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Attitudes to Marriage in Selected New Zealand Periodicals,
1960 - 1969

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours in History, at the University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand.

October 1991.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are several people who deserve recognition and thanks for the assistance they gave me in the course of this essay. I greatly appreciate the guidance and suggestions of my supervisor, Dr. Barbara Brookes, which were very valuable in shaping my work. I am also extremely grateful to my parents for the use of a word processor and printer, and to the whole family for their patience.

Many of my friends have given me encouragement when it was needed, but I would especially like to thank Susan for her support. Finally a very special thanks to John for proofreading this essay in its final form, and more importantly for his endless patience and readiness to listen.
CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE - The Ideal Marriage

CHAPTER TWO - Stereotypes Relating to Marriage

CHAPTER THREE - Ideals Out of Reach

CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX
LIST OF TABLES

Table 0.1  Average Age at Marriage  page 2
Table 0.2  Percentage of Women Employed and Not Employed immediately after marriage by marriage cohorts, 1927-32 to 1962-67  page 3
Table 0.3  Ex-nuptial Births, Illegitimacy Ratio and Illegitimacy Rate, 1962 - 67  page 10
Table 0.4  Brides Whose Pre-marital Conception Resulted in a Live Birth within eight months of marriage, 1962 - 67  page 10
Table 1.1  Increase in Women in the Labour Force, 1955 - 75  page 15
Table 1.2  Percentages of Church and Civil Wedding Ceremonies, 1960 - 69  page 23
Table 2.1  Marital Status of Spouses of remarried divorcé(e)s, 1920 - 75  page 38
Table 3.1  Divorce Rates - Decrees Nisi  page 49
Table 3.2  Divorce Rate per 100 marriages during year, 1955 - 69  page 50
Table 3.3  Duration of Marriages affected by Divorce Petitions and Decrees, 1915 - 75  page 51
Table 3.4  Grounds for Divorce in Decrees Absolute granted each year, 1960 - 69  page 52
INTRODUCTION

The subject of marriage in New Zealand has not received much attention from historians in comparison to other topics in social history, making it an important area for further research. The first significant study of New Zealand marriage was taken from a demographic perspective. Two articles by Miriam Gilson (later Miriam Gilson Vosburgh) appeared in general books in 1970 and 1973, and in 1978 she published *The New Zealand Family and Social Change: A Trend Analysis*. In these studies, Gilson Vosburgh illustrates how marriage patterns in New Zealand have changed along with the age-sex structure of the population and social and economic conditions. High marriage rates can be attributed to an equal sex ratio, particularly at the popular marrying ages. Changes to the age-sex structure of the population therefore result in changes to the average age at marriage.

Moreover Gilson Vosburgh argues that from the late nineteenth century until relatively recently there has been an overall trend to a younger average age at marriage.¹ Once a trend to a younger age at marriage is underway, it starts to be socially reinforced and becomes the norm. Once some members of a friendship or peer group have married the other members are under pressure to do the same due to a fear of not marrying at a later age, a loss of usual companionship and a fear of being considered 'abnormal'. A younger average marrying age can also be attributed to developments in birth control which enabled marriages to be planned on the basis of two incomes once the arrival of children could be successfully delayed until the wife no longer had to work outside the home.²

Initially at the beginning of the twentieth century there was an increase in the average age of both men and women at marriage. Gilson Vosburgh suggests that the age at marriage had probably been younger at the beginning of settlement in New Zealand and had begun to rise at the end of the nineteenth century. A slight tendency for the age at marriage to decrease was interrupted by a small rise during

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economic depression in the 1920s and 1930s as couples postponed marriage until they were more financially secure. A rapid decline in the average age at marriage occurred at the onset of World War Two, and appears to have continued until recent times.  

TABLE 0.1
Average Age at Marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Spinsters</th>
<th>Bachelors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>24.9</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955*</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960*</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965*</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>24.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967*</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes Maori marriages


Gilson Vosburgh argues that it is likely that an increase in the average age at marriage during the nineteenth century was the result of economic conditions unfavourable to marriage. Marrying at an older age became the norm as people, desiring good living standards and some degree of financial security, adjusted. Similarly the increase in the average marrying age during the depression of the 1930s can be attributed to economic influences.

Probably the high rate of unemployment, rising to well above 10 per cent of the males of workforce age on occasions during the 1929 - 35 period, the decrease in average wages and wide-spread feelings of economic insecurity, all had some influence on delaying marriages.

Conversely, she suggests that the age at marriage decreased during times of relative economic prosperity and a reduction in the economic constraints on marriage. Between the Second World War and 1966 New Zealand had nearly full

---

employment and no severe economic hardships. Moreover the proportion of married women in paid employment increased (See Table 0.2), as did public acceptance of joint financial responsibility during the early stages of marriage. Fewer possessions were required before marrying, with husbands and wives jointly buying household goods after marriage.\(^6\)

**TABLE 0.2**

**Percentage of Women Employed and Not Employed immediately after marriage, by marriage cohorts, 1927-32 to 1962-67**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marriage Cohort</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Not Employed</th>
<th>Number of Cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1927-32</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>82.7</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932-37</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>80.0</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-42</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>66.2</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1942-47</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947-52</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-57</td>
<td>69.3</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-62</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-67</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Gilson Vosburgh suggests that the traditional practice of New Zealand couples establishing their own household on marrying combined with a housing shortage could increase the average age at marriage, since couples would delay their wedding until they could set up their own home. Following World War Two there was a severe housing shortage which was not overcome until the early 1960s. However, given that the average age at marriage was decreasing at this time, it is possible that the shortage of housing had the effect of preventing the average age becoming even younger.\(^7\)

From the mid 1950s there were more women of popular marrying ages than men, resulting in a tendency for women to marry men who were closer to their own age, thus decreasing the age gap between husbands and wives. A likely reason presented by Gilson Vosburgh for this trend is that with the growing stress on companionable marriages it was generally recognised that two people closer in age were more likely to have shared friendships and interests, and age-linked

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\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 210 - 12.

\(^7\)Vosburgh, *The NZ Family*, p. 51.
authority within marriage would be lessened. Earlier marriage and an earlier end to childbearing meant that a husband and wife were likely to spend longer in their marriage without children, thus making companionship a valued quality for a happy marriage.

Gilson Vosburgh argues that in the selection of a spouse the choice is often consciously or unconsciously limited to those with a similar racial, religious or economic background. Between 1917 and 1967 there was very little change in the tendency to marry within a particular socio-economic group. Moreover the likelihood of having the same religion as a spouse was even greater. Couples were likely to either marry within their own religious group or to change after marriage to the group of their spouse. Weaker social controls during World War Two partly explain more Protestant and Catholic intermarriage than in the post-war period. The proportion of this type of intermarriage rose again in the period 1962 -67.

The next contribution to the historiography of marriage in New Zealand was made by Erik Olssen and Andree Levesque in an article which appeared in *Families in New Zealand Society* edited by Peggy Koopman-Boyden in 1978. This article examines the history of New Zealand marriage since 1840.

During the early colonial period in New Zealand (1840 - 1879), Olssen and Levesque state that the family was seen as a source of social stability and a way to reproduce labour. Edward Gibbon Wakefield believed that the right amounts of land, capital and labour would also result in prosperity, which in turn would enable young people to make good marriages and have large families, thus guaranteeing growth and stability for the new colony. The colonial family was an economic unit, making marriage both socially and economically desirable. Courtship was an important process which occurred under communal supervision due to the value attached, especially by the small elite, to marrying a social equal. Marriage was an important social occasion and an opportunity to show parental approval of the match as well as to display their wealth publicly. Wealthy parents were able to prevent their daughters meeting with unacceptable young men, while lower class

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parents tried to emulate the same degree of control over their daughters' virtue and to ensure prudent marriages were made.\(^{12}\)

Olssen and Levesque argue that marriages in New Zealand were more of a partnership than they had been in Britain since colonial husbands and wives worked side by side, but there was also a considerable amount of violence. Men tended to settle most disputes by force, and this also applied within the home, thus patriarchy remained dominant. This was reflected by the law, with women losing their few civil rights on marriage.\(^{13}\)

Unlike Maori society, the basis of European social organisation in New Zealand was not kinship. Married couples established their own separate households. Moreover the distance separating them from family in Britain made it difficult to maintain close ties. Olssen and Levesque suggest that therefore neighbourhood connections were therefore of greater importance. Colonial New Zealand found divorce socially unacceptable as a solution to marital conflict. Men, particularly in the lower classes, therefore turned to desertion as a means of escape.\(^{14}\)

Olssen and Levesque argue that between 1880 and 1920 the cults of domesticity and motherhood developed and established themselves firmly as the dominant ideology of the New Zealand family. Gender roles were polarised and separate spheres developed for men and women. They suggest that urban women were given a new sense of importance and dignity with the recognition of the value of good motherhood for the future of the nation. Moreover a decline in fertility rates during this period may reflect the emancipation of women and the acceptance of these new cults, since having too many children made it very difficult to be the ideal mother. New attitudes towards marriage developed, as people tended to place more importance on their own interests and emotional objectives. Thus marriage was justified not only as a way of producing children but also as an emotional necessity for the couple themselves.\(^{15}\)

\(^{12}\)Olssen and Levesque, pp. 1 - 3.
\(^{13}\)Ibid, pp. 3 - 4.
\(^{14}\)Ibid, p. 4.
\(^{15}\)Ibid, pp. 6 - 11.
Olssen and Levesque suggest that by the First World War the dominant ideology of marriage and the family was being questioned. It seemed as if marriage and the family unit were being 'attacked' by advocates of birth control and defenders of abortion. During the war the traditional controls on young people were eroded, and both divorce and illegitimacy rates increased. Marriage for love rather than prudence was defended in the 1920s with a greater emphasis placed on romanticism and domestic bliss. However the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s intensified the orthodox attitudes towards marriage which had remained dominant.16

Olssen and Levesque argue that labour government policies between 1935 and 1949 facilitated marriage by providing, for instance, increased family benefits, housing and a minimum wage and thus giving greater economic stability to married couples. However a decline in family size continued as couples limited their fertility. This could have been due to the greater likelihood for each child to survive into adulthood, and the cost involved in raising each extra child which took money away from family luxuries. During the Second World War more women entered the workforce and achieved greater freedom and autonomy. Modern values were filtered through to New Zealand society by the media and particularly American films. These values promoted the inclination to follow emotions and desires and people sought to compensate for earlier sacrifices during hard times. Similarly, society placed a greater emphasis on consumption rather than on thrift, as post-war prosperity enabled the realisation of domestic ideals.17

The most recent major contribution to the study of marriage in New Zealand was made by Roderick Phillips' *Divorce in New Zealand* in 1981. Through his study of divorce records, Phillips sheds light on attitudes towards marriage. A series of legislation was introduced which made divorce more readily available in response to the needs of New Zealanders. These changes would have contributed to altering attitudes by presenting divorce as an officially accepted response to marital breakdown. Roderick Phillips suggests that couples were less prepared to tolerate marital disharmony as divorce became easier to obtain, thus lowering the level of discord accepted within marriage. An increasing acceptance of liberal attitudes towards divorce was part of a larger process of growing

16*ibid*, pp. 12 - 14.
17*ibid*, pp. 15 - 17.
tolerance towards previously unacceptable behaviour in the area of sexual activity, contraception and women's rights in general. ¹⁸

This brief survey of previous studies of New Zealand marriage indicate that plenty of scope remains for further detailed investigation which draws on different sets of primary sources. This essay seeks to partially fill that gap.

The 1960s are generally viewed as a decade of social change, making it interesting to see if attitudes to marriage in New Zealand reflected these changes. One such change likely to have an impact on marriage was the altering of male stereotypes and the image of the 'Kiwi bloke'. Jock Phillips suggests that the stereotype of the hard-living colonial pioneer was mythical, since most New Zealand men knew nothing of the toughness of backblock living, yet the image persisted.

