group, the meeting will take place on the Wednesday 29th March, 2007, at 6 pm. for around one- two hours at Library South, Colombo Street Beckenham, Christchurch.

For the Post-birth group, the meeting will be at the same venue on the same date at 8.15 pm until approx. 10.15 pm. Tea/Coffee and biscuits will be available at both meetings

How do you take part?

Contact- **David Lamb**

(Senior Lecturer in Sport/Recreation/Events Management), Lincoln University.

Email: lambd@lincoln.ac.nz

Appendix 5 Flyer to recruit pregnant females and their partner for interview (pre-birth)

"Pregnant females and their partner needed for family leisure research project"

Why am I interested in this area of Research?
The origins of this research developed mainly from my experience as a 'new' parent and the impact this significant life event has had on family life and leisure.

Aim of the Research Project
The specific aim of this project is to research the nature of leisure activities and experiences for families with an expectant child.

Participation in the Research
Your participation in this project will involve being interviewed to discuss how changes in your personal life situation, due to pregnancy, may have impacted upon your leisure experiences and opportunities. Your participation in the project will involve ONLY one hour of your time to determine your views. Complete confidentiality of material will be ensured throughout the project and no participant will be mentioned by name.

The Interviews
The interviews will give you the opportunity to express your views and opinions on the topic with the intention of better understanding how significant life events, such as pregnancy can impact upon our life and leisure.

HOW DO I TAKE PART? - VERY SIMPLE, JUST CONTACT

David Lamb (Principal Researcher - Lincoln University.)

Email: lambd@lincoln.ac.nz

Appendix 6 Pre-birth Iinterviewees (all names used below are pseudonyms)

Alan and Rhian, both white American in their mid 30s, had now been married several years and since moving to New Zealand from the States three years ago, they had made the decision to start a family. As a result, Rhian was now 5 months pregnant and was very excited about the arrival of her first child. Their move to New Zealand was described by Alan as a "lifestyle choice", to remove themselves from the "increasing commercialization of American life". For a number of years, they had been disillusioned with life in the States, although leaving family members behind was difficult for them both. Alan worked from home in video production and Rhian worked for a private hospital in Christchurch as a nurse. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Rhian was five months pregnant and they were renovating an old weatherboard property on the outskirts of Christchurch in a rural location, and much of their spare time was now committed to this endeavour.

Nina (UK European) and Stu (NZ European) both in their early 30s, had recently returned from the UK, where they worked for a number of years to increase their savings in order to buy a property in a south eastern suburb of Christchurch. Nina had worked for a number of years in travel retail, which she described as a "very demanding job, with poor pay". Stu had worked in accounting since leaving University and had a very highly paid post in London, yet had difficulty finding similar work in New Zealand. However, Stu was very keen to return to New Zealand to start a family and likewise Nina found living in a foreign capital city extremely stressful and not conducive to having children. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Nina, was eight months pregnant and had just given up full time work. This was a joint decision, to allow Nina to focus her energies on the baby and later childcare.

Vera (NZ European) and Marty (NZ European) both in their early 30s had been working in the UK for the last three years and returned to Christchurch (their hometown), eighteen months ago to be around family again. They had recently bought a house, with their UK savings two kilometres south of the city centre, in a desirable suburb of Christchurch. Although they both had well paid jobs in London, they decided to return to start a family and raise their kids in what they described as a "safe country". They enjoyed their time in London, but had always intended to return to New Zealand to settle down.

Vera was a nurse specializing in baby care and Marty was a Production Manger for a major company and worked unsocial hours in a business based on the outskirts of Christchurch. They both found work once back in New Zealand, relatively quickly, yet on much lower rates of pay compared to the UK despite both being in recognized professions. At the time when the interviews were conducted Vera, was several months pregnant

Yasmin (UK European) and John (UK European), both in their mid 30s, had moved to New Zealand from the UK, just over nine months ago and both found work very quickly. They resided south of the city centre in a popular suburb by the beach, in an area often frequented by new arrivals from the UK. Yasmin worked in a local hospital as a Physiotherapist, and John worked as a Sales Manager for a multi- national company. Both were very happy in their new posts as they described working life in New Zealand as less stressful, when compared to the UK. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Yasmin was nine months pregnant. As a result her baby was due anytime in the next few days and she was busy buying baby 'things' and generally preparing herself for the birth of her first child. Yasmin was apprehensive about how she would cope after the birth, as she did not have any family members to assist. However, John believed the friends they had made since arriving would help out and many had already offered assistance.

Pete (NZ European) and Sue (NZ European), both nearly 30 years of age, arrived back in New Zealand just nine months ago after an extended period of time working in the UK. Just over eight months ago, they decided to return to New Zealand and reside in Christchurch as Pete was offered a research contract at a local University. Soon after their return, Sue found work as a Teacher and with their savings they bought a three bedroom weatherboard property in the south-west of Christchurch. Their choice of suburb was based on accessibility and the location they chose, enabled them easy and direct access to the city centre for work and pleasure. At the time when the interviews were conducted Sue was eight months pregnant. Although the baby was not planned, they were both looking forward to being parents. Sue was working part time at the moment at a local school and hoped to return to full time work as soon after the birth as possible.

