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# **BLURRED BOUNDARIES: WOMEN'S WORK AND LEISURE**

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## **Task allocation and ultimate responsibility while on a family camping holiday**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## Abstract

*It used to be quite relaxing when it was just Keith and I. Like it was "Let's go for a swim." "Let's read a book." "Let's do nothing." But now it is, whenever it is a nice day, get up and have breakfast....do the washing and I make the beds, sweep out the tent and tidy it up.*

Using data from participant observations and in-depth interviews, this study focuses on domestic division of labour tasks and responsibilities associated with the family camping holiday. While men help, women perform the vast majority of tasks because patriarchal ideology decrees that the responsibility for domestic tasks, even while on holiday, is women's. Although this working while at leisure results in gender inequality of both labour and leisure time, the women enjoy camping holidays. Such enjoyment is partly attributed to the holiday providing increased opportunities to nurture relationships and to it reducing the pace and standards of work. Using the concept of hegemony it is shown that the family camping holiday reproduces and reinforces patriarchal ideology. This study suggests that such holidays provides an opportunity to initiate a change towards equality of domestic division of labour and leisure.

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To the thirteen women who willingly gave of their time to tell me their stories about camping with their families, as well as the numerous families I observed in the camping grounds, thankyou. Without your contributions, this study could not have occurred in this form.

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## CHAPTER 1

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# ALLOCATING TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Along with buzzy bee, black singlets and pavlovas, the annual summer camping holiday with the family is part of the New Zealand way of life. The great expectation is one of carefree days with countless hours of leisure for all as the family escape with their camping gear to the beach or river for a week or two. Freed from the routines, stresses and demands of their normal work and life in suburbia, adult family members want time to enjoy their holiday. Therefore those in two parent families, the subject matter of this thesis, will allocate equally the tasks and the responsibilities for any necessary holiday household labour, or so goes the myth. Here is a reality check. Sharon<sup>1</sup>, camping with her husband Seth and two children, talks about their daily holiday walks in the bush and along the beach and distinguishes between allocated tasks and ultimate responsibility:

*Seth tends to organise where we are going to go. He is the organiser really of the day's activities. You know, the activities camp manager. To begin with at camping (sic) he had reasonably strong ideas on where we should go each day but that was because he had read about the walks in the area.....He was probably a bit unrealistic with the children initially because he would want to get ahead and we were absolutely exhausted by the end of the day. You know, it was 'Mum, when are we going home?' I mean he did slow down. One of the walks we started on at the beginning of our camping holiday was very steep. We started up and I said 'No'. And he said 'It's not good for you is it?' And I said 'No and it's not okay for the children.' So we realised that and turned back.*

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<sup>1</sup>Not her real name. All names have been changed in order to maintain confidentiality of informants.

In the above narrative, taken from an in-depth unstructured interview with Sharon about her family camping holiday she indicated, perhaps unknowingly, that while Seth had the allocated task of organising the day's walk, she was still the one ultimately responsible for the family's physical and emotional well being.

On the surface the walk appears to be Seth's idea and supposedly for the recreation of the whole family. Besides having the task of organising where they would walk to, Seth decided on the pace and terrain taken to get there. While this suited him and primarily met his own leisure needs (he is a keen walker) it did not on all occasions suit the rest of the family or meet their leisure needs. Only when other family members complained was the walk adjusted. However the walk did enable the family to be together as one unit.

Sharon had the overall responsibility. She monitored the children's progress and assessed any difficulties that lay ahead. It was to her the children turned for help and it was she who alerted Seth to the problems. Then together she and Seth decided how to respond to the situation. The exercising of this responsibility was primarily labour for Sharon even though the context was one of leisure.

Sharon valued the time the family spent walking during their camping holiday. Being away from the home environment provided opportunities for the children to talk as they walked with her and Seth. This one to one conversation opportunity resulted in the children talking over with a parent, matters which at home Sharon and Seth might not fully grasp because of busyness or the children might talk about matters which they would not normally raise in their home environment. Family walks also provided an opportunity for Sharon to monitor family relationships and then to nurture them appropriately. She said:

*When you are out walking you get the chance to talk to a particular child. Well I suppose we are like any other house and sibling rivalry raises its ugly head quite often. Well, we would talk about it actually after we got the children to bed. You know, I would say 'Look. I've noticed that Emma was getting a bit upset because you were spending all the time today with Matt. Do you want to have a chance to talk with*

*Emma? I'll lag a bit behind tomorrow so that you can have a chance to talk with her'.*

Even though the walk was Seth's allocated task, it was Sharon's responsibility to increase the walk's value by using the opportunity to nurture family relationships. She identified Emma's emotional need, organised for Seth to meet that need and then on the day managed the situation by keeping Matt with her.

There is a world of difference between helping with a task such as Seth did and having, like Sharon, the overall responsibility for the task. When a person is responsible for a task they know "the task has to be performed and that it is (their) job to ensure that it is performed" (Dempsey, 1997a:26-27). If the task is not done, they are responsible for remedying the situation. This may involve the person ultimately responsible for the task in carrying out the whole task themselves or a portion thereof, as in Sharon's case, or in them delegating it to another person. However the delegated person does not have this responsibility. If they fail for whatever reason to complete the task that has been either self-allocated or allocated to them by someone else, it becomes "someone else's responsibility to see that the task is carried out" (Dempsey, 1997a:27). Several studies (Dempsey, 1997b:218; Novitz, 1987:45-46; Oakley, 1985:138) reveal that where men are involved in the domestic division of labour they are most likely to be helping by performing an allocated task rather than assuming responsibility for it. The responsibility falls to women to ensure that either they or someone else completes the tasks.

For Sharon and the other twelve women involved in this study the responsibility for the domestic division of labour while on a family camping holiday was primarily theirs. It was not leisure at all. It was labour. It reduced their holiday leisure time and when the women toiled within a leisure situation to provide leisure experiences for their families as Sharon did on the walks, their labour was often mistaken as their leisure.

Sharon and Seth's leisure walks are symptomatic of many of the labour/leisure tasks detailed in this thesis. Their walk story raises the question of why is it, as we near the dawn of the third millennium, women on holiday with their families feel compelled to assume responsibility for

the domestic division of labour during their leisure time in order that the families may have a successful holiday?