In 1960 not less than in 1920, men thought of the New Zealand male as a giant of the backblocks - strong, resilient and modest, a man who could hold his drink and enjoyed yarning with his mates, and who would eventually settle down as a loyal family man. The only change was a reduced effort in presenting the Kiwi male as a gentleman, and rather more public tolerance of the informal male culture. ¹⁹

Phillips argues that a series of social changes began in the mid 1960s which widened the gap between the male stereotype and actual experience, and which caused the image of the hard-living man to begin to disappear. ²⁰ In 1967 fifty years of six o'clock closing came to an end, resulting in changes to the pub environment as publicans tried to attract a more leisurely drinker. Breweries were forced to supply export quality beer rather than alcohol to be consumed at speed and not really tasted, and wine consumption slowly began to increase, breaking the link between beer and masculinity. War spirit, previously a tenet of the male stereotype, declined as the population contained fewer war veterans and as opposition to the Vietnam War from the late 1960s caused hostility to a particular war to develop into a questioning of war psychology itself. ²¹

¹⁸Phillips, p. 83.
²⁰Ibid. 
Moreover the image of the Kiwi male was altered by the declining importance of rugby which had previously been the mark of a New Zealand man. Relative affluence helped make individual sports such as skiing, squash and diving more popular, while soccer became increasingly accessible under the influence of many post-war British immigrants. The publicity given to rugby related injuries (and broken necks in particular), and the firmly amateur status of the game reduced rugby's popularity as people turned towards other sports. Furthermore rugby's preeminence was threatened by the world's abhorrence of South Africa's apartheid system. In 1960 New Zealanders protested the exclusion of Maoris from the All Black team to tour South Africa, while in 1967 the National Government supported the 'No Maoris No Tour' stance.22

The male stereotype in New Zealand was also changed by the increasing number of women moving into the workforce from the mid 1960s. To some extent, the exclusiveness of the male breadwinner was weakened. Many men no longer had sole control of the family income, and they could not automatically assume that there was a woman at home who was in charge of domestic responsibilities.23 Husbands were therefore forced on occasion to look after the children and cook meals. The women's movement which took off in the early 1970s in New Zealand also affected male stereotypes as it forced some men to reconsider previously unquestioned domestic roles.24

If these changes to the image of the 'typical Kiwi bloke' in the 1960s altered men's behaviour, they would also be likely to promote more egalitarian marriage and a change in expected domestic roles. It is therefore reasonable to examine the 1960s to discover if such a change in attitudes to marriage did occur.

The beginnings of the women's movement in the late 1960s was a further social change likely to affect attitudes towards marriage in New Zealand. From the early twentieth-century until the late 1960s, New Zealand women were politically

22ibid , p. 270.
23ibid , p. 273.
24ibid , pp. 272 - 73.
invisible with virtually no public identity other than as wives and mothers. The increasing number of women in the paid workforce led to the campaign for equal pay. It was not until the late 1960s that assumptions about women's 'place' and discrimination forcing females into sex-typed jobs were also questioned as the women's liberation movement began to challenge the prevailing notion of equality more forcefully. Improvements in education and economic opportunities for women, combined with their increased social freedom due to advances in fertility control provided the ground from which the second wave of active public feminism grew. Koopman-Boyden and Scott suggest that the women's movement sought equality of opportunity for women along with freedom of choice. Such goals implied the questioning of all aspects of a male-dominated society, not only with respect to equal access to paid employment and equal pay but also in connection with the sex-stereotyped roles within marriage and family. Women began to question their restricted role in society, and to speak out on women's issues previously rarely considered by male policymakers.

If this questioning of the traditional roles and values in marriage was widespread, the 1960s could have witnessed dramatic changes in the attitudes of dominant groups in society towards marriage.

Finally Miriam Gilson Vosburgh suggests a demographic trend which possibly illustrates a change in the way marriage was perceived by large numbers of New Zealanders. Since the Second World War there has been an increase in ex-nuptial birth rates in New Zealand, especially during the 1960s. (See Table 0.3) Without a comparable rise in the proportion of pregnant brides, this could indicate a changing attitude to births outside marriage and thus changing attitudes to marriage and its functions. (See Table 0.4) From 1952 to 1962 there was an increase in pregnant brides, therefore, provided pregnancy hastens a move into marriage, this would help to explain the trend to a younger age at marriage. However from 1962 to 1967 there was a rapid rise in the ex-nuptial birth rate, but no increase in the

27 Aitken, p. 13.
proportion of pregnant brides. This suggests a changing attitude to marriage since proportionately more children were being born outside marriage. Social changes in the 1960s therefore provide some background with which attitudes to marriage can be compared.

**TABLE 0.3**

**Ex-nuptial Births, Illegitimacy Ratio and Illegitimacy Rate, 1962-69**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of ex-nuptial births</th>
<th>Illegitimacy ratio</th>
<th>Illegitimacy rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>5 242</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>5 698</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>6 189</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>35.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>6 554</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>6 960</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>7 783</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>8 094</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>8 127</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Illegitimacy ratio = number of ex-nuptial live births as a percentage of all live births. Illegitimacy rate = number of ex-nuptial live births per 1,000 never married, divorced, widowed or legally separated women aged 15 - 44 at mid-year.

**Source:** Sam Elworthy, 'Social Change and the State', p. 15.

**TABLE 0.4**

**Brides Whose Pre-Marital Conception Resulted in a Live Birth within eight months of marriage as a percentage of all Brides in same age group at marriage, 1962-67**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>16-19</th>
<th>20-24</th>
<th>25-29</th>
<th>30-34</th>
<th>35-39</th>
<th>16-49</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>49.9</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>49.8</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>47.9</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In attempting to examine the attitudes to marriage in the 1960s the problem of sources arises. No one set of values can be said to represent every member of New Zealand society, since it consists of such a diverse group of people in race, culture, socio-economic grouping and religion. Rather than investigate the attitudes

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29Vosburgh,'Changing Marriage Patterns', pp 212 - 14.
of all the various sectors of the community towards marriage, this essay concentrates on the dominant attitudes, beliefs and practices in New Zealand from 1960 to 1969 and excludes numerous but less widely held values relating to marriage.

Magazines and periodicals are accessible primary sources which can provide an indication of the attitudes and values dominant in a particular society. In her study of women's magazines Marjorie Ferguson argues:

Alongside other social institutions such as the family, the school, the church and other media, they contribute to the wider cultural processes which define the position of women in a given society at a given point in time. In this exchange with the wider social structure, with processes of social change and social continuity, these journals help to shape both a woman's view of herself, and society's view of her.30

As mass communication media, magazines have considerable potential for social and economic influence.31 They function as agents of socialisation and promulgate values and attitudes. Women's magazines in particular tell their readers what to think and do about themselves, their lives and their families, and the influence of these messages is multiplied by a woman's influence on her family and friends.32

Moreover periodicals are intended to sell and make a profit, thus editors try to meet their readers' demands.

A major effect of social change [in Britain in the 1960s] was to force the women's magazines to raise their standards of service commensurately with the changes taking place in the pattern of life of their readers.33

Magazines attract readers by meeting a demand for a certain kind of information representing dominant social values, and creating an image of 'another world' as a form of escapism. Periodicals can therefore be expected to both reflect and reinforce the attitudes and values of their reading audience, making them a useful primary source for examining the dominant attitudes in a given society.

32 Ferguson, pp. 2 - 3.
33 White, p. 160.
A reading audience of a journal or magazine, however, will not be representative of all groups in the wider community. The content of a magazine will determine what type of readers it attracts. For instance a magazine which focuses on golf will not be widely read by people who have no interest in the sport. The values and beliefs presented in a periodical will therefore be limited to those of its readers and not of all groups in society. Conclusions drawn from a study of periodicals must therefore be qualified with respect to which groups in the community they are appealing to.

In an attempt to minimize this problem, this essay uses as primary sources the following four periodicals published in the 1960s, each of which appealed to different reading audiences in order that collectively most of the dominant groups in New Zealand society would be represented. *The New Zealand Women's Weekly* was first published in 1932 and by 1940 had a circulation of around 40,000 copies. It was initially targeted at young working class and lower middle class women, but was later altered to appeal to older women as well. 34 *The Women's Weekly* appeal to a large section of the female population makes it a useful primary source in the study of marriage in the 1960s.

Similarly *New Zealand Truth* also appealed to a large reading audience, both men and women, and has been in print since the early 1900s. Based on a radical working class tradition, it provided both news and entertainment in the 1960s. *The New Zealand Listener* first appeared in 1939, and like the *Women's Weekly* and *Truth* is still successful and in print. The *Listener* was aimed at both men and women in the 1960s and focused on contemporary issues and cultural events in an intellectual tone. The final primary source chosen for this essay is *Thursday: the Magazine for Younger Women*. In contrast to the other three weekly periodicals, *Thursday* appeared fortnightly from 1968. Its self-proclaimed objective was to provoke any kind of response (either positive or negative) among its reading audience of predominantly young, more radical women. These four periodicals therefore all appeal to different reading audiences and thus can be expected to reflect the views and attitudes of different dominant groups in New Zealand society. As sources for a study of marriage, the *Women's Weekly* is the most useful since a larger proportion of its content is devoted to marriage or related

subjects than in the other three magazines. In comparison, the *Listener* is the least valuable, since its pages are more often allocated to features on radio or television programmes.

The wide acceptance of marriage as a social institution makes it an important topic in New Zealand social history. John Gillis discusses the influence of family, peers and the wider community on the marriage of a couple. These influences illustrate the extent to which changes affecting society also affect marriages. Similarly a marriage will also have an effect back onto the community.

The process of making a marriage is inevitably *eventful* because it involves such significant changes in the lives not only of the couple but their families, kin, friends and neighbours. Together with birth and death it is usually the most important moment in the individual life cycle. For centuries it was also one of the most dramatic events in the life of the community as well.\(^{35}\)

\(^{35}\)Gillis, p. 6.
CHAPTER ONE: THE IDEAL MARRIAGE

By the 1960s there were a variety of ideals and expectations of marriage in New Zealand society. The basis of marriage shifted from an economic to an emotional necessity. Moreover, some groups in society began to doubt whether an unhappy marriage was preferable to no marriage at all. In periodicals, role models reflected this process of reconsideration. Some role models accepted and reinforced traditional images of marriage, while others questioned the appropriateness of such ideals in the light of social and economic changes. The questioning of previously accepted values and attitudes towards marriage was important in the 1960s but traditional images of marriage largely remained dominant.

As the number of women in the workforce increased, the basis of marriage shifted from economic to emotional support as women gained some degree of financial independence. (See Table 1.1) The belief that sex was vital to marriage was widespread and with better access to birth control and the availability of the contraceptive pill in 1961, the risk of pregnancy was removed and sexual intercourse became more recreational.¹ Companionship also became an important demand in marriage, while for those women who were unable to support themselves financially, a husband who was an adequate provider would have been a primary objective. Although emotional expectations were largely dominant by the 1960s, there was variation in the degree needed for fulfilment.

These ideals of married life reflected the effect of social and economic changes on people's expectations. As day to day life gradually altered and new ideas were considered, doubt was cast upon the legitimacy of previously accepted beliefs.

For most New Zealanders, the 1960s provided economic security. More people in New Zealand owned cars than before, and by 1966 over 90 per cent of all homes had hot water, a refrigerator and a vacuum cleaner, while over 80 per cent contained a telephone and a washing machine. Until the end of 1966 there was nearly full employment, due to a proportionately small number of the population being of working age, government policy and a high demand for goods and services as a result of population growth and relative affluence. Social welfare

¹Sam Elworthy, 'Social Change and the State: The Emergence of a Benefit for Unmarried Mothers in New Zealand', p. 8.
TABLE 1.1
Increase of women in the labour force 1955-75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>males number (000)</th>
<th>annual % increase</th>
<th>females number (000)</th>
<th>annual % increase</th>
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<td>609.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>191.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>619.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>194.4</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
<td>200.3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>206.2</td>
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<td>210.5</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
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<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>1962</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>231.0</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>248.0</td>
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<td>2.6</td>
<td>261.5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>1966</td>
<td>744.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
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<td>1968</td>
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<td>-0.4</td>
<td>287.2</td>
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<td>764.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
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<td>1970</td>
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<td>834.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>364.5</td>
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</table>

Source: New Zealand Official Yearbooks

support added to the feeling of security which was an important influence on attitudes and behaviour, particularly for the younger members of society who had had no experience of the pre-war depression. New Zealand was not a classless society, but divisions based on income, education and occupational groupings were slight and less definite than in other similarly developed countries. Population increases supported the growth of towns and cities, and helped foster the process of suburbanisation. This period of relative prosperity was not brought to an end until 1967 when both population growth rates declined and the economy went into recession.2

Following the Second World War, women experienced more financial independence as they moved increasingly into the workforce. Although the concept of full-time motherhood persisted, wider choice was available. Marriage was no longer seen merely as an acceptable economic arrangement. Financial independence among women led to new demands such as personal fulfilment and mutual

2Vosburgh, The NZ Family, pp. 16 - 21.
compatibility in marriage, rather than a husband who was a satisfactory breadwinner. Society's expectations and requirements of an ideal marriage rose. "Increasingly, women in particular demanded marriages that offered equality, preservation of their individuality and emotional fulfilment." 