Rose (early 30s) and Sam (early 40s), both NZ European, had resided in a pleasant suburb of Christchurch, south of the city centre for seven months. They moved from Auckland nine months ago, as life there was too busy and before that spent some time working in Europe. Both Sam and Rose worked in the medical profession based at local hospitals. They met while working together and decided to move south in order to buy a property without a mortgage. At the time when the interviews were conducted Rose, was seven months pregnant. After the child was born, they planned to return to the North Island of New Zealand to be closer to family.

Rita (mid 30s) and Angus (mid 30s), both NZ European, returned to Christchurch over a year ago after spending a year in Dunedin and two years in the UK. The principal reason to relocate to Christchurch was a quality of life decision, as both felt it would be a "good city to raise children". Angus found work relatively quickly in banking, whilst Rita found work as a specialist mental health nurse on a part time basis. At the time when the interviews were conducted Rita was nine months pregnant. Rita has now terminated her employment to focus her energies on the birth of their first child. Angus now spent most of his spare time renovating a property they had bought six months ago in the south east of Christchurch, in readiness for the birth.

Rory and Ria, both UK Europeans and in their early 30s, had lived in Christchurch for two years after spending over a year travelling around New Zealand. Rory worked in civil engineering and was away from home in different parts of the country on a regular basis, his partner Ria was based locally, as a Laboratory Assistant. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Ria was six months pregnant. Rory tried to spend most of his weekends around the home to help out with household chores, as Ria was finding the pregnancy very tiring. Two months after the baby's arrival, they intend to move from their centrally located rental property and return to the UK. Rory has already had offers of work back home and they plan to live within close proximity of Ria's parent, so that they could have family support, close by.

Sadie, (mid 30s and NZ European) and Ned (late 30s and white Australian), had moved recently to Christchurch. Ned originally worked in the wine industry in Marlborough whereas; Sadie worked as a Training Manager for a cosmetics company. Any spare time they had was now committed to their first child. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Sadie was eight months pregnant.

Cody (UK European) and Brenda (UK European), both in their mid 30s had resided in a desirable area of Christchurch just below the Port Hills for over two years. Before this time, Brenda resided in the North Island and moved to Christchurch for work in advertising, whereas Cody had lived in the Marlborough area, as what he described as a "hospitality entrepreneur". Since their arrival in Christchurch, he had managed a number of hospitality projects and continued to remain busy. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Brenda was nine months pregnant and was still working on a part time basis and intended to work from home, once the baby is born.

Ruby (NZ Maori) and Dave (NZ European) had both just turned 30 years of age and resided in a northern suburb of Christchurch, just one kilometre from the city centre. Both worked full time in what they described as enjoyable, yet demanding jobs. Ruby worked in sales and marketing, promoting Christchurch as a tourist destination to foreign visitors. Dave was on the road on a regular basis, selling clothing for a major retail outlet. Since her pregnancy, Ruby had curtailed her hours of work as she simply got too tired, working on a full time basis. Dave had recently asked his boss if he could avoid overnight stays as part of his work. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Ruby was six months pregnant and was enjoying the experience of being pampered by her husband and friends.

Karen was in her early 20s, (NZ European) and Dan was in his mid 20s, (NZ Maori) lived in the north of Christchurch, in a rural location, by the sea. They were originally from the far north of the North Island, so took some time to cope with the demands of living near a big city. They both moved south to find work and had been together now for over a year and in that time had been married. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Karen was four months pregnant. Karen still worked full time as a Restaurant Manager, which involved working evenings, whilst Dan worked as a Mechanic in the city centre on a regular 8 am to 5 pm shift during the week and occasionally at weekends.

Rhona and Mick, (both UK European) were both in their late 20s and moved to New Zealand, just 4 years ago. Life in the UK had become too stressful and they backpacked together several years ago in New Zealand and had since returned to permanently settle here. Mick had found full time work as a Sales Consultant with a major New Zealand company within six months of arriving and Rhona had several part time jobs working in administration. At the time when the interviews were conducted, Rhona was eight months pregnant. During the last two months of her pregnancy she had worked part-time, but was now based at home. This has put quite a strain on their finances as they were still paying off an expensive mortgage on a house they bought over a year ago. Rhona would like to return to full time work a few months after her baby was born, in the meantime they were managing with help from family in the UK and with Mick's overtime pay for weekend work. They lived in a moderately priced area of Christchurch, just south of the city centre, and had recently sold their car to save on expenditure.

Appendix 7 Post-birth interviewees (all names used are pseudonyms)

Meg and Colin, both NZ European were in their very early 30s, and had one girl, aged 2 years. They both worked full time in a teaching capacity and Colin also studied part time as part of his plan to further advance his career. They moved to Christchurch as life was too hectic in Auckland and they were followed to Christchurch by Meg's parents. As a result they now had access to child minding, but Meg stressed that she did not want to abuse this opportunity. They lived in a desirable suburb of Christchurch and were presently renovating the property with the help of Meg's dad, who was a builder. Since the birth of their child, Meg had worked on a part time basis to spend more time with her. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had one child.