Back home in suburbia, this domestic division of labour is also usually the responsibility of women (Dempsey, 1997a:32-35) even if they are in full time paid employment. Not only are women responsible for seeing that someone does the work, they also perform the majority of it (Dempsey, 1997a:27). Hochschild's (1989:4) study of couples struggling to find time for both paid employment and the domestic division of labour, noted that "Just as there is a wage gap between men and women in the work place, there is a 'leisure gap' between them at home".

Embedded in this issue of performing work while at leisure lies questions such as why is it that women's leisure and not men's leisure takes a back seat when the family are on holiday? How are the gendered inequalities such as women having the ultimate responsibility for domestic division of labour tasks, treated during a family camping holiday?

This present study developed out of an interest in how contemporary New Zealand women experience the domestic division of labour while camping with the family. It is exploratory in nature and seeks to understand two overarching questions. Firstly, who does what in the way of 'house'-work and child care work while on a family camping holiday? Secondly, how do the different genders experience leisure while on holiday? This study also seeks to explain why the pattern of women working while on holiday persists in New Zealand society.

The effects of women's labour<sup>2</sup>, both paid and unpaid, on women's leisure has received increasing attention in recent theoretical and empirical literature (Deem, 1986; Dempsey, 1997a; Green and Hebron, 1988; Shelton, 1992). The literature has primarily focused on labour and leisure within the context of everyday life based in suburbia, with scant attention being paid to women performing the domestic division of labour while on holiday with their family. This paucity of literature meant it was necessary for me to look primarily to studies related either to the domestic division of labour (Hochschild, 1989; Oakley, 1985) or to women's leisure

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<sup>2</sup>The term 'labour' as used in this study refers to the physical, mental and emotional aspects of work.



(Dempsey, 1989; Hunter and Whitson, 1991; Shank, 1986) for research design factors. The observation and/or open ended interview methods used by these researchers enabled them to gain a detailed understanding of who did what in the way of the domestic division of labour and how leisure time was facilitated. I was wanting to achieve a similar in-depth understanding in relation to the family camping holiday.

Dempsey (1997a) in his study of Australian marriages explores, among other things, the notion of the domestic division of labour being composed of two dimensions, namely helping with a task and taking responsibility for a task. In this present study I use this idea and talk in terms of tasks being self-allocated or imposed. If the performance of a task has not already been chosen by a person (or self-allocated) the person ultimately responsible for ensuring tasks are performed may allocate (or impose) it on someone else. Alternatively they may perform it themselves. Either way, allocated tasks are imposed tasks whereas self-allocated tasks are chosen tasks. The reason the person with the ultimate responsibility allocates tasks to themselves is not through free choice as in self-allocation, but through the concept of responsibility which demands they impose the task upon themselves if no one else will perform it. In the case of the domestic division of labour women end up performing the vast majority of the tasks because patriarchy<sup>3</sup> has imposed the responsibility for household labour on women. Even though men may self-allocate one or two tasks or may have a few tasks imposed upon them, it is women who are left with the ultimate responsibility. The buck stops with them so to speak.

The difference between task allocation and ultimate responsibility is at the heart of this thesis. At the outset of designing this qualitative research though, the importance of this difference between helping with tasks and responsibility was not apparent. It was only when analysing the resultant data that the significance of this difference was revealed.

While tasks and responsibility is the main theme running through this study, two minor themes are also present. Firstly, leisure is included as that is what a camping holiday is purportedly all about. While

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<sup>3</sup>"A system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (Walby, 1991:20).



acknowledging that the many definitions of the term 'leisure' are problematic (Deem, 1986:17; Green, Hebron and Woodward, 1990:2) I use it here to mean a freely chosen, self enhancing experience that creates 'my space' (Wearing and McArthur, 1988:151). This definition is an amalgamation of Kelly's and Wearing's definitions (cited in Wearing and McArthur, 1988). In the thesis I will suggest that the definition may be gendered. On the family camping holiday men more than women found leisure time that created 'my space'. Secondly, nurturing family relationships is considered because for women it is a major criteria in terms of them deciding whether or not the holiday has been successful (Davidson, 1996:100). Women gain much satisfaction and pleasure from nurturing relationships that are significant to them (Davidson, 1996:96).

This thesis covers seven chapters. Chapter Two uses the available literature on the domestic division of labour including responsibility for that labour and child care, as well as leisure, to frame the study. Because many of the domestic division of labour tasks performed on a family camping holiday<sup>4</sup> are similar to those performed at home, I explore the literature which relates to both giving some prominence to tasks and ultimate responsibility. This chapter also explores the link between the domestic division of labour<sup>5</sup> and patriarchy which sees household labour as women's primary responsibility even though women may also be involved in paid employment. While women perform the vast majority of household labour tasks and have the ultimate responsibility for them, women often see this unequal division of labour as fair for a variety of reasons. In this chapter I also examine the literature relating to women's access to leisure, particularly that which relates to women's leisure within families being a lower priority than that of the rest of the family. Consideration is given to Gilligan's ethic of care<sup>6</sup> which suggests that women may feel selfish if they continually put their own needs ahead of those of the rest of the family. While the ethic of care is a psychological concept the women's stories in this thesis suggest it may be useful in

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<sup>4</sup>A self-catering holiday where child and adult family members live together for at least a few days in a tent, caravan or motorised camping vehicle at a camping ground or other camping location.

<sup>5</sup>Inside household labour tasks including cooking, cleaning and child care that are regularly performed as well as outside labour tasks such as lawn mowing and gardening that are intermittently performed at home to maintain the family.

<sup>6</sup>"An activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, of taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone" (Henderson and Allen, 1991:99).

endeavouring to understand the role that nurturing relationships play in the family camping holiday.

As I wanted to learn the stories of women like Sharon, I chose participant observations and unstructured interviews as the data collection methods. Chapter Three lays before you details of these data collection methods as well as the camping ground settings in which the research took place. Consideration is also given to the applicability of the fieldwork method as a research technique for studying the domestic division of labour and leisure when the family is on a camping holiday.