Similarly economic and social independence generated a new 'youth culture' in the 1960s. With increased financial independence and more time spent in the education system, adolescents were able to break away from parental control to a certain extent. Independence of thought can also be attributed to the development of global communications. Young people were influenced by film, radio, literature, music and television from overseas, and began to develop their own ideas and practices, such as the new ideology of sexual freedom. The youth of the 1950s and 1960s had not experienced economic hardship as their parents generation had, thus creating a generation gap which was used to justify the rejection of traditional morality.

Ideas of sexual freedom created social problems and thus social tensions. Advances in contraception were not readily available to the young and single, instead being reserved for married couples. The contraceptive pill was usually only available to women if they could prove their intention to marry. It was believed that access to contraception would facilitate extra-marital sexual activity and therefore threaten the institution of marriage. The rate of pregnant brides in New Zealand is indicative of this change in patterns of sexual behaviour and illustrates that pre-marital abstinence was far from being a universal norm. In the 1920s one in five brides of reproductive age were pregnant at marriage. This dropped to one in eight in 1940 and remained fairly constant until 1949. However by 1963 nearly one in every four brides were pregnant. A decrease in the ratio of legitimate births can partly be accounted for by increasing public acceptance of a woman not rushing into marriage as soon as she became pregnant, since an unhappy marriage was not necessarily seen as preferable to no marriage at all. In the 1960s it was becoming more common for exnuptially conceived children to be cared for by their unmarried

3Elworthy, pp. 6 - 7.
5Elworthy, pp. 4 - 5.
6Ibid, pp. 10 - 11.
7Carmichael, pp. 57 - 9.
mothers. By the late 1960s concern was mounting over New Zealand’s high rate of illegitimate births in comparison to other countries. It was seen as a social problem, since illegitimacy was believed to undermine marriage and produce the deviants, misfits and criminals of the future. If viewed as a result of a lack of contraception and sex education the problem could be resolved, but it was largely seen instead as caused by moral decline, and therefore contraception continued to be withheld from unmarried people.

The impact of economic and social changes on expectations of marriage in the 1960s was both reflected and reinforced by magazines. Marriage was often presented in periodicals in an ideal form since the aim is to provide entertainment and escapism into 'another world' which lacks the difficulties of day to day life. These ideal values were taken on board by readers who then strive to reach the perfect marriages they read about. Images of marriages which fell short of the ultimate forms, however, were also present in periodicals of the 1960s. Letters from readers seeking advice revealed problems with their marriages, and articles on topics such as divorce reflected public concern over very real issues. Statistics on divorce and illegitimacy rates clearly indicate a reality for many people with no proximity to society's ideal marriage.

A study of three British women's magazines between 1949 and 1974 revealed the dominant theme of love, marriage and family as the ultimate female achievements. The goal of romantic love is invariably marriage. The message that romantic love was both a necessary and sufficient condition for marriage rang out loud and clear during the 1950s and 1960s. It spelled out both the condition and the institution as basic entry requirements for female group membership.

Emphasis was given to the value of domestic skills and to the ideals of virginity and monogamy between the 1950s and the early 1970s. The British royal family acted as a role model for the ideal happy family unit. During the 1960s the idea of a working wife being a 'bad' wife disappeared. Self-help was stressed in overcoming misfortunes and achieving perfection.

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8Elworthy, pp. 12 - 17.
10Marjorie Ferguson, Forever Feminine, p. 44.
11Ibid, pp. 47 - 55.
These entrenched themes and ideal values were mirrored without being questioned in *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly* during the 1960s. A woman's wedding day is usually romanticised and given an almost fairy-tale quality as it is portrayed as the emotional high point in her life.

Your wedding day, and planning for it, is one of the most exciting times of your life. Some brides know exactly how they will look, and what their bridesmaids will wear years in advance! For those who are uncertain and would like some ideas and guidance in this direction, we have devoted these pages to you...

In contrast, a *Thursday* editorial recognised the romanticism attached to weddings, but hastened to remind readers that the reality of marriage was much different and required a different kind of preparation.

For many young girls the trappings of a wedding - the long white dress, the three-tiered cake, the wedding blossom and confetti are paramount considerations. The living and working together which follows this brief idyll as "Queen for a Day" is hidden in a welter of romanticism which traditionally surrounds the young bride. Pretty it all may be but it is hardly closely related to the realities of life after marriage.13

This warning represents a questioning of the traditional romantic vision of marriage, by drawing attention to the more practical aspects of married life. Therefore by the late 1960s the traditional ideal of romanticism in marriage was not always merely accepted as the way life had to be.

The perfect marriage or the ideal values of married life could be presented by the use of role models. Certain people, usually well-known personalities, featured in articles as objects to be imitated. Readers usually admired these celebrities, if only for the fact that they appeared famous and successful, and were therefore likely to be influenced by their beliefs and behaviour. Members of the British royal family were the most frequent role models, particularly in *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly*, but tend not to be so common in *Thursday* which focused more on actresses, models and career women. Actors, musicians and

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13*Thursday*, 28 Nov 1968 p. 3.
artists featured in the *Listener* commented on their careers only and did not discuss their personal lives or beliefs. In addition to royalty and Hollywood stars the *Truth* presented photos of women, usually in skimpily swimwear, with a brief caption describing them. These women were presented as pin ups portraying ideals of beauty rather than as behavioural role models.

It is difficult to assess the influence role models in periodicals had on readers. They had a certain degree of appeal, even if only as entertainment value. However the values implicit in such articles and interviews were also to be found elsewhere in the magazines, suggesting that ideal roles and relationships are not contrary to those of the majority of their New Zealand readers.

The most frequent image presented by role models in these periodicals was the ideal wife/mother who enjoyed her traditional role as a homemaker, sometimes in addition to a successful career, and who was prepared to sacrifice her own ambitions in the interest of her husband and/or family. For instance a young actress from Wellington hoped to travel and continue to act although "being Mrs Bertolomei is naturally the most important job in her life now." Ballerina Margot Fonteyn was the perfect devoted wife who nursed her paralysed husband while continuing a strenuous dancing routine. An article on Princess Alexandra emphasises the happiness gained from sharing royal duties with her husband Angus Ogilvy and from fulfilling a role as a housewife. Similarly Soraya, the ex-Queen of Persia would have to give up her title on remarrying "But, say her friends, the idea of being Mrs O'Brien seems to agree with her so much she will not have any regrets at this." Marriage was portrayed as the ultimate goal for women, allowing them to discover fulfilment and happiness. The ideal woman could also have a career but the importance of being a wife is unquestioned. An article based on an American survey describes the teenage girl of 1960 as churchgoing, industrious and willing to help her mother around the home. Moreover her two main goals in life were a career and a husband. The survey found that most American teenagers collected items for a hope chest in preparation for marriage.

14 *NZWW*, 19 March 1962 p. 82
This picture of what teenage girls should be was suggested to New Zealanders as an ideal.

Role models in Thursday often implied different messages to a different type of reading audience. The magazine began in 1968 and was targeted at young women with the aim of making readers think and form their own opinions, not merely follow convention. The idea of marriage as every woman's ultimate goal was questioned, for instance in an article on Twiggy and her manager/boyfriend who planned to marry but were in no hurry to do so. Similarly 30 year old actress Dianna Rigg felt marriage was unnecessary for herself, since she had both financial and emotional security without being married. She believed that it was rare for love to grow throughout a couple's lives and saw marriage as usually ending in dissolution or divorce. However Thursday did contrast this with more conventional ideals, such as in an article on author Margaret Forster, who "claims to be nothing more than a homemaker who loves running a nice house, looking after her children and husband and cooking meals." 

The expectation that the ideal marriage would be a happy one was apparent in New Zealand magazines in the 1960s. A letter from H., Oamaru reads:

'Don't marry a man until you know you can't live without him,' my grandmother used to say. 'When you marry it will be a success only if the main concern of each person is the happiness of the other.' Sound advice! Similarly a reply to a problem page letter gave the advice;

In a marriage one should be primarily concerned for the welfare of the other partner, instead of being self-indulgent and self-pitying. If you really want your wife back show her that her happiness is more important to you than your own whims and vanity.

Moreover, older people stressed the importance of companionship and understanding for a happy marriage. 'Contented Mum' wrote:

19Thursday, 28 Nov 1968 pp. 18 - 19.
22NZWW, 22 Jan 1968 p. 46.
When we are young and full of illusions, we have a mental picture of the man we want to marry; as we grow older we look for deeper qualities, . . . love and kindness and understanding are the main ingredients for a happy marriage and as we all know, there are different kinds of love - the true kind grows deeper with the years.24 Similarly a couple interviewed by the Listener agreed that marriage was good in middle age, since although the bloom of marriage had disappeared their love had strengthened. In the same article another women stated that companionship became more important as the years progressed.25 It therefore appears that people expected marriage ideally to be happy and companionable, providing emotional satisfaction.

Ideally the engagement period could be seen as a time of transition and preparation for the couple to be married. It gave them an opportunity to save money for a home and furnishings and to adjust to the withdrawal from the company of their peers. In the 1960s engagement began to function as a halfway state between being single and being married by gradually legitimising increased sexual intimacy and even living together before marriage.26 Letters to the problem pages often received replies advising against rushing into marriage, especially if any uncertainty or hesitancy was apparent. For example a sixth form girl who had fallen in love and intended to marry her teacher was told;

I think you are making a terrible mistake in intending to marry this man. He sounds a thoroughly unsatisfactory person, . . . I do not advise you to rush into marriage with him. You are far too young to know whether you are in love or not.27

'Broken Hearted' was in love with a married man twelve years her senior and was concerned about opposition from her family to their intention to marry once he was divorced. She received similar advice to avoid rushing into any commitment with this man, because she seemed to be hesitating for reasons other than her family's oppositions.28 The general attitude therefore appeared to be that it was more sensible to have a longer engagement and allow for adequate emotional and

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26John Gillis, For Better, For Worse: British Marriages, 1600 to the Present, pp. 280 - 309.
27Truth, 6 Sept 1960 p. 43.
28Ibid, 17 April 1962 p. 44.
financial preparation rather than rush into marriage without fully thinking about the changes involved.

However this did not mean that long engagements were preferred by everyone. Inadequate preparation for marriage was suggested by the look of surprise on the groom's face in a cartoon with his bride standing beside him at the altar saying "Of course I can cook - mother taught me yesterday." Not only did the bride need to have a crash-course in cooking, but the groom did not know his wife-to-be well enough to know if she could cook or not. The humour in the cartoon was based on the absurdity of questioning the traditional ideal of preparing for the traditional roles in marriage.

The tradition of a white church wedding was created by upper class Victorians as a symbol of their ideals of conjugal love and the nuclear family. It had the necessary elements of a white wedding gown and veil as symbols of chastity, the bride being 'given away' by her father or guardian, the throwing of rice and a honeymoon. Marriage was seen as a 'new thrill' and a white wedding was one of the reasons for women to guard their chastity. Even once society in general was committed to the ideal of equality in a marriage relationship, the symbolism of white weddings continued to show women as dependents consigned to the domestic realm. Moreover the wedding day was regarded as a woman's 'big day' emphasising the change in role from daughter to wife which had no male equivalent.