Sandy, in her mid 30s and Alvin in his mid 40s, were both NZ European and lived just below the Port Hills in a very desirable area of Christchurch. They had always lived locally and at the time when the interviews were conducted, had a son, aged 3 months. They had both been University educated and Alvin now worked in academia on a full time basis whereas, Sandy had recently resigned from her job as an engineer, to focus her energies on her child.

Greg (NZ European), in his early 30s, was married to Dawn (NZ Maori), in her mid 30s. They had recently moved to a new property on the east coast of Christchurch to be close to the beach and away from the city. This meant longer travel times to work as both of them worked in the city, but the compromise meant they could afford a cheaper property in a developing area of Christchurch with lots of outdoor activities close by. They had recently started a family and at the time when the interviews were conducted, had a son, aged four months. Dawn had a very demanding job and often had to bring work home and since the birth of their son, Greg had been a 'stay at home dad'. This was a joint decision as Dawn had greater earning potential and now they have paid off their house they could manage on one salary. Greg still worked part time on a regular basis and this suited their lifestyle

Teus was in his mid 30s and originally from Holland. He was married to Sharon (NZ European), in her late 20s. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had a son, aged six months. They lived south of Christchurch city centre in a moderate suburb on a very big plot of land. This land was inherited from Sharon's family and prior to the birth of their child they'd spent much of their spare time, renovating the property. However, since the birth of their son, plans to renovate the property had to be put on hold as Teus had just started his own business and Sharon continued to work part time in an administrative role in the city centre.

Marie (Asian origin) and Ben (NZ European), were both in their mid 20s, and had returned from the UK just over a year ago after a two year period of work there. Soon after they returned to New Zealand, Marie discovered she was pregnant. Ben quickly got a very well paid job in computing and with their savings from the UK, bought a new property south east of the city centre. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had a son, aged 4 months of age. Marie had now been able to return to an administrative post in a local college as her mum looked after their son when she was at work.

Fay (UK European) in her mid 30s, had been living in New Zealand for four years now and her partner Paul (UK European) was in his early 40s. Before her pregnancy, Fay had a high profile management job with a large New Zealand based company. Paul still worked full time in a management capacity. Fay had recently resigned from her job as it was getting too stressful and they were having no luck when trying for a baby. However, three months after Fay quit her job she discovered she was pregnant. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had a son, aged eight months and are planning to have more. Both of them were very happy in New Zealand and intended to stay. More recently, Fay's parents moved to New Zealand to support their daughter.

Olga in her late 20s, and Jan in his mid 30s, had recently moved to Christchurch from Russia and brought Jan's mother with them as she had just lost her husband. They had been based in Christchurch now for over three years in various rental properties just outside the city centre. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had a son, aged 16 months, whom Olga looked after on a full time basis. Olga went to college on a part time basis to improve her English and to help find work. Jan worked unsocial hours during the week and long hours at the weekend and normally only saw his son on his day off, on Monday. Eventually they planned to raise enough money to buy their own property, but at the moment found it difficult to manage on their household income.

Stef (short for Stephanie) was in his early 30s, and Dean in his mid 30's, were both NZ European and had recently returned to Christchurch after living in the UK for the last four years. They decided to return home to have children, after 12 months in the UK. Before the birth, Stef studied full time, but now opted to study full time whereas, Dean quickly found work as a Craftsman, which involved working long hours during the week. They still lived in a rental property in a suburb just outside the city centre, but hoped to buy a property once Stef had finished University. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had a daughter, aged nine months.

Clara, in her early 30s, moved to New Zealand from Sweden over ten years ago after a backpacking trip with friends. Not long after her move to New Zealand, she had met Steve in his mid 30's (NZ European) and they both spent time living in Europe, before they returned to New Zealand two years ago to start a family. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had a daughter, aged nineteen months and were seriously thinking about trying for more children and were preparing for a six month trip back to Sweden to visit family and friends. Clara was a full time mum, whereas Steve was very busy building houses for a company he'd recently formed with a friend

Kate (UK European) was in her mid 30s and a full time mum. Her partner, Syd was in his late 30s (NZ European) and worked in a local hospital. He was now the key earner as collectively they decided that one of them needed to care full time for their child. This meant a lack of funds to spend on holidays and home improvements and the recent cancellation of a planned trip back to the UK. Syd and Kate live in an old weatherboard property in a moderately priced northern suburb of Christchurch.

Cora in her late 20s and Denny in his early 30s, were both NZ European and lived on the outskirts of Christchurch in a new and developing area of Christchurch. They were originally from the North Island of New Zealand and had lived in Christchurch for over ten years. They moved south to take up teaching posts in the city, but since their arrival in Christchurch Denny worked full-time as an Education Facilitator in a cultural organization. Cora had switched from secondary to primary teaching and now worked part-time. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had a son, aged twelve months.

Tina and Fred both NZ European were both in their early 30s and worked as teachers at local schools and were both born in Christchurch. At the time when the interviews were conducted, they had a daughter, aged twenty two months. Once they were settled in their new home in a new suburb in the south of Christchurch, they intended to try for another child.