The next two chapters, Four and Five, document moments in the 'leisured' life of women camping with their families. Chapter Four focuses on the domestic division of labour tasks and ultimate responsibility associated with camping such as preparing for and dismantling camp afterwards, preparing and cooking food, washing dishes and clothes, keeping the tent or caravan and the site tidy, caring for children and making beds. Most of these jobs needed to be carried out on a daily basis. What was different between home and camping was the context in which the domestic division of labour was performed. This resulted in some tasks such as washing clothes involving more work due to the less convenient facilities in which the tasks were performed. This chapter reveals that while the family members did perform more tasks than at home, they did not assume the ultimate responsibility for them even though there was the potential for them to do so. Instead, just like at home, the women were left with the responsibility or management of the family and their needs.

Chapter Five explores how the women involved in this study experienced leisure on the family camping holiday. While such holidays did provide women with a leisure time to freely choose a self enhancing experience providing a sense of 'my space', they had less access to this time than men had. This unequal access to leisure while on holiday mirrors women's unequal access to leisure back in suburbia which has been commented on by researchers such as Deem (1986:39-40), Dempsey (1989:39), Shaw (1985:280) and Woodward and Green (1988:139-140). Also of significance in this chapter is the involvement of women's labour in the leisure of other family members, such as that experienced by Sharon's family when walking. She had the ultimate responsibility for the family's

walking trips. The chapter shows that often this masked responsibility leads to a disguising of women's labour and a lack of personal leisure for women.

Chapter Six analyses this pattern of women being responsible for household labour while on holiday and why their holiday leisure was accorded a lower priority than the rest of the family. In spite of the inequality of labour and leisure experienced by the women, why then did they say they enjoyed their holiday and were looking forward to the next one? The women certainly appreciated the increased opportunities to nurture relationships and the change of pace and standards. Using Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony, this chapter explores the idea that the family camping holiday with its inequalities, reproduces ideology and masks power relationships.

The concluding chapter, Chapter Seven, suggests that the family camping holiday with both parents present and available may provide a starting point for working towards equality of responsibility for household labour and equality of leisure time of one's own.

## CHAPTER 2

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### SHARED RESPONSIBILITY?

How Sharon experienced the family walk reveals the equivocality of the family camping holiday. The change in context provided her, like the other women whose stories are told in this study, with experiences different from those normally incurred at home. On the other hand the family's walk was still characterised by tasks and responsibilities similar to those experienced in suburbia with the domestic division of labour and leisure. It is to a literature review and a theoretical understanding of the domestic division of labour including the role of patriarchy, leisure and the family holiday that I now turn. The chapter ends exploring the ethic of care. This concept centres around women's commitment to relationships with other people and responsibilities, and suggests women put the needs of others ahead of their own needs.

#### Domestic Division of Labour

Family camping holidays involve many of the domestic division of labour tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing clothes and child care that are usually performed at home (Cerullo and Ewen, 1984:38; Deem, 1992:26). The unpaid domestic division of labour including household labour<sup>1</sup> performed at home is largely the responsibility of women (Bittman and Lovejoy, 1993:302; Brines, 1994:652; Deem, 1982:33; Dempsey, 1997a:27; Firestone and Shelton, 1994:47; Hochschild, 1989:3; Oakley, 1985:29; Scruton, 1994:254) and carries "tremendous symbolic weight as (a) marker of gender" (Brines, 1994:654). Men are involved in performing

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<sup>1</sup>The term 'household labour' is used to distinguish between inside domestic division of labour tasks such as housekeeping and childcare, and outside domestic division of labour tasks such as lawn mowing, vegetable gardening and repairing/maintaining the house and household equipment.

(or helping with) domestic division of labour tasks through either allocating some tasks to themselves (self-allocated tasks) or through women allocating tasks to them (imposed tasks). Women however have the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all the tasks are performed and to achieve this they perform the vast majority of tasks themselves.

Just who is responsible for a task is a critical issue in household labour (Oakley, 1985:160). It is fundamental to this thesis. Dempsey (1997a:26-27) points out that there is a great deal of difference between responsibility and helping. He argues that a person who has responsibility for a task is aware that it needs performing and ensures that this happens. On the other hand a person helping usually needs to be asked to carry out the task and is not ultimately responsible for ensuring it is performed (Dempsey, 1997a:27).

Current estimates reveal that women in Australia, UK and USA perform between sixty five and eighty percent household labour (Bittman and Lovejoy, 1993:302; Dempsey, 1997a:22-23; Shelton and John, 1996:299-300). Several researchers (Brines, 1994:653; Coverman, 1985:81; DeMaris and Longmore, 1996:1043; Dempsey, 1997a:51; Hochschild, 1989:2-3; Kynaston, 1996:233; Shelton and John, 1996) note that even with an increasing number of women, either married or with partners, moving into full time paid employment, men have not, on average, substantially increased their hours of household labour to compensate for women's extra work load. For instance Baxter in her Australian study found that where wives were in full-time paid employment they spent 28 hours per week on household tasks, excluding child care tasks, compared with their husband's thirteen and a half hours (Baxter, cited in Dempsey, 1997a:56). Men whose wives were full time housewives spent 11 hours per week on household tasks (Baxter, cited in Dempsey, 1997a:55-56). That is, men worked only an additional two and a half hours per week on household labour tasks where their wives were in full-time paid employment. Data collected for the 1991 New Zealand Census showed that where women were in full-time paid employment, one third of the men did not increase (or only marginally increased) their hours of child care work (Callister and Davey, 1995:172). Through such uneven distributions, women become responsible not only for their own paid employment but



also for household labour. Hochschild (1989:4) terms this phenomenon 'the second shift'.

Hochschild (1989:259) and Kynaston (1996:233) point out that in order to cope with two labour loads, women may resort to such strategies as lowering housework and child care standards, buying prepared meals, using child care services or employing other women to assist with the household labour. Strategies such as these according to Dempsey, (1997a:52) reduce the amount of time women devote to household labour and result in narrowing the gap between the total time that the two genders devote to household labour. However these strategies do not release women from the overall responsibility of ensuring that the tasks are carried out to a satisfactory level (Hochschild, 1989:120; Kynaston, 1996).