The attention was not on the couple, but on the bride. He could be himself; she could not, for this was the day when she ceased to be herself and became his wife.

By the 1950s civil weddings performed by a Registrar were usually reserved for pregnant brides, those older than average, and people marrying for a second time. Women in these circumstances did not conform to the ideal image of the chaste young bride who was entitled to a white wedding in church. During the 1960s there was no significant change in the proportions of church and civil weddings performed in New Zealand. (See Table 1.2) This suggests that attitudes

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30Gillis, pp. 282 - 313.
32Ibid, p. 299.
towards both types of ceremony remained relatively unaltered. The symbolism of white weddings remained dominant, suggesting that the underlying traditional values and beliefs were not questioned.

### TABLE 1.2

**Percentages of Church and Civil Wedding Ceremonies 1960-69**

<table>
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<td>Church of England</td>
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<td>18.46</td>
<td>17.99</td>
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</table>

**Source:** *New Zealand Official Yearbooks*

The ideals of a Christian marriage were described by T.W. Cadman in a pamphlet in the 1960s to inform and advise couples planning to marry in church. He claimed that a bride and groom married in church make their mutual vows of love before God, and are united as one person.

To be married in church, then, is to express your belief in Christian marriage. To believe in Christian marriage is to believe that God Himself has united you and that if you co-operate with Him He will enable you to make of your marriage all you hope for.33

Cadman saw love, loyalty and faith in each other as the most important values in a Christian marriage, allowing difficulties to be met and overcome.34

Cadman defined the Christian ideal of a happy marriage requiring faith, respect, confidence and enjoyment. He believed ultimate happiness and qualities of patience, goodness and self-control were present in the lives of those who see Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

If you both have a personal faith in Jesus Christ you are joined together at life’s deepest level. Thus your coming marriage will be, above all else, a rich and spiritual partnership.35

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34 Ibid, p. 4.
Furthermore Cadman argued that a husband and wife were companions who must respect each other's rights, be willing to compromise and accept the other's feelings and points of view. They needed to have each other's confidence and trust, being able to confide in each other. He believed trust could be established by praying together, since by confiding in God the couple also confide in each other and by talking things over.

Knowledge is essential to understanding and as you talk with each other, especially over personal relationships and concerns, you will enter into a deeper understanding of each other's feelings and attitudes.\(^3\)

Cadman claimed that enjoyment was also necessary for the ideal Christian marriage. It could be physical enjoyment, expressed in a variety of ways, from pleasure in each other's company to sexual intercourse, which was not the be-all and end-all in marriage but needed to be enjoyed to avoid frustration and irritation. Moreover he argued that enjoyment could also be on an intellectual level with the couple sharing common interests, or on a spiritual level since a Christian could not separate physical and intellectual enjoyment from his religion.\(^4\)

This description of an ideal Christian marriage would differ considerably from the ideas aspired to by those who were not strongly religious. A significant proportion of weddings, between 18% and 19%, were not conducted in a church during the 1960s but before a civil registrar. People marrying in a non-religious ceremony may have been less likely to ascribe to Cadman's ideal Christian marriage and more likely to question it. However those marrying in church may also not have had firmly Christian beliefs but merely been following the convention of a white church wedding.

Variation in views of the ideal form marriage should take existed among different social groups. This is illustrated by an article in the *Listener* which gave the views of a housewife/mother, representatives of the Roman Catholic and Presbyterian Churches, and a social science senior lecturer. Each person had a slightly different perspective and therefore various views of what marriage should be, but essentially they all agreed that it was a voluntary union or contract between a man and a woman. The Catholic view was that the voluntary contract was followed

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\(^{3}\) *Ibid*, p.6.

by a God-made relationship, whereas the housewife saw marriage as worked out between two people rather than by God.38

Variation also occurred among the churches as to the purpose of marriage. Dr N.H. Gascoigne, a representative of the Roman Catholic Church stated;

It is clear to me from the history of marriage that the primary purpose of marriage, from which its rights and obligations flow, is the procreation of children, and secondly the deepening mutual affection of a man and a woman.39

In contrast the Rev. J.S. Somerville (Presbyterian) believed that the mutual comfort of husband and wife was the primary purpose of marriage, although children were also important in Christian marriage. This allowed for the possibility of a childless couple. The housewife also agreed that children were not the sole purpose of marriage.40

An article by Phyllis Hostler in the New Zealand Woman's Weekly focused on the important effects children could have and gave a more traditional interpretation of the purpose of an ideal marriage. A baby could place strain on a marriage and remove the privacy and freedom of a husband and wife. The article recognised children as giving marriage a purpose and sense of permanency.

Of course children do not guarantee the happiness of a marriage, but there is no doubt that the creation of a new life brings to the young mother and father a deeper sense of belonging to each other even more emphatic than marriage vows.41

The importance of financial security prior to marriage was not often questioned in the periodicals. A lack of money and money management were recognised by Marriage Guidance counsellors as the causes of many disputes between husbands and wives. A man interviewed who had been married for six years believed that a marriage needed to be comfortable materially, but that the importance given to money depended on what a couple felt they needed to be happy.42 Readers were advised of the need to have a clear understanding of how

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38Listener, 26 Aug 1960 p. 4.
39Ibid.
40Ibid.
to handle their finances before they married, with all incomes ideally being shared. Yet a woman married during the depression believed "Human relationships count for more than money. You can so easily lose your sense of proportion about things that really matter." 

Similarly emphasis was given to the necessity of material possessions for happiness. An advertisement for Dromorne linen which frequently appeared in both the Women's Weekly and Truth had the caption "Happy is the Bride with her trousseau from Dromorne." Grosvenor silver was advertised as a perfect item for a glory box and as an ideal engagement or wedding present. An article with the headline "Weddings Boost US Economy" claimed that the average American marriage generated a demand for US$15,000 of goods and services. Around US$11,000 was spent on a new home, US$1,000 on the engagement and actual wedding, and the remainder on household appliances, furniture and a car. The attitude implicit in such advertisements and articles was that material possessions and money were an important feature of the ideal marriage.

Readers seeking advice in the problem pages of magazines were often encouraged to delay marriage until they had saved a sufficient amount of money. A fifteen year old girl whose boyfriend of two months wanted to marry her was advised to plan a year long engagement.

This period of waiting will give you both an opportunity to get to know each other and also a chance to save money. Believe me, it is very handy to have a little money in the bank when you get married.

Moreover a girl whose boyfriend could not keep a job but wanted to get married was told that obligations, such as a steady job must be accepted along with the commitment to a marriage. This girl was advised that her boyfriend should wait a year until he had a job and money saved and was able to propose 'decently', since income earned by a wife was unreliable due to the possibility of an unexpected pregnancy. If her boyfriend was unable to keep a job "life could mean a succession

\[43\text{Ibid, 19 March 1962 p. 13.}
44\text{Ibid, 17 June 1963 p. 4.}
45\text{NZWW, 27 Dec 1965 p. 74.}
46\text{New Zealand Listener, 27 Oct 1961 p. 43.}
47\text{Truth, 14 June 1960 p. 37.}
48\text{Ibid, 21 Feb 1961 p. 43.}\]
of debts and privations, of discomfort and worry as to where the rent and the food cash was coming from. That sort of thing kills love in most cases.\textsuperscript{49} Another letter to Women's Weekly's Mary Miller was from a girl who had met and fallen in love with a boy who had been in prison. They wanted to marry as soon as possible but were advised to wait for at least a few months. Mrs Miller believed that the boy should not marry until he had shown he could keep the law, had a job and saved some money.\textsuperscript{50} This type of advice reinforced the traditional belief that financial stability was essential for a successful marriage, thus emphasising the economic basis of marriage.

The ideal marriage was not always presented as one to be imitated at all costs, however. Rather than encouraging readers to question traditional values, the use of marriage in humour treated marriage lightly, suggesting its dismissal as unworthy of serious thought. Because marriage was recognised as a common social institution involving most people it is often used in humour as a subject most people can relate to.

An article on a marriage manual, for instance, written by American comedienne Phyllis Diller, provided entertainment rather than guidance by presenting marriage as a joke. Phyllis Diller advised that beauty was not the most important quality in a spouse, but that it was a good idea to marry a man of a similar age since his eyesight would fail at the same rate as his wife's beauty. Furthermore, she suggested choosing ugly bridesmaids to help the bride appear more beautiful, and said signs that a husband had lost interest in his wife included building an escape tunnel and urging the government to start a war and call up married men first.\textsuperscript{51} This kind of article indicated to readers that marriage did not need to be taken seriously.

Similarly cartoons often made fun of marriage. One which appeared in the \textit{Listener} showed a wife lying in bed half asleep and the husband in his pyjamas standing by the bedroom window. The caption reads "Don't stand in front of the window like that, or people will think I married you for your money . . . ."\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{49}NZWW, 25 Jan 1960 p. 35.
\item \textsuperscript{50}Ibid, p.34.
\item \textsuperscript{51}Truth, 16 Jan 1968 p. 21.
\item \textsuperscript{52}Listener, 24 Sept 1965 p. 23.
\end{itemize}
While periodicals in the 1960s presented various ideals and values to be aspired to, there was recognition of the difficulty in doing so. To realise that great potential of happiness in marriage, the married pair has to work quite hard - for to live happily together they need deep understanding, wide tolerance, considerable patience and, above all, the ability to laugh together.53 The ultimate goals were not portrayed as completely unattainable, yet for many New Zealanders in the 1960s the perfect marriage was a distant dream and nothing more. The reality of those undergoing marital breakdown and divorce clearly illustrated ideals beyond reach, and would have forced people to reconsider their own goals and values and alter them accordingly.

CHAPTER TWO: STEREOTYPES RELATING TO MARRIAGE

Developments in the 1960s such as the increased participation of women in the public sphere and changes to the traditional stereotype of the hard-living Kiwi male encouraged the questioning of the dominant social structures and previously accepted images of male and female roles within marriage. The image of marriage as the normal and socially accepted male-female relationship was rejected by some groups in society such as unmarried mothers and de facto couples. Therefore in the 1960s traditional images and stereotypes of married life were both accepted and altered under the impact of social and economic change.

Traditional stereotypes of married couples reflected images of the perfect marriage. A multiple-choice quiz in the Woman's Weekly revealed the ideal qualities of the perfect husband and wife. Readers answered questions such as "How long do you spend making up your face each morning?" and "What do you call your husband most?" to discover if they were "still the girl he married." A reader who scored highly was told

You're a girl in a million - the girl he married, loved and worshipped AND still does. He's never regretted marrying you for you've retained all the qualities he first loved you for. Not only this: you've added several more - maturity, tact, understanding and all those other things which come from experience and years of give-and-take loving. You've grown up with your husband, moved with the times yet kept the integrity, charm and gaiety he was attracted by when you first met him. The wife who did not measure up to this high standard was told she was lazy and could not be bothered to make the most of herself or her marriage.

The second part of the quiz asked "Is he still the Man you married?" with questions on his reaction to new perfume or how often he says he loves you. The highest scoring husband was "exceptionally kind, considerate and loving and loads of fun to be with. He's every bit as marvellous as when you married him - in fact he's probably better" and should be pampered by his wife. The lowest scoring, least ideal husband was described as selfish and needing to consider his wife's

2Ibid, p. 15.
3Ibid, p. 16.
feelings more.\textsuperscript{4} The image of an ideal marriage as one which continues to grow and improve, with happiness as an essential component was reinforced and readers were not encouraged to question either the ideal or the qualities needed in a husband and wife to achieve it.