Historically in New Zealand and Australia men have been involved in domestic division of labour tasks performed outside rather than inside the house itself (Dempsey, 1997a:36-37; James and Saville-Smith, 1994:49; Novitz, 1987:48; Wearing and Fullagar, 1996:20). Such tasks are usually more visible to the public and include lawn mowing, vegetable gardening, and repairs and maintenance to the house and household equipment. Compared with household labour, this outside domestic labour is more likely to have greater flexibility as regards the time it is carried out (DeMaris and Longmore, 1996:1044; Dempsey, 1997a:35-36; Shelton, 1992:147) and is more likely to be completed in a larger dedicated time block free from interruptions (Dempsey, 1997a:36). Even considering the amount of time men devote to these outside tasks, women still perform the vast majority of the overall domestic division of labour tasks (Dempsey, 1997a:35-36). Why? One explanation is patriarchy.

### **Patriarchy and household labour**

Patriarchy is central to contemporary feminist debate involving household labour. Feminists such as Beechey (1987:115), Delphy (1984:20), Hartmann (1981:371-372) and Walby (1991:21) emphasise that the reason why household labour including child care has become the responsibility of women is anchored in the concepts of patriarchy and capitalism. In patriarchal capitalist society, Hartmann (1981:368) argues, men and capital

not only dominate women. They also benefit directly and indirectly from women's labour through the gender based division of labour. Hartmann (1981:372-373) contends that in such a division of labour men's prime responsibility is their own paid employment performed in the public sphere while women's prime responsibility is household labour performed in the private sphere for the benefit of men. Although women are increasingly involved in paid employment (Dempsey, 1997a:28; Novitz, 1987:31) such employment is often regarded as secondary to men's paid employment (Dempsey, 1997a:86; Hochschild, 1989:106; Novitz, 1987:48) even if the income is important for the family budget (Dempsey, 1997a; Novitz, 1987:41). Furthermore, what is central to this thesis is that women involved in paid employment are still responsible for household labour (Brines, 1994:652; Dempsey, 1997a:59; Novitz, 1987:47-48).

In endeavouring to understand why patriarchy is able to impose on women the responsibility for household labour tasks, the concept of 'hegemony' is useful and it is to an outline of this concept that I now turn.

### **Hegemony**

'Hegemony' as a concept was developed by Gramsci and may be described as "the process by which dominant groups such as men win consent to their domination" (Green et al., 1990:29). The process involves a combination of political coercion and ideological consent (Hall, 1977:332; Tester, 1994:16-18) resulting in the subordinate social groups such as women accepting the "total social authority", or hegemony, of the dominant group (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson and Roberts, 1976:38). This enables the dominant group to have "(economic), social, political and cultural leadership and authority throughout civil society and the state" (Hall, 1980:35).

The dominant group is rarely one single group but rather an alliance of ruling social groups (or a 'hegemonic bloc') (Hall, 1977:332) such as patriarchy and familism. As both these groups share similar ideological views about household labour tasks being the ultimate responsibility of women, they are able to work together as a hegemonic bloc to maintain through leadership their authority over other social groups, including women. The acceptance of the hegemonic bloc's authority by the

subordinate social groups gives the illusion that all social groups "spontaneous(ly)" and "natural(ly)" agree with the dominant group or bloc's view of the world (Clarke et al., 1976:38).

Once a hegemonic bloc such as patriarchy and familism achieves dominance, that dominance has to be sustained because hegemony can also be lost through struggle, resulting perhaps in this case in both genders being equally responsible for household labour tasks. Therefore a state of permanent flux exists with a continual struggle going on within the social structure for this dominance (Clarke et al., 1976:11-12; Hall, 1980:36). To retain its leadership patriarchy and familism therefore need to continually "accommodate successfully opposing and competing interests" within the boundaries established by and favourable to them, to the extent that the subordinate groups such as women believe they have a "stake in the status quo" (Tester 1994:16-17). With the subordinate groups believing they have a stake in the status quo they perceive that any change in leadership will be to their disadvantage (Tester, 1994:18).

The patriarchal system of social relations which disadvantages women is characteristic of New Zealand capitalist society today (James and Saville-Smith, 1994:7), where men dominate the economic, social, political and cultural spheres. Familist ideology which "emerged in the 1970s and 1980s" (Eichler cited in Shaw, 1992:272) supports patriarchal society's ideology of gender based responsibilities (Gittens cited in Bella, 1992:12). It is the responsibility of women, according to familism, to perform household labour, to service the leisure needs of the family and to be responsible for family rituals such as Christmas celebrations and family holidays (Hunter and Whitson, 1991:220).

### **Ideologically speaking**

Ideology is a key factor for hegemony (Clarke et al., 1976:39) because it is able to "conceal contradictions and antagonisms" in such a manner as to make them either "invisible" or appear as natural in the social order in which the subordinate groups live (Green et al., 1990:30).



Barrett (1980:97) defines ideology as "a generic term for the processes by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced, transformed". The dominant ideology will be a complex mix of ideas arrived at through, in this case patriarchy and familism, negotiating ideological concessions with the subordinate groups including women (Hall, 1977:333; Bennett, 1986:xiv-xv). While these concessions are sufficient to obtain and maintain the subordinate groups' consent for the bloc to hold the leadership (Bennett, 1986; Hall, 1977:333-334) they are never sufficient to pose a threat to the bloc's ideological underpinnings.

The family has a role to play in ideology. As a civil institution it helps to keep the entire social bloc (both dominant and subordinate groups) together through continually reproducing ideology which favours the dominant groups (Clarke et al., 1976:38-39).

Embedded within this process of maintaining hegemonic authority is the dominant bloc's power to develop alternatives and restrict opportunities to only those which fall within its framework (Clarke et al., 1976:38; Hall, 1977:333). How society views what is presented to it about the ideology of household labour and leisure for instance, will be influenced by the way a particular version of household labour or leisure is presented (Green et al., 1990:30). In a patriarchal society, with support from familism, society is most likely to be presented with only those versions which see household labour tasks as the ultimate responsibility of women. Any alternative versions that are presented will most likely not pose a real threat to patriarchal dominance.

The concept of hegemony provides a broad framework to look critically at what appears to be innocent, "taken-for-granted" practices which on the surface do not seem to involve power and politics at all (Cameron, 1993:174). Green et al. (1990:29) note that leisure is often portrayed as an 'innocent' social practice free from the influence of power and politics and is frequently contrasted with paid work (an area where the impact of power and politics is acknowledged). Yet, as McKay (1986:359-360) argues power and politics do impinge on leisure experiences as patriarchy endeavours to legitimise their particular practices as being in the best

interests of all. The rest of this chapter now explores the sources and practice of patriarchy as inequality.