A lawyer and Marriage Guidance Counsellor supported the traditional notions of roles within marriage. He claimed that

In marriage husband and wife form one unit, each complementing the other. The husband undertakes the obligation of providing the home and maintaining and supporting the wife, while she as the "help-meet" has the duty of giving him support and encouragement. She also has the duty of caring for the home, comfort and wellbeing of her husband and family.\textsuperscript{5}

In 1968 the \textit{Listener} featured an interview with four different couples who gave their opinions on the ideal roles and duties of husbands and wives within marriage. Each point of view was different, thus illustrating an altering and questioning of stereotypical roles in marriage. At one end of the spectrum an unmarried 20 year old woman supported the traditional image of a wife serving her husband. She argued that the husband's career was the most important and a wife should not work since she was then unable to be a good companion, although a hobby, which was not too absorbing, would be acceptable to prevent the wife becoming bored. A similar ideal was expressed by a man in his early forties who had been married for two years. He believed that a woman's family would suffer if she worked full-time and that raising children was rewarding enough without the need for outside interests. In contrast the three remaining men all agreed that a wife should be able to choose whether or not to work outside the home, believing that the extra stimulation and interest involved in working would benefit both the wife and the marriage. Moreover, they recognised the need to deal with the problems arising from a wife spending her time away from home, especially in reaching a compromise over household tasks and thus forming new images of roles within marriage. Similarly a working mother in her late twenties stated that work outside the home was necessary to prevent frustration and a feeling of a lack of achievement since childcare did not require any mental exertion. The other two women

\textsuperscript{4}\textit{Ibid.}
interviewed both occupied the middle ground, arguing that ideally a wife and mother would stay at home, but if working was an economic necessity it was acceptable.  

Due to the economic climate to the 1960s, it was recognised that it was no longer always viable for a woman to give up her job automatically on marriage. With the trend to a younger age at marriage, a young couple often had not saved sufficiently before marriage to set up their new home. It therefore made better economic sense for newly married wives to continue to work and learn to adjust to the added responsibilities of caring for a husband and home.  

In such circumstances it is fair to expect the husband to assist as best he is able and this does apply whenever a wife is working. An essential ingredient to any well-adjusted marriage where both husband and wife work is an understanding and helpful husband.  

The ideal marriage would therefore involve a working wife being assisted by her husband in running the home contrary to previous stereotypes, but it was still portrayed as the wife's responsibility to care for the household and family duties. The stereotype of a working mother was also altered to no longer be considered a 'bad' parent. "If her children are properly cared for she could even be a better wife and mother because of a broader outlook and wider interests."  

Results of a survey featured in Thursday demonstrated that around 67% of women felt guilty about working outside the home, while 80% of men resented women working. There was some support for the idea that if a woman felt she needed to work to prevent stagnation, it was better for her to do so. However it appeared that the traditional role stereotypes of a mother and wife who remained at home while the man was the breadwinner remained the dominant ideals in the 1960s, despite the existence of a variety of role types.  

Entrenched stereotypes of unmarried men and women were also dominant in New Zealand periodicals in the 1960s. An common attitude was that women had  

6Listener, 6 Sept 1968 pp. 6 & 9.  
7NZWW, 16 June 1969 Supplement p. 5.  
8Ibid.  
9Ibid.  
to attract or 'catch' a husband. Implicit in this belief was the assumption that women had marriage as their ultimate objective in life, while men were reluctant and uninterested in marrying and were forced into it. Men were portrayed as passive creatures who are unwittingly 'caught' or 'trapped' like animals at the mercy of a cunning predator.

*The New Zealand Woman's Weekly* ran a series called "How to Catch Your Man", designed "to tell every girl of any age how to get her man. I shall discuss how and where to find him, how to make contact and how to follow up that contact to bring about the desired results."¹¹ The man was given no chance to act or think independently in this courtship process. The article advised women to act rationally and not to allow themselves to act solely according to emotion, until the man had been 'caught'. The derogatory attitude presented here towards men did nothing to encourage a relationship based on the mutual respect of husband and wife, but instead suggests that women were dominant, yet dependent upon men since they could not exist without one.

I take it you know a man when you see one. This helps, because recognition from a description of physical characteristics would be near impossible. A Martian on a man-hunt, with only a verbal description to go on, could come back with anything from a gorilla to a Shetland pony.¹² Although this attempt at humour suggests the possibility of the whole article not to be intended as serious advice, stereotypes of women as man-hunters appeared to be widely recognised. For instance an article in *Truth* entitled "How to Land a Husband" advised women how to dress to impress and attract men who worked in the city.¹³

An article on the tradition of women proposing marriage to men in a leap year illustrates the same stereotypes. A married woman from Onehunga felt "that a woman can bring a man round to the point of proposing without making a direct attack, and if she can't then he's probably not interested in marrying her anyway."¹⁴ Similarly a man who was also interviewed stated "I suspect a girl can nearly always manoeuvre a man into proposing without his realizing that it was not

¹²Ibid.
¹³*New Zealand Truth*, 9 April 1968 p. 32.
entirely his own idea." Both of these opinions expressed the belief that women do not need to propose in a leap year because they had trapped their chosen men into proposing anyway, reflecting the dominant stereotype of women as man-hunters.

The following poem, apparently by an anonymous poet, was sent to the *Listener* by James K Baxter and published in 1966. The stereotype of New Zealand marriage which it presents is perhaps closer to reality than the ideals usually presented in magazines during the 1960s. It challenges the concept of marriage as romantic, and although the husband is portrayed as a typical Kiwi bloke, the changes to his stereotype are illustrated by his involvement in cooking and caring for the children occasionally.

THE KIWI HUSBAND’S REPLY

I'm just a normal kiwi bloke,
I like my glass of beer,
I like to go out to the trots
Once or twice a year,
I sometimes give the wife a kiss
When she lets go the Hoover,
But the Reverend Lowe has told me straight
That I'm the world's worst lover.
Well, if you'll take the collar off
And be plain Mr Lowe,
Then just as plainly I'll admit
I'm not a Romeo.
When I was young I'd act the goat
After the dance was over,
But I don't get much encouragement
These days to be a lover.
I often peel the spuds for her;
I'm not too bad a cook
(The doctor says she needs a rest
Because her nerves are crook);
I give the kid his bottle

When he wakes up at night;
But I find it's best to play no games
When we put out the light.
I thought when we got married
We'd have a bit of fun,
But in the end I might as well
Have married my own Mum.
You don't complain to a Kiwi dame
Unless you want a divorce;
Her man is something that she owns
Like a budgie or a horse.
I often wish that I'd been born
A Buddhist of Confucian
Who have a different notion of
The marriage institution;
With twenty lively concubines
I'd frolic on the sofa;
But Kiwi manner, Mr Lowe,
Don't breed that kind of lover.
My brand of love will brew the tea
In spite of a tongue-lashing,
And trundle round the shops with her
When some new hat's in fashion,
And give a wink but nothing more
When blondes in jeans go by -
That's how we work it, Mr Lowe,
My Kiwi wife and I.
And if you think there's another way
To cook our spuds and greens,
I reckon you must have been reading
The women's magazines.
So put your collar on again,
My sermon's nearly over;
And pray to God that I won't become
A Kiwi Casanova.16

16 Listener, 3 June 1966, p. 12.
The poet's reference to women's magazines infers that the ideals of marriage and domestic roles which they presented consisted more of fantasy than fact. This less than glamorous picture of New Zealand marriage in the 1960s reflects the process of re-evaluating previously accepted stereotypes.

Similarly *Woman's Weekly* readers were warned that initially a sexual relationship could be disappointing and in contrast to popular romantic ideals. By the 1960s the importance of the sexual components of marriage were being recognised, although young couples were warned it should not be the sole basis of a marriage.

[T]he sexual component is far from being the only part in a marriage. It may be the core, but round the core is wrapped daily living, the details of domesticity that matter a great deal more than many people realize.17 Couples had no need to be ignorant, since information was available from the family doctors, the Marriage Guidance Council, the Family Planning Association, the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council and a variety of books on sex.18 During the 1930s and 1940s the New Zealand Family Planning Association had had to fight churches, the Plunket Society and the medical profession to provide people with information on contraception. By the 1950s and 1960s the make up of the association had altered and was increasingly run by doctors. Sam Elworthy suggests that this implies "a new readiness on the part of the profession to supply contraception to married couples, thereby giving sanction to the new ideology of sex, within marriage, as recreation rather than procreation."19

In spite of the recognition of the new sexual ideology, public opinion largely accepted it only within marriage. For example, chemists often placed small advertisements for sexual information such as the "Husbands' and Wives' Guide. A frank and confidential booklet for married people only. Sent in plain wrapper free. Write today . . . ."20 Attitudes towards sex had therefore not altered sufficiently for the dominant stereotypes to be altered to allow wide public acceptance of sexual relationships outside marriage.

18Sam Elworthy, 'Social Change and the State', p. 9.
19*Ibid*.
Although marriage was largely accepted as the normal relationship between men and women in the late 1960s, it was not chosen by all members of society. The marriage stereotype was often rejected in favour of defacto relationships or the single life. Spinsters were generally seen as social failures who sat waiting for 'Mr Right' to appear instead of actively seeking him out like other women.

All a girl needs to do is to go out into the world - or just across the landing, even - to find a man who is longing to meet a woman who will save him from certain death by his own cooking.21 Spinsters were not capable of making even such a small effort. A letter from an unmarried Auckland woman reacted against the common stereotypes of 'old maids' and disputed the assertion that younger unmarried women try to steal the husbands of others.

Don't think we are not happy because we don't have a gold band on our left hand, and don't treat us like threats to your marriage . . . treat us like normal human girls. We are sorry we can't talk about disposable napkins, but we can join in about the economic state of our country . . . can you?22

This kind of attitude suggests that women can be happy without a husband, and thus reject the institution of marriage.

A sharp increase in ex-nuptial birth rates during the 1960s and a relatively stable proportion of pregnant brides between 1962 and 1967 shows that more children were being born outside marriage, suggesting a change in attitudes towards illegitimacy.23 Many women rejected marriage and the dominant stereotype of a wife and struggled to support their children by themselves, despite adverse social and economic pressures. There was a growing recognition of the needs of unmarried mothers; economic hardship was thought to cause delinquency in children and there was a feeling that men should be more financially responsible.24 Groups began advocating a state benefit for unmarried mothers, and the Domestic Purposes Benefit was introduced in 1968.

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22Thursday, 4 Sept 1969 p. 47.
24Elworthy, pp. 41 - 5.
A Hamilton woman who had had an illegitimate child 22 years earlier wrote in 1966 that unmarried mothers were much better off than in her day due to advances in social security. However a letter from an unmarried mother in 1967 advised young mothers against keeping a baby on their own due to a lack of help available from the state. This suggests that unmarried mothers still had a struggle to bring up their children and therefore a lack of acceptance of their situation. The image of married mothers remained dominant although challenged to some extent.

With a move away from the universality of marriage, acceptance of formalising cohabiting relationships grew. If most of the benefits of marriage can be enjoyed without tying oneself legally to one's partner, logically some individuals will delay marriage while others might reject it altogether. There is some evidence to support an increase in coresidence in New Zealand between 1961 and 1976, although it does not show that the tradition of beginning cohabitation at marriage ceased to be chosen by most couples. Living together outside marriage became more public and acceptable in the 1960s, although ultimately most such couples would still marry, usually once they decided to start a family. Legal recognition of de facto relationships was also important in promoting a feasible alternative to traditional marriage. Throughout the 1960s it became increasingly common for ex-nuptial children to be brought up in de facto relationships, particularly as the belief spread that it provided a home as good as any 'respectable' marriage. A letter appearing in Truth pointed out that it was wrong to consider a de facto relationship as merely 'living in sin', since it required courage, love and a will to succeed just like a traditional marriage. Moreover it could be to a de facto couple's advantage economically not to marry if they were receiving maintenance payments from previous spouses.

An article by a British doctor in Thursday justified a couple living together if it was a 'trial marriage'. He argued that a marriage based on sexual attraction

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27Carmichael, pp. 243 - 4.
29Gillis, pp. 301 - 10.
30Elworthy, p. 19.
31Truth, 4 Aug 1964 p. 47.
32Ibid.
alone was bound to end in failure, so it was better to live together before marrying to try and find a stronger basis for a relationship. The article made a clear distinction between a trial marriage, and promiscuity which was based solely on sexual appetite and not mutual respect.