### **Whose responsibility?**

Who takes responsibility for the domestic division of labour within the home and who helps with it is a key issue. As shown above Dempsey (1997a:26-27) outlines the difference between taking responsibility and helping (or performing a task). When a person, usually a women, is responsible for household labour tasks they are aware that the tasks needs doing and that, just like the business manager, they are responsible for seeing that it gets done. However the helping person is free from this responsibility (Dempsey, 1997a). Why this situation exists and persists is at the heart of patriarchy.

Several studies (Dempsey, 1997b:218; Habgood, 1992:165; Novitz, 1987:45-46; Oakley, 1985:138) reveal that men involved in household labour are most likely to be helping (or performing a task) rather than assuming responsibility for household labour. A 1995 New Zealand Department of Justice survey of 2000 New Zealand men, followed by 200 in-depth interviews reveals that ninety five percent of the men felt that "men should share in household tasks such as washing the dishes and doing the laundry" (Phillips, 1996:278).

Across the Tasman, Bittman and Lovejoy (1993:306) report that eighty nine percent of the men involved in their Sydney study "agreed that they (men) should share equally in the housework and childcare". Yet as noted above, studies such as Baxter's (cited in Dempsey, 1997a:56) show that Australian women still spend more than double the amount of time that men spend on household tasks. The differences between these two studies may reveal the discrepancy between what men think the practice should be and reality as practiced in the home (Bittman and Lovejoy, 1993:310).

Eighty percent of the men in Dempsey's (1997b:218) Australian study said their role in household labour was mainly helping. Of the men whose

wives<sup>2</sup> were in full time paid labour, ninety percent said their wives took most of the responsibility for household labour. When interviewing the wives only twenty percent said they wanted their husbands to share the responsibility and this usually related to one or two household labour tasks rather than the full raft of tasks (Dempsey, 1997b:219). Dempsey (1997b:218-219) concluded that women appear to look to men for help with household labour tasks rather than for a redistribution of responsibility. Dempsey (1997b:219) is of the view that asking for help "does not constitute a serious challenge to the system whereas pressuring husbands to share responsibility is tantamount to asking for the ground rules governing the relationship to be changed".

According to Hochschild (1989:201) some men genuinely want to share the responsibility for household labour but are prevented from doing so by their wives who "took over" at home. Dempsey posits that "Many women want to go on performing certain jobs because they are personally rewarding" (Dempsey, 1997a:53). Bittman and Lovejoy (1993:313-314) make the point that some women simply prefer to retain the responsibility because they want to control the standard of work performed.

Even though research shows both genders acknowledge that women perform approximately two thirds of the household labour, only approximately one third of the men and women involved in the research see this unequal distribution as unfair (DeMaris and Longmore, 1996:1043; Dempsey, 1997b:222). Several studies have endeavoured to understand why this inequitable distribution is perceived as fair. For example, DeMaris and Longmore undertook an examination of 4205 responses to the 1987-88 National Survey of Families and Households conducted in the USA. They concluded that ideology and equity were significant factors in determining the perception of fairness in household labour tasks, noting that where "husbands perform housework because they believe in sharing it, rather than because they have been coerced, both husbands and wives are more likely to accept this work as fairly distributed" (DeMaris and Longmore, 1996:1065). Such work, willingly performed, is valued by

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<sup>2</sup>The terms 'wife/wives' and 'husband/s' are used where the literature specifically uses such terms.

wives "for its symbolic value in equalising the status of the partners" (DeMaris and Longmore, 1996) even if in practical terms an unequal distribution remains.

The women in Dempsey's (1997b:222) study of Melbourne couples gave a variety of reasons for seeing the unequal performance of household labour tasks as fair. These reasons included women believing some tasks were intrinsically rewarding to them or gave them other "valued outcomes...such as an emotionally supportive husband"; believing that they (the women) were not overloaded with household labour tasks; seeing the division of tasks as fair if the husband/partner helped with 'feminine' tasks, and concluding that their own husband's/partner's contribution to household labour was the same as or greater than other husbands'/partners' efforts with whom they were making the comparison.

Thompson (cited in Shelton and John, 1997:313) gives support to Dempsey's reason that women are more likely to make intra-gender comparisons rather than inter-gender ones when deciding on fairness of performing household labour tasks. Thompson goes on to argue though "that women will perceive the division of household labour as unfair only if they want their husbands to perform more housework", "and if they do not see any justification for the unequal balance of housework".

With just whom comparisons are made may be a key factor when considering equality of household labour. Risman and Johnson-Sumerford's (1998:39) research involving 15 "postgender" couples, that is couples who successfully shared responsibility for household labour, indicated that what differentiated these couples from most other couples was that they compared their contribution to household labour with each other's contribution instead of with other same-sex people.

Lennon and Rosenfield (cited in Shelton and John, 1996:313) have examined the perceptions of fairness in household labour in terms of exchange theory. "The more power and resources a person has the more likely he or she is to view an unequal division of household labour as unfair". Lennon and Rosenfield's research only partially supported this hypothesis. They found that women who would become poverty stricken

if their only income source is their own paid labour, "are less likely to view the division of household labour as unfair". They also found "no association between contributions to household earnings and perceptions of fairness" (Shelton and John, 1996).

While the above explanations for perceiving the unequal as fair focus on an ideology of sharing and relative resource constraints, another explanation focuses on the social construction of gender. Unlike the other explanations though, the social construction of gender as outlined by Shelton and John (1996:312) considers the wider purposes household labour may serve.

### **Constructing gendered work**

Shelton and John's (1996:312) social construction of gender posits that household labour produces not only goods and services for family consumption, but also produces and reproduces gender through women's time involved in household labour and their husbands'/partners' general reluctance to be involved in it. De Vault (cited in Shelton and John, 1996) gives tacit support to this idea when noting that some women see household labour as a way of expressing their care and love for their family, rather than seeing household labour as work.

According to Shelton and John (1996:312) by acknowledging that household labour produces gender as well as goods and services for the family, it rationalises the unequal division of labour. Household labour is thus seen as affording a way for women to express themselves as women (Shelton and John, 1996) or to define themselves, rather than defining themselves through their paid labour or other interests (Dempsey, 1997b:221). The gender based explanation may encourage women to see the status quo as fair or it may discourage them from seeking an equality of household labour as change could represent a threat to women's self definition or identity (Dempsey, 1997b:221-222).