While, in certain circumstances, there is no harm - and perhaps a deal of good - in a trial marriage, sleeping around is a very different thing. Unfortunately, many young people, in today's increasingly permissive atmosphere, confuse the two. He believed that marriage was for life, so a trial marriage was only justified if there was a serious intent to marry and not just a desire to see if there was sexual compatibility. In this way the rejection of traditional marriage apparent in a couple who live together was reversed and accepted by society if it was a prelude to a formal marriage at a later date. In this way, couples living together were made to conform to the dominant stereotype of a married couple.

Couples who separated or divorced could also be assumed to be rejecting marriage, yet between 1920 and 1975 the proportion of divorced people remarrying steadily increased. (See Table 2.1) This suggests a rejection of particular marriage relationships, but a continued acceptance of the dominant image of marriage. Roderick Phillips suggests that people's expectations of marriage had risen so high that they were prepared to divorce and try again if a relationship did not live up to their high standards. Remarriage among divorced people therefore illustrates the continuing dominance of traditional formal marriage.

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<td></td>
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<td>71</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53</td>
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<td>Widows</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
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<td>69</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>51</td>
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<td>19</td>
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33Thursday, 28 Nov 1968 p. 35.
34Ibid, p. 36.
35Roderick Phillips, p. 97.
Mixed marriages in the 1960s presented a further threat to traditional ideas of marriage by uniting couples across racial boundaries. In his study of mixed Maori and European marriages, Harré argued that spouses did not usually have much difficulty in adjusting to differences since most couples did not differ greatly in their cultural values, had a potential for adaptation, and faced any problems intelligently.\(^{36}\)

While the members of neither race accept mixed marriages completely, the obstacles placed in the way of most young people who wish to marry a member of the other race are not usually great and their place in the community is not usually seriously affected by their choice of spouse.\(^{37}\)

Parental objections were often made on the grounds that the differences between the races were too great to be overcome. Most couples seemed to regard disapproval from parents as based on racial prejudices and intensified their relationship towards marriage as a result.\(^{38}\) Although some inevitable adjustments began to be made during engagement, this period was not usually regarded by the couple as a time of trial or adjustment, regarding it instead as an unfortunate delay before the wedding.\(^{39}\)

Examples of successful mixed marriages in the periodicals during the 1960s suggest that mixed marriages challenged existing ideals. An article in *Truth* on the black entertainer Sammy Davis Jnr and his Swedish wife, saw love, caring and intelligence as reasons for their successful marriage.\(^{40}\) Similarly a woman who married a man of a different race while overseas encountered no opposition from family and friends on returning to New Zealand. Her husband spoke English and was a Christian, making his adjustment to European culture easier.

I think a mixed couple must be prepared to be looked at with curiosity occasionally, especially a pale mother with dark children, but overseas I have known what it is like to be regarded with open hostility, whereas in New Zealand I have encountered no trace of prejudice of any kind.\(^{41}\)

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\(^{37}\)Ibid, p. 9.

\(^{38}\)Ibid, p. 75.

\(^{39}\)Ibid, p. 85.

\(^{40}\)Truth, 8 Aug 1961 p. 48.

\(^{41}\)NZWW, 17 March 1969 p. 77.
Yet strong opposition to mixed marriage was also apparent, illustrating the continued influence of the ideal of marrying within the same cultural group. A man with a Rarotongan wife was unable to find anywhere to live in Wellington because of a refusal to accept 'coloured' people. Families were often split over a proposed mixed marriage. The engagement of a girl to a Maori boy was accepted by her parents but not the rest of her family. She was given the advice that her relatives were probably against the idea of a Maori in the family.

The success of a marriage where there is a racial (or religious) difference can depend on how the couple can cope with any slights they may encounter. Your boy has the right attitude. By remaining friendly and polite, in spite of snubs, he is showing that he is made of better stuff than your illmannered relatives. Similarly a mother despaired over the opposition of her husband and son to her daughter's engagement to a boy of foreign birth. Attitudes towards mixed marriage in the 1960s therefore encompassed both an acceptance and a rejection of previously unquestioned images of marriage.

The dominant stereotypes relating to New Zealand marriage in the 1960s were both challenged and accepted without question by different groups in society. Both of these perspectives were reflected in the periodicals of the time. Traditional roles within marriage were altered by developments in women's liberation and by changes to the male stereotype, yet they were also upheld and reinforced by some more conservative sectors of the community. Accepted ideas concerning marriage were rejected by spinsters, unmarried mothers and mixed and defacto couples, yet other groups in society continued to uphold traditional ideals.

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43*Ibid*, 10 July 1962, p. 44.
44*Ibid*. 

CHAPTER THREE: IDEALS OUT OF REACH

During the 1960s the beginnings of the women's movement and gradual changes to the male stereotype encouraged higher expectations of married life as traditional values were reconsidered. Happiness and emotional fulfilment were largely viewed as the most important elements of the ideal marriage. A failure on the part of many New Zealanders to achieve these goals and reach such high standards were illustrated by problems within marriage and their portrayal in periodicals. Articles and letters to advice columns alerted readers to the pitfalls and dangers on the road to ultimate happiness and reflected marital problems experienced by the unfortunate in society.

A letter to the New Zealand Woman's Weekly suggested that a lack of preparation was the cause of problems in some marriages. A couple had only themselves to blame if they failed to look past the wedding and honeymoon and neglected advice to wait before marrying. Moreover the letter argues that a danger to marriage today is that young women can look after themselves and earn enough to live well. There is not the inducement of earlier times of really having to work at marriage to make it something worthwhile. This correspondent suggested that by the 1960s social changes had reduced the conditions which had previously made marriage a necessity for women.

T.W. Cadman identified differences in outlook in Christian marriage which could also lead to problems. For instance, a Christian who married a non-Christian would find the issue of faith became a problem, especially when the education and upbringing of children became involved. It is not sufficient to hope you will change your partner after you are married. You take each other in marriage for what you are, not what you intend to make each other. A couple in this position needed to respect each other's different religious beliefs. Moreover, Cadman recognised the difficulties in religiously mixed marriages, particularly those between Protestants and Roman Catholics. He believed that harm

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1 NZWW, 19 April 1965, p. 102.
2 Ibid.
3 Cadman, p. 8.
and suffering would result from such marriages, yet he had no solution to offer. Furthermore, he highlighted the problems which could arise from differences in personal qualities, and suggested a positive attitude as the best way to deal with them.

You may regard these [personal qualities] as difficulties about which you can do little, or you can see them as characteristics of personality which together contribute to the joy of marriage.

In an article entitled "Wisecracks and Marriage Don't Mix", a New York marriage counsellor warned that 'kidding' could be a sign of more serious marital problems. She identified three types of marriage 'jokers'; 'problem-duckers' who used cruel jokes rather than face up to marital conflict, 'belittlers' who tried to build themselves up by making their spouse look bad, and 'foot-in-the-mouth' types who unconsciously hurt their spouse due to unconscious resentment, for instance a husband referring to his wife as 'the ball and chain'.

Similarly the periodicals in the 1960s presented 'nagging' as a factor in marital conflict and breakdown. A 1967 article in Truth centred on a London man who left his wife after being nagged by her for 23 years of marriage. The man was granted a decree nisi on the grounds of his wife's cruelty.

A reply to a letter to Truth's problem page suggested that unhappiness in marriage was reasonably common. A woman married for three years complained that her husband was quick to criticise her, but hardly ever complimented her looks or cooking. The Truth's agony aunt claimed in the reply that "this is such a common complaint among wives that it might be argued that those husbands who observe the niceties and show their appreciation are in the minority." However the correspondent was advised that if she was happy with other aspects of her husband, she should overlook this one inadequacy.

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5 Ibid, p. 10.
6 NZWW, 19 March 1962, p. 12.
8 Ibid, 22 Dec 1965, p. 43.
9 Ibid.
Similarly an article in the *Listener* based on a 'Feminine Viewpoint' radio talk and entitled "How to be Happy and Married though Unhappily Married" also suggested that unhappy marriages were something to be endured. The talk was given by a woman unhappily married for twenty years, but unable to leave her husband due to the needs of the children and a lack of financial independence. She suggested that divorce was not always a sign of a failed marriage, since it took courage and was often the only remedy for a tragic situation.\(^{10}\) She argued that;

> there is no hell to equal that of living with a person with whom you can no longer share affection. Does living with that person prove anything but that you are living together?\(^{11}\)

This woman appeared to have reconsidered and re-evaluated the traditional disapproval of divorce from the perspective of her own circumstances. Yet she was also resigned to remaining unhappily married, and argued that there was no point dwelling on the faults of a spouse if they could not be changed. Instead she suggested working hard and giving to others in order to keep out resentful feelings.\(^{12}\)

*Truth* was the only one of the periodicals examined for this essay to include material on the problems of alcohol in marriage, and even this was limited to a few instances. A 1960 article related the lives of different female members of Alcoholics Anonymous. The story of one woman in particular illustrated marital problems as a cause of alcoholism.

Mary married young and had two children quickly. Financial difficulties, frustrations, a husband who beat her, all these things sent Mary to the bottle for aid. Her husband left her and Mary struggled on with the two children.\(^{13}\)

Conversely, a letter to *Truth* pointed out the problems alcoholism in marriage could lead to. The writer argued that marriage to a heavy drinking man brought frustration and misery to the wife and children.\(^{14}\)

If he can't control his drinking beforehand, he is unlikely to after marriage. And believe me, living with a man made unreasonable

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\(^{10}\) *Listener*, 17 May 1968, p. 7.

\(^{11}\) *Ibid.*


\(^{13}\) *Truth*, 14 June 1960, p. 29.

\(^{14}\) *Ibid.*, 18 Feb 1964, p. 44.
by drink is not easy. It is hard enough making the ordinary adjustments in any marriage, but in these circumstances, it is well nigh impossible.\textsuperscript{15}

She argued that tension, resentment and quarrels were likely consequences, as well as an inappropriate atmosphere for rearing children.\textsuperscript{16}

The subject of violence in marriage was also only covered by \textit{Truth}, mainly as 'news' items on recent court cases. The existence of such problems indicated that violence was an element of marriage in New Zealand in the 1960s. Therefore the reality in a number of marriages did not conform to the ideal pattern.

In an article entitled "Hit Wife Who Asked Questions", a man was fined £5 after pleading guilty to assaulting his wife. The magistrate suggested that this kind of behaviour was too extreme to be accepted and stated that;

\begin{quote}
You marry for better or worse. After 13 years you should be used to the ways of women and appreciate that they can be unreasonable at times, just as a husband can be.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Moreover a similar case reported that 'Hitting one's spouse with the butt of a rifle to try to teach her restraint was overdoing things a bit, in the opinion of Mr A.W. York, SM in New Plymouth Court . . . ."\textsuperscript{18} The man, who was fined in this case, assaulted his wife for saying that she could not care less that he was going out with another woman that night. The violence in this relationship was linked to other marital problems, such as financial difficulties, the 'unhealthy' influence of his mother-in-law, and the heavy drinking of the wife,\textsuperscript{19} none of which reflect an ideal marriage.

A woman who was five months pregnant was stripped and beaten by her husband, yet later asked to withdraw the charges for "what the police called an animal-like attack."\textsuperscript{20} The husband said he regretted his behaviour and blamed his actions on illness, stress and a loss of control. The man also claimed that his wife was an epileptic and the doctor had told him to be firm with her. He was fined £10

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{15}Ibid.
\bibitem{16}Ibid.
\bibitem{17}Ibid, 9 May 1967, p. 2.
\bibitem{18}Ibid, 29 Nov 1960, p. 13.
\bibitem{19}Ibid.
\bibitem{20}Ibid, 17 April 1962, p. 3.
\end{thebibliography}
and costs, yet the couple were reported to be living happily together again. This suggested that violence was accepted as a natural part of married life, yet even once separated from her husband, a woman could still be victimized. For example, a woman in one court case

said she had been living in terror of her husband for the past year or so. Although they were living apart, he used to arrive to see her only when drunk. On these occasions he used to argue with her and assault her. He had also forced her to sleep in the fowlhouse, she alleged. Moreover a cartoon in Truth suggested that violence in marriage was regarded as normal and commonplace. The caption read "I'm sorry about hitting my wife, your Honour. Don't send me to prison - it would spoil our honeymoon." None of the periodicals used for this essay discussed the social causes of violence in marriage. Neither did they question its legitimacy, nor offer solutions for violent outbreaks of marital conflict. The Truth's use of violent marriages was confined to 'news' items. This lack of discussion suggests that violence was regarded as a taboo subject and that although violence in marriage existed, it was not accepted since it was worlds apart from the ideal marriage.

A further cause of marital breakdown identified in New Zealand periodicals was adultery. Letters to the Truth's agony aunt discussed the problems resulting from unfaithful spouses (usually husbands), suggesting once again that infidelity was a hidden aspect of married life since it was not an element of the ideal form of marriage.

The letters and the advice they received illustrates the serious consequences of infidelity on a marriage. One correspondent had been married for eight years to an unfaithful husband. The woman allowed her husband to talk her out of divorce in the past because of the effect it would have had on their children and in the hopes that the situation would improve. However some nights he did not go home. He never had any money to spend on his wife and children, and their family life was

described as non-existent because he was never there. The woman was considering a divorce.24

Similarly a reply to a man whose wife had discovered he was having an affair stated how damaging infidelity could be. The Truth's Lyn Carroll answered:

I couldn't detect a hint of remorse anywhere in your letter and, if that is your attitude at home, then your wife's silence and constraint with you is easily understood. Infidelity is not a thing that can be wiped out by a single promise to be a good boy given only "because the wife took it to heart". She had a pretty nasty body blow and will need considerable reassurance if she is to trust you again.25

Problems in marriage such as violence, infidelity and alcoholism were not widely discussed in periodicals of the 1960s. This suggests that although these problems existed, people preferred not to dwell on them. The unpleasant realities of married life were in sharp contrast to the ideal form of marriage which the periodicals largely portrayed for many people. Moreover, if a person read a magazine as a form of escapism into another, more perfect world, they would have been unlikely to seek reminders of marital conflict which could have been a part of their everyday lives.

The solutions offered to marital problems ranged from counselling and advice, through separation, and as the final resort, to divorce. Jacky Lloyd linked the need for such solutions to rising expectations of married life. "It seems that as the 'traditional' economic foundations of marriage continue to diminish in importance, the quality of the marital relationship becomes critical."26 An increase in divorce could reflect social and demographic changes which encouraged the development of new attitudes to divorce as an acceptable remedy for marital conflict.27

27Ibid, p. 139.
However an increased divorce rate did not necessarily imply that marriages were more unstable or valued less. Roderick Phillips argued that not all couples with sufficient grounds for divorce would necessarily have filed petitions. Many unhappy marriages continued until one spouse died or an informal separation was agreed upon. Moreover Phillips stated that:

both marriage and divorce are primarily legal procedures, recording a social event. There is no way of knowing whether a rise in divorce rates betokens an increase in the dissolution of marriages or whether it is simply the result of a growing proportion of de facto dissolutions going through the legal formalities of divorce.

However, divorce was clearly a consequence of marital breakdown and was offered as the final solution.

One way in which the Woman's Weekly approached the issue of marital conflict was to make readers aware of how some of these problems could arise. In an article entitled "What Men Say They Most Resent About Women" Dr Joyce Brothers of New York showed women what not to do in order to avoid creating resentment in their marriages. Types of behaviour which men disliked included possessiveness, self-righteousness and martyr acts.

Furthermore, an article on the British Marriage Guidance Council discussed the role of counselling in overcoming marital difficulties. Counsellors had to be good listeners and tried to get partners to see their role in marriage and to recognise their reactions to their spouse. However one marriage counsellor pointed out that success was not automatically guarantied. She said that;

the outside world made the mistake of supposing that somehow marriage counselling was going to make every family the same; that there was a level of married happiness or family life that everybody could achieve if only they went to "those archangels" of the Marriage Guidance Council.

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29 Ibid.
30 NZWW, 25 March 1963, pp. 4 - 5.
32 Ibid.
In New Zealand, the Marriage Guidance Council was first established in 1938, yet it was not until the 1950s that the Government became involved. In 1959 an Adviser in Marriage Guidance was first appointed, followed in 1960 by an Advisory Committee to advise the Justice Department of what steps could be taken by the Government to give the Marriage Guidance movement stimulus and direction.\(^{33}\) Marriage Guidance remained a voluntary organisation in contrast to the professional counsellors with academic qualifications in the United States. It was agreed that if New Zealand set such high standards there would be no one in the country sufficiently qualified to become a marriage guidance counsellor. On the other hand the voluntary counsellor system provided a community service very cheaply, an important consideration in New Zealand.\(^{34}\) Yet counsellors were selected and trained by highly qualified and competent people. Their tasks included counselling, court conciliation, education and public relations. The Constitution of the Dunedin Marriage Guidance Council in the 1960s described their aims as being "to promote happiness in the home through education for marriage, education in marriage by counselling in marriage breakdown circumstances."\(^{35}\) The addition of Government support from 1959 illustrated the growing awareness of difficulties in marriage and the need to deal with them, since not all marriages could live up to the high ideals that were dominant in New Zealand society. As the incidence of divorce increased and greater emphasis was given to reconciliation of broken marriages, the levels of counselling increased, reaching a height following the 1968 Matrimonial Proceedings Act which stressed the importance of conciliation.\(^{36}\) This suggests that the continuance of marriage was regarded as ideal and was therefore reinforced by legislation.

The relatively high rate of divorce in the 1960s suggested that alternatives to the traditional ideal of married life were being accepted. (See Table 3.1) Jacky Lloyd suggested that the trend to a younger average age at marriage affected the incidence of divorce. She argued that the decreased age gap between spouses placed more emphasis on companionship in marriage and thus divorce was more

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\(^{35}\)Ibid, p. 3.

\(^{36}\)Ibid, p. 89.
likely if these higher expectations of emotional fulfilment were not met. Moreover, with an increase in life expectancy and smaller family sizes, child rearing years were shortened and a married couple could expect to live together without their children for longer. Without other people around to dilute the annoying habits of a spouse, divorce could have become more likely.37

TABLE 3.1
Divorce Rates - Decrees Nisi
(Number of divorces per 1000 married women)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>2.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>2.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>2.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945*</td>
<td>5.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951*</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956*</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961*</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966*</td>
<td>3.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Includes Maoris


Roderick Phillips argues that a number of factors influence the likelihood of a married couple divorcing.

In the final analysis the resort to divorce and the rate of divorce must be the results of the complex interplay of factors such as the legal availability of divorce (whether the law is permissive or restrictive), its social availability (whether it can be obtained easily in terms of procedure and expense), social attitudes towards divorce, the material conditions of family life, and the frequency of marital disharmony serious enough to warrant one spouse's petitioning for divorce.38

The divorce rate shows the number of divorces per 100 marriages during the year. These figures give a more accurate indication of trends than absolute

37 Lloyd, p. 148.
38 Roderick Phillips, p. 12.
numbers of divorce which do not account for the proportion of the population which is not married and therefore not at risk. During the 1950s and 1960s divorce rates stabilized following the second world war, and only rose significantly in 1969 as the 1968 Matrimonial Proceedings Amendment Act came into effect and made divorce more easily obtainable. (See Table 3.2)

### TABLE 3.2
**Divorce rate per 100 marriages during year, 1955-69**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>number of decrees absolute granted</th>
<th>rate per 100 marriages during year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>1472</td>
<td>8.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>1449</td>
<td>8.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>1400</td>
<td>7.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>1751</td>
<td>9.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1639</td>
<td>8.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>1648</td>
<td>8.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>8.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>1755</td>
<td>8.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>9.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>9.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>8.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>2064</td>
<td>8.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>2047</td>
<td>8.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>2172</td>
<td>9.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>2996</td>
<td>12.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Roderick Phillips illustrated that the overall duration of marriages affected by divorce did not change greatly between 1915 and 1974. From the 1960s on, marriages of over twenty years duration accounted for one quarter of all divorces. (See Table 3.3) Phillips argued that this could reflect changes in patterns of child rearing and increases in the potential duration of marriages, which increased the length of post-parental time in marriage.39

The lengthening of this period, when spouses are forced to relate to each other, without the option of alternative relationships within the household, and when consideration of the effects of separation on children is no longer an inhibition to divorce, might well go a long way to explaining the increased representation of marriages of long duration among those dissolved by divorce.40

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40*Ibid*. 
TABLE 3.3
Duration of marriages affected by divorce petitions & decrees (percentages in completed years) 1915-75

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>0-4</th>
<th>5-9</th>
<th>10-14</th>
<th>15-19</th>
<th>20-29</th>
<th>30+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1915-19</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920-29</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930-39</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-49</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950-59</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-69</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-75</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Roderick Phillips, *Divorce in New Zealand*, p.84.

Changes to divorce legislation affected both the divorce rate and the duration of dissolved marriages. As new grounds for divorce were introduced, the marital circumstances of more couples were included. Liberalised legislation therefore accounted for increases in the divorce rate, and more marriages of longer duration being dissolved as use was made of legislation which previously excluded such couples.

The clear tendency was for petitioning to respond rapidly to newly available grounds for divorce, evidence that the legislative reforms themselves responded to needs within the married population of New Zealand.41

By 1960 the grounds available for divorce had been described in a series of Acts of Parliament. Adultery, desertion, drunkenness, insanity, three years separation under a judicial separation or court order, the wounding of a petitioner or the child of a petitioner, murder, a three year failure to comply with a decree for the restitution of conjugal rights, and living apart for at least seven years were all grounds for divorce in 1960. In 1963 the Matrimonial Proceedings Act repealed and replaced all previous divorce legislation. Under this act, matrimonial faults which justified divorce were; adultery, the wife's artificial insemination by another man without the husband's consent, drunkenness or drug addiction for three years in combination with neglect or non-support, and a three year failure to comply with a decree for the restitution of conjugal rights. The 1963 Act also allowed divorce if one spouse was convicted of certain crimes, in cases of three year separation agreements or court orders, and if the spouses had lived apart for seven years. Of

41Ibid, p. 68.
greater importance was the Matrimonial Proceedings Amendment Act which
followed in 1968. This legislation reduced the terms for desertion, separation
agreements, separation orders, failure to comply with a decree for the restitution of
conjugal rights, and habitual drunkenness from three years to two years. Moreover
a couple were required to live apart for four years rather than seven to obtain a
divorce, and marital breakdown was recognised rather than matrimonial fault.42
Emphasis was given to the importance of reconciliation and as a result "the number
of couples who had to undergo counselling because they could not agree about the
way in which they were to divorce or separate increased sharply after the Act."43

TABLE 3.4

Grounds for divorce in decrees absolute granted each year as % of
total decrees absolute granted for that year, 1960-69

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>separation agreement</td>
<td>46.7</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>42.5</td>
<td>43.9</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>46.2</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>separation order</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lived apart</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adultery</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>25.9</td>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>desertion</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drunkeness</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insanity</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>non-consumation</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of decrees</td>
<td>1648</td>
<td>1733</td>
<td>1755</td>
<td>1905</td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1814</td>
<td>2064</td>
<td>2047</td>
<td>2172</td>
<td>2996</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*includes: murder, attempted murder, grievous bodily harm, non-compliance with a
decree for the restitution of conjugal rights, presumption of death, sodomy, nullity, bigamy, rape, incest, pregnant to another man, criminal conviction, drug addiction.

Source: New Zealand Statistics of Justice, 1960-69

Table 3.4 shows the grounds for divorce as percentages of decrees
absolute granted during the year for the period 1960 to 1969. The marital problems
which led to divorce on the grounds of separation agreements, orders and on the
grounds of living apart are unknown. However adultery and desertion accounted
for high percentages of the total decrees absolute granted each year, thus indicating
that they were causes of marital breakdown and divorce in a large number of New
Zealand marriages. Moreover the increase in divorces on the grounds of separation
agreements or living apart which occurred in 1969 reflects the reduced time periods
required for these grounds to be available under the 1968 legislation. Furthermore

43Stedman, p. 82.
the reductions in divorces granted on the grounds of adultery and desertion in 1969 suggest that some couples possibly used the grounds of separation and living apart as alternatives, since they no longer had to wait as long for these conditions to be fulfilled and they were easier to prove and less controversial in court.