Both Dempsey (1997b:222) and Hochschild (1989:201-203) note that some wives have been successful in getting their husbands to share equally in performing household labour tasks. Even so, the ultimate responsibility for those tasks appear to still lie with women. Dempsey (1997b:222-223)



suggests that most men are reluctant to leave their privileged position of not being responsible for household labour tasks and that until women realise the unfairness of their situation, no major shifts in the division of household labour are likely to occur. The goal of this thesis is to provide sufficient evidence to begin a debate on the unequal nature of work at leisure.

I now turn to the reality of two household labour tasks - housework and child care.

### **Devalued housework**

Oakley (1985:182) claims that the housework aspect of household labour is disliked by many women, with seventy percent of the women who took part in her study saying that they were dissatisfied with performing such work. Bose, Bereano and Malloy (1984:64), Kibria, Barnett, Baruch, Marshall and Pleck (cited in Shelton and John, 1996:316) and Krause (cited in Shelton and John, 1996) also note that women dislike housework. This should not be surprising Novitz (1987:48) claims when one considers that at the end of a week there is little trace of the work that has gone into producing a week's meals or washing the family's dirty clothes.

Dempsey (1997a:29) reports that most women find the routine tasks of housework such as washing clothes, cooking and cleaning, "unpleasant, meaningless, boring, demeaning and fatiguing". Bose et al. (1984:80) concluded from their study that the impact of technology on housework has not made it more pleasant or more interesting. The monotony of the 'housewife' role and the lack of social interaction were areas in which the informants in Oakley's (1985:182) study registered dissatisfaction. What is valued by these women according to Oakley (1985) is the autonomy aspect of household labour. "Being your own boss" gives similar (Oakley, 1985) or greater flexibility over the work (Bird and Ross cited in Shelton and John, 1996:316) than that found in paid employment.

### **Child care work**

Household labour comprises more than just housework. It also includes child care work. This aspect of household labour relates to the 24 hour a

day care and development of children, including babies, who will become future adults. Although child care work is usually combined with housework, Oakley (1985:166-167) points out that they are quite different. Housework has short term goals and repeats itself day after day, year after year, while domestic child care work has a single long term goal of producing independent young adults (Oakley, 1985).

The entanglement of these two household tasks does not mean that the two are necessarily indivisible. Goodnow and Bowes (1994:12) point out that it is possible to share some or all of the tasks and the responsibility of one of these aspects of household labour, say child care work, while not sharing the other, such as housework. When men do share in household labour, that sharing is more likely to be associated with the child care aspect of household labour rather than with the housework aspect (Goodnow and Bowe, 1994).

The wide ranging child care tasks are seen by many women as more demanding than housework (Dempsey, 1997a:40). Dempsey notes that as with housework, much of child care work is routine, fragmented and time specific with many of the demanding tasks being more related to the child's timing than the care giver's timing, particularly in the case of babies and young children. The unpredictability of these tasks can upset the planned routine of other activities, leaving the care giver/houseworker feeling irritated and unsettled.

Even though men are much more likely to share in some of the tasks associated with child care than those tasks associated with housework, none-the-less, like housework, the overall responsibility for child care work is most likely to be the province of women (Hartmann, 1981:385; Samuel, 1996b:288; Shelton, 1992:147; Wearing and Fullagar, 1996:21). Australian studies conducted in 1987 and again in 1992 showed on both occasions that women spent 350% more time than men in caring for children (Dempsey, 1997a:42). While in the intervening period between 1987 and 1992 men increased their total number of child care hours worked per week by 21 minutes, women also increased their hours (Dempsey, 1997a:41-42). According to Deem (1982:31) and Samuel (1996b:288) at least some of the increase in the hours women spend on child care tasks

can be the result of women reducing their housework hours. Of course, even where mothers are in paid employment, they still perform more child care work than men (Dempsey, 1997a; Novitz, 1987:46).

In the USA, a study conducted by Thompson and Walker (cited in Dempsey, 1997a:43) concluded that mothers "carry ninety percent of the burden of *responsibility* for child care: they plan, organize, delegate, supervise and schedule". Performing child care work is seen as such an integral part of motherhood in many societies that women, having internalised society's norms, may feel guilty if they do not take the overall responsibility for child care (Wearing and Fullagar, 1996:22).

As with housework, men are more likely to be involved in helping by performing some tasks rather than in having responsibility for child care (Dempsey, 1997a:41; Novitz, 1987:47; Wearing, 1984:201). This help is far more likely to be associated with doing fun things with their children, such as playing with them or taking them to sport while the less attractive and time consuming tasks such as feeding, dressing and helping with homework are likely to be left to women (Dempsey, 1997a:43; Hochschild, 1989:150-151). In Dempsey's (1997a:) study of 'Smalltown' Australia, he found that less than thirty three percent of fathers helped in these less attractive time consuming areas and less than ten percent helped put children to bed.

Russell (cited in Dempsey, 1997a:45) estimates that between one and two percent of Australian fathers are involved in significant sharing of responsibility for child care tasks. His study showed that where this sharing of responsibility took place, all the wives were in paid employment. On average these 'non-traditional' men in Russell's study spent 26 hours per week with their children compared with their wives' 16 hours per week. However when a partner's child care hours and paid employment hours were combined, the wives' total labouring hours still exceeded that of their husbands'. In addition the women were still more likely to have the ultimate responsibility for the children and also perform the less attractive and more time consuming tasks such as feeding and dressing (Dempsey, 1997a). The shared care arrangement however was likely to be only temporary with wives eventually performing the major share of child care



tasks and of course retaining the ultimate responsibility (Dempsey, 1997a:46). This change was likely to be influenced by factors such as men having difficulty coping with the loss of status and the economic pressure associated with a drop in income, as well as the lack of social support for men engaging in role reversal (Dempsey, 1997a:46-47).

Although either gender is capable of providing child care, Green et al. (1990:118-119) point out that it becomes the learned role of women, rather than men, through the gendered division of labour. This role is imbued with characteristics such as "self sacrifice" and "cleanliness" which have little to do with child care itself (Green et al., 1990).