During the 1960s details of divorce cases often featured in Truth. Cases in both New Zealand and British courts were reported as 'news' items. However, of the periodicals analysed for this essay, only Thursday and the Listener discussed the causes and implications of divorce. The Woman’s Weekly’s silence on this issue suggests a lack of acceptance of divorce in more conservative and traditionalist circles.

A 1968 editorial in Thursday discussed the division of public opinion over the Matrimonial Proceedings Bill then before Parliament. The editor believed that it was impossible to pass moral judgements and argued that;

Divorce can never be a "good" thing - but it is, surely, infinitely preferable to the slow destruction of individuals by their partners when all love and respect is gone and life together becomes intolerable.44

This kind of attitude implied that divorce was becoming more socially acceptable as an alternative to continued suffering within a less than ideal marriage.

Furthermore in the same issue of Thursday an article discussed the Matrimonial Proceedings Bill and the Domestic Proceedings Bill in more detail. It argued that the number of divorces granted was not likely to change. Instead the law could be made more realistic and humane by placing less emphasis on parties being in the right or the wrong within marriage.45 On the whole, the article supported the Bills.

Change draws comment. And when the change is so closely aligned to that pillar of society, Marriage, the comment is sure to be heated. It bodes well for the bills that a majority of people are warmly in favour.46

44Thursday, 28 Nov 1968, p. 3.
In 1968 there was also discussion of divorce in the *Listener*. The text of a radio talk for 'Feminine Viewpoint' saw divorce as a threat to the structure of society.

The family no longer exists as a permanent social value sanctioned by Church and State. It depends now, on the emotional impulses of a man and a woman - who may or may not want to live together . . . . Escape from a marriage-contract is not escape from failure. Failure can't be dissolved so easily. The woman who gave this talk advocated making marriage licences harder to obtain. When this article is compared with the attitudes described above from *Thursday* it becomes clear that New Zealand public opinion was divided between continued rejection and a new acceptance of divorce.

Despite concern over the incidence of divorce in the 1960s, it did not illustrate a rejection of marriage in general. As table 2.1 in Chapter II has shown, many divorced people remarried. This suggests a rejection of particular relationships and not of marriage and its ideal forms in general. By marrying for a second time, people were attempting once more to attain those elusive ideals. Therefore in spite of the existence of problems in marriage, the values and ideal form of marriage persisted alongside the questioning and altering of those same beliefs.

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47*Listener*, 22 March 1968, p. 5.
CONCLUSION

The selection of primary sources for an examination of attitudes to marriage in New Zealand raises several difficulties. The diversity among people in race, culture, religion and socio-economic background means that a variety of opinions, beliefs and values will be present in the community at any given time. To try and overcome this problem, four periodicals were selected which would reflect the ideals and values of the dominant groups in New Zealand during the 1960s. Each magazine appealed to different reading audiences, and the attitudes of a significant proportion of New Zealand society were covered, making the magazines appropriate sources.

The four periodicals varied in the content devoted to marriage and related topics. This became a problem when the discussion of marriage was very limited. *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly* contained the most information on marriage, but was silent on many aspects of marital conflict, as was *Thursday*. *New Zealand Truth* did cover problems in marriage such as violence and adultery, but presented these issues as 'news' rather than discussing the social implications, thus making it difficult to determine the attitudes of groups in society towards marital problems. The *New Zealand Listener* did not provide much information on marriage at all, making it the least valuable of the four sources. However despite these limitations, some general conclusions could be drawn from these sources on New Zealand marriage in the 1960s.

Attitudes to marriage in New Zealand were altering during the 1960s under the impact of social, economic and demographic changes. These changes promoted the questioning of the traditional ideals of married life and the dominant stereotypes of male and female roles resulting in aspects of marriage, such as its purpose and the responsibilities of husband and wife, being adapted or even rejected altogether. Unmarried mothers and de facto couples can be interpreted as rejecting the traditional ideals and stereotypes of married life. Furthermore not all New Zealanders were able to achieve the goal of an ideal marriage, encouraging the reconsideration of the qualities desirable in married life. Problems in marriage such as violence and adultery indicated a failure to conform to dominant social values, as did the need for solutions to marital conflict such as counselling and divorce.
The four periodicals relied on in this essay represented the traditional ideals of dominant groups in New Zealand society, as well as the questioning of those values and alternatives to them which were increasingly being accepted. Moreover the discussion and portrayal of marital problems and divorce in these magazines suggested that many New Zealanders failed to reach and maintain the traditional ideal of marriage in the 1960s.

The 1960s were an important decade of social, economic, and demographic change. For instance the trend to a younger average age at marriage became a socially reinforced norm. It had some social causes, such as developments in fertility control which allowed marriage to be planned on the basis of two incomes since the birth of children could be delayed. Similarly New Zealand enjoyed economic prosperity and virtually full employment until 1967, reducing the economic constraints likely to delay marriage.¹

A shift in attitudes to marriage was also reflected by an increase in the number of children born outside marriage in the 1960s. Ex-nuptial birth rates increased from the Second World War, and rose rapidly between 1962 and 1967. Yet during the same period, the proportion of pregnant brides remained constant.²

Similarly the number of women in the workforce increased during the 1960s as did the proportion of married women in paid employment outside the home. The resulting advances in the financial independence of women caused the basis of marriage to shift away from economic and towards emotional support. A higher standard of fulfilment was therefore expected from marriage in the 1960s.

A series of social changes from the mid-1960s widened the gap between the traditional stereotype of a New Zealand male and actual experience, thus causing the image of the hard-living Kiwi 'bloke' to disintegrate. Rugby, beer, and war spirit were given less emphasis and the exclusiveness of the male breadwinner was undermined by working wives.³ Traditional roles within marriage began to be questioned and altered under the impact of these changes.

Similarly the challenges made by the women's liberation movement to prevailing concepts of equality between men and women to some degree forced the re-evaluation of the ideal marriage in the late 1960s. This limited questioning contributed to an increase in alternatives to the values of the dominant groups in New Zealand society.

A growth of social and economic independence in the 1960s facilitated the development of a new 'youth culture'. Adolescents began to forge their own ideas under the influence of film, television and music. The new ideology of sexual freedom and the rejection of traditional morality were justified by the emerging generation gap, yet the established values of sex being confined to within marriage remained dominant.

These demographic, social and economic changes, which occurred during the 1960s, encouraged some people to reconsider the legitimacy of the dominant ideals of marriage in New Zealand. Both the traditional values and the questioning process were reflected and reinforced by the periodicals of the period. For example the belief that marriage was the ultimate goal of romantic love was reflected without being questioned in The New Zealand Woman's Weekly, yet in the late 1960s Thursday was questioning the romanticism usually associated with weddings and suggesting it was unrealistic. Similarly the dominant image of the ideal wife/mother as a homemaker prepared to sacrifice her own ambitions in the interests of her husband and family was often presented in the magazines as a role for women to pursue. Some role models did question marriage as women's ultimate objective in life, but such examples were not very common. Magazines in the 1960s also reflected some re-evaluation of the purpose of marriage. For instance an article in the Listener presented four different opinions, some in favour of marriage for the purpose of procreation, while others disagreed that children were the sole reason for marriage.

The traditional white church wedding persisted in the 1960s as the dominant ideal, yet around 18% of ceremonies were performed by civil registrars throughout the decade. This suggests that the values surrounding the image of a

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4Sam Elworthy, 'Social Change and the State', pp. 4 - 5.
5Listener, 26 Aug 1960, p. 4.
chaste young bride remained the most widely accepted and that the symbolism of white weddings was not being reconsidered.

Traditional stereotypes associated with marriage, like the dominant ideals, were also both accepted and questioned in periodicals in the 1960s. For example the Woman’s Weekly reflected and strongly reinforced the stereotypes of wife and mother happy in the home and husband as economic provider in an article in 1962. Similarly an article in the Listener interviewed four couples, some of whom supported the traditional roles while others had adjusted their values to agree in principle to wives and mothers working outside the home. Gradually the stereotype of a working mother was altered in moves away from the image of her as a 'bad' parent. However, the established belief that a woman was responsible for caring for the house and family was incorporated into new attitudes towards working wives.

Entrenched stereotypes of unmarried men and women remained dominant and largely unchallenged in the periodicals. Single women were commonly assumed to have marriage as their ultimate objective in life and were out to ‘catch’ a husband. Men were portrayed as being uninterested in marriage, forced to comply in order to obtain a cook and cleaner to care for them.

Although it was largely accepted as the normal relationship for men and women, the stereotype of marriage was rejected by some groups in the community. Spinsters were generally portrayed as social failures who had not succeeded in finding a husband. Yet the existence of happily unmarried women illustrated the conscious rejection of marriage in favour of an alternative. Similarly an increasing number of women were rejecting marriage and the dominant stereotype of a wife by the 1960s by supporting their children outside marriage despite social and economic pressures to the contrary. The image of married mothers remained dominant, however, despite the challenge from the increasing acceptance of de facto relationships and couples living together outside marriage.

The separation and divorce of married couples could also be interpreted as a rejection of dominant stereotypes, yet the proportion of divorcée(s) remarrying
increased throughout the 1960s. This trend illustrates the continued dominance of traditional formal marriage and only a rejection of particular relationships.9

New Zealand periodicals of the 1960s therefore reflect both the acceptance of and challenges to the dominant stereotypes associated with marriage. Traditional values were questioned to some extent and reflected by some groups in society. Yet despite the persistence of entrenched ideals, not all New Zealand relationships succeeded in reaching their goal of the ideal marriage. Problems in marriage and the need for solutions to such problems indicated that traditional ideals were often beyond reach.

Letters and articles in all four periodicals detailed unhappy marriages. In the 1960s it was largely accepted that the perfect marriage was a happy one which provided emotional fulfilment, hence an unhappy relationship represented a failure to achieve the ideal. Yet Truth reflected the existence to some extent of alcoholism, violence and adultery in New Zealand marriages. These issues were presented as 'news' rather than social concerns and their causes and effects went largely unmentioned. The Listener, the Woman's Weekly and Thursday were all silent on these aspects of marriage, suggesting an unwillingness to acknowledge such contradictions to the ideal marriage, and a lack of public acceptance.

Ironically, the magazines did discuss solutions to marital problems ranging from counselling to divorce, thus implying that conflict in marriage was common. Both Thursday and the Listener discussed divorce as a social evil and as an acceptable solution for a failed marriage. The acceptance of divorce as an alternative to marriage is suggested by the relatively high divorce rate in the 1960s, and by the obvious re-evaluation of previous values regarding divorce. However, the occurrence of divorce did not necessarily mean a rejection of the ideal marriage. Many people remarried in the 1960s and attempted to reach that elusive goal for a second time.

Throughout the 1960s the ideals and stereotypes of married life held by dominant groups in society came under attack as a result of social, demographic and economic changes. People questioned values previously taken as indisputable, while some groups in the community went so far as to reject them altogether in

9Roderick Phillips, p. 97.
favour of alternatives. In the magazines of this period, the simultaneous acceptance and questioning of traditional beliefs is both reflected and reinforced. However by the end of the decade, the threats to the perfect marriage had largely been held off, and the dominant ideals persisted.
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The conclusions of this essay have largely been based on the primary research of four New Zealand periodicals published in the 1960s. Three of these magazines appeared weekly and therefore only a sample of each could be examined. To avoid the possibility of bias in favour of certain years, a random sample was taken from each of the four magazines. Every twelfth issue of *The New Zealand Woman's Weekly, New Zealand Listener, and New Zealand Truth* was included in the sample. In this way, four or five issues from each year from 1960 to 1969 were examined. The random sample of *Thursday* differed slightly from this pattern since it appeared fortnightly rather than weekly and did not commence publication until October 1968. In order to have a sample of reasonable size, every sixth issue was selected. The random sampling of each of the four magazines ensured an accurate indication of the attitudes and values towards marriage which they presented, without the need to examine every issue between 1960 and 1969.