### **Ambivalent satisfaction**

Child care is one aspect of household labour with which women have expressed some satisfaction (Kay, 1996a:154; Oakley, 1985:175). However both Kay and Oakley add words of caution to these findings. Kay (1996a) notes that comments by researchers regarding satisfaction with child care work are not lengthy and that it is unusual for them to be expanded into a major theme. Oakley (1985) reveals that almost half the women she interviewed had ambivalent feelings towards child care work and suggests that this may be driven by society generally not accepting negative attitudes by women towards motherhood.

Having a break from child care work is important for the well-being of most women (Wimbush, 1988:67). The responsibility for arranging such temporary exit routes usually lies with the woman herself and is frequently complicated by juggling conflicting demands (Green et al., 1990:89). As Green et al. (1990:119) point out though, patriarchal power can remain unchallenged and even be reinforced if another woman, rather than the father, performs the child care role in order to give the mother a break.

Family holidays usually involve aspects of child care work (Wimbush and Talbot, 1988a:xix) and are more of an extension of women's normal housework and child care work than leisure according to Deem (1986:63). However, Davidson (1996:99-100) argues that women value performing some aspects of child care work while on family holidays. Such labour

makes women feel comfortable and reduces their internal conflict between the accepted image of mother and the way they see their mother role. Davidson (1996:97) also notes that women value the opportunity holidays provide to strengthen family relationships. This thesis also explores the costs of these values, for the women.

## **The Leisure Experience**

The image of family camping holidays is frequently one of endless days of leisure for all but Deem (1986:61) points out that this is far too simplistic an image and ignores women's experience. Even though most women place a high priority value on the family's leisure (Samuel, 1996a:8; Shaw, 1992:284) including holidays (Davidson, 1996:102; Deem, 1986:63) women's experience can be different from men's experience.

Women's involvement in family leisure is often one of being responsible for the leisure needs of the family members including husbands (Dempsey, 1991:89; Firestone and Shelton, 1994:47; Shaw, 1992:284; Thompson, 1990:135). Rather than providing her with space which she can call her own and use for her own self enhancement, family leisure activities, enjoyable though they may be, become women's work because as a mother, she is still responsible for child care (Wearing and McArthur, 1988:156), and expected to do the "planning, organising and scheduling" of family leisure (Shaw, 1992:284). Bella, (1992:11) agrees when she says "Family leisure is in reality women's work." Proclaiming that family leisure includes women's leisure not only renders invisible the labour women perform to bring about that family leisure (Hunter and Whitson, 1991:220). It also disguises women's own lack of leisure (Thompson, 1990:137).

Thompson (1990:138) supports a patriarchy based analysis. She states that women in New Zealand and Australia are pressured through ideology and practices of being a 'good' mother and wife, to put family leisure especially their husband's before their own. Thompson (1990) writes "His success and happiness through this is supposed to become hers", denying women of any identity outside of that of their husbands' identity. Women's physical labour as Dempsey (1991:92) notes such as providing transport or organising an outing, and their emotional labour such as listening to the

'post-mortem' of an activity or soothing a bruised ego, enables other family members to pursue their own activities. While some men do reciprocate on occasions through such acts as "putting up trestles for a street stall or helping erect a marquee for a fete" (Dempsey, 1991:100) such reciprocation is far less frequent, resulting in a form of exploitation of women.

Women's leisure is not accorded as high a priority as men's leisure (Deem, 1986:13; Dempsey, 1989:43; Lynch and Simpson, 1993:60). Some women justify their inferior access to leisure on the grounds that they do not work as hard as their husbands/partners work (Deem, 1982:44). They perceive their role in family leisure, especially their husband's leisure, as a measure of their dedication to the marriage and the home (Dempsey, 1991:105). As Deem (1986:13) points out "men see leisure as a right; women do not and are not encouraged by men so to do".

Woodward and Green (1988:135) along with Desaulniers and Théberge (1992:136) suggest that women's second class access to leisure is because of an assumption based on men's experience that paid employment earns a person leisure time. Linking paid employment with leisure gives little consideration to the efforts of those who are not formally employed (Lynch and Simpson, 1993:66) including women with household obligations (Desaulniers and Théberge, 1992). Kynaston (1996:230) adds to the debate by pointing out that unemployed or retired men often enjoy better access to leisure time than women and that women in paid employment frequently do not enjoy the same level of access to leisure as their male counterparts. Kynaston (1996) along with Chambers (1986:311) and Dempsey (1989:41-42) agree that access to leisure is not employment based but rather gender based and ignores women's different experience.

Dempsey (1997a:57), Firestone and Shelton (1994:46), Samuel (1996a:6) and Lynch and Simpson (1993:66) note that women's experience of leisure is often intermingled with their labour, such as reading while supervising children's activities. This intermingling or blurring of boundaries makes it different from men's experience of a clear separation between labour and leisure. The blurred boundaries often experienced by women make it

difficult to clearly separate labour from leisure and therefore for women to experience leisure as 'my space' (Wearing and McArthur, 1988:156).

The blurring of work and leisure can be traced back to feudal times. Cowan (1983) in recounting the history of American housework from the pre-industrial era to the present, notes how with industrialisation, income earning work was separated out from the home, dividing labour into public and private spheres. This resulted in a clear separation between income earning work and leisure which then became associated with a person's non-paid labour time (Deem, 1986:4; Green et al., 1990:41), disregarding women's different but equally valid experience.

By ignoring the different gender experiences as a central factor influencing leisure, men's experience of a clear separation both in terms of time and place between labour and leisure, is often taken to be the norm (Chambers, 1986:311), rendering leisure as a male prerogative (Kynaston, 1996:230). Unlike paid employment, household labour does not provide social rewards (James and Saville-Smith, 1994:56) such as a holiday entitlement for its performers (Deem, 1986:61-62).

The concept of familism which prescribes to patriarchy's gender based roles, (and therefore by association supports women's oppression) (Bella, 1992:12), assumes that women experience leisure with their families in the same way as other family members, that is, family leisure is women's leisure as well (Hunter and Whitson, 1991:220). Within familism, family leisure is depicted as a mutually enjoyable experience of benefit to all family members (Shaw, 1992:271). Shaw (1992:283) points out however that such an ideology masks the work women do for their family's leisure.

### **Family Leisure**

Even though family holidays involve women performing much household labour this does not stop the holiday being defined as a holiday according to Davidson (1996:99). The holiday household labour however is characterised by less pressure, the absence of suburbia's normal routines and anxieties, as well as a change in location of the labour.

With men not involved in paid employment during the family holiday, they become more available to perform household labour tasks. While more assistance with such tasks during the family holiday may help reduce women's labour and increase their access to leisure, a real holiday for some women is one free from the responsibility for household labour tasks and affords women their own space (Davidson, 1996:91; Deem, 1986:63). Reality is different given its basis in patriarchal social relations. Wimbush and Talbot (1988a:xix) suggest that family holidays provide women with only a "relative freedom" from their normal pace and place which is "compounded" by pre-holiday preparations that women make at home and subsequently the post-holiday unpacking.

Many of the English women who took part in Deem's research into leisure were aware that family holidays incurred them working the same number of hours or even more on household tasks than at home, and usually in less convenient facilities (Deem, 1986:63). While on holiday their husbands' labour contributions usually revolved around sharing tasks like "fetching bread and milk from the shop and 'cooking' on a barbecue" and towing the caravan rather than taking responsibility for tasks (Deem, 1986).

Cerullo and Ewen's (1984:39) United States family camping study notes that while women reduced their household labour when camping, the men increased theirs. Cerullo and Ewen (1984) point out however that many of the meals were planned and prepared by the women before leaving home, thereby giving the women more leisure time at the camp site itself. While camping the men were most likely to carry out household tasks that were visible and performed outdoors, such as cooking on the barbecue. If food preparation was required at the camp site, it was attended to by the women inside their camping vehicle.

Davidson's (1996:95-96) research of holiday experiences of Australian women with young children, found that once the family arrived at their holiday destination and unpacked, the household tasks required less labour and effort as there were no school clothes to organise daily, no commitments to pre-school groups, meals were simpler and housework standards were reduced. It is this change of place and pace that facilitates a relaxing experience according to Davidson (1996:99). However the



women in Davidson's (1996:95-96) research reported that the packing and unpacking associated with the holiday increased their work load, as did washing clothes and cooking meals using facilities that were far less convenient than those at home.

Davidson (1996:99-100) also notes that women may classify some holiday labour tasks as leisure, particularly emotional labour to do with nurturing family relationships and often women do not wish to relinquish this type of task while on holiday. Although it consumes time and energy, a family holiday that enables relationships to be nurtured is an important factor for many women and can give them pleasure and satisfaction according to Davidson (1996:99-100) as well as meaning to their holiday experience (Davidson, 1996:102). None-the-less women are not entirely free to choose whether or not they nurture family relationships while on holiday as there is a social expectation that they will take the responsibility for the emotional well being of the family (Davidson, 1996:101). Even though family holidays can produce the same tensions and conflicts as found in the domestic setting in suburbia (Deem, 1986:61) women still place importance on the opportunity to nurture family relationships and this is reflected in what Gilligan calls the 'ethic of care'.

Women are much more likely to be the primary care givers, rather than being the ones cared for (Hunter and Whitson, 1991:223). Their experience of caring for the family, whether it be meeting the family's physical needs or emotional needs can be expressed in the 'ethic of care' concept, a manifestation of patriarchy. Although this is a psychological theory, it can be useful in gaining some understanding as to why women put the leisure needs of others ahead of their own needs while on a family camping holiday.

The ethic of care concept was developed by Gilligan to explain the different moral developmental path that women tend to take (Gilligan, 1982:18-19). Women tend to see 'self' and 'other' as interdependent (Gilligan, 1982:74), giving rise to women generally perceiving the successfulness of their lives in terms of relationships and responsibility (Gilligan, 1982:73). Men though tend to favour an approach characterised by independence and rules (Gilligan, 1982:18). If women put their own

needs first they often feel selfish and in moral conflict (Gilligan, 1982:73-74). Men also care, but the difference for Gilligan is that women are more likely to put the care of others ahead of their own needs in order to maintain moral equilibrium (Henderson and Allen, 1991:99; Shaw, 1992:283-284). As women live in unequal relationships, the ethic of care affords them a positive aspect to their labour.

Women's caring labour, such as housework, child care work and nursing the sick, is the one area where patriarchal society has allowed women a limited amount of power over others (Henderson and Allen, 1991:101). However Henderson and Allen (1991:101-102) point out that this has allowed women's caring labour to become a two edged sword. On the one hand if women forsake the role of caring for others before themselves, they forsake the limited amount of power inherent in that role and they have no other forms of power with which to replace it. On the other hand if women retain their caring labour, it oppresses them, as they perform tasks to meet the needs of others ahead of meeting their own needs (Henderson and Allen, 1991:101-102).

The ethic of care can have a detrimental effect on women's leisure (Shank, 1986:301-302; Shaw, 1992:284). Henderson and Bialeschki (cited in Shaw, 1992) suggest that the ethic of care may lead some women to feeling that they are not entitled to leisure in the same way as other people, especially men, who are in paid labour. Consistently giving the family's leisure needs a higher priority than their own may lead women to losing their "sense" of entitlement to 'my space' (Shaw, 1992) and thus be denied the "individual benefits" that accrue to self from leisure (Henderson and Allen, 1991:101). Henderson and Allen (1991:104-105) note that the ethic of care may also affect leisure choices. For instance women may desire a holiday away from the family, but feel morally obligated to holiday with the family. Yet the ethic of care, according to Henderson and Allen (1991:105) can also be "empowering", affording a person control over their own leisure activities "according to (their) own terms and values".

Gilligan (1982:149) is of the view that women need to seek out an equilibrium between their own needs and those of others. Placing the care for self along side the care of others, enables women to exercise choices

that are compatible with the multi-faceted aspects of their lives (Gilligan, 1982) and gives them the freedom to seek out alternative leisure activities that may not embody patriarchal society's dictate of selflessly caring for others (Wearing, 1991:582).

While women usually find the idea of leisure being free from commitments to relationships largely foreign to their experience, this does not mean that they are unaware of the need for 'my space'. The Canadian women involved in Hunter and Whitson's research into leisure constraints valued nurturing relationships but were also cognisant of their need for more time and space for their own personal development, even if they were currently unable to obtain it (Hunter and Whitson, 1991:231).

Rituals such as Christmas or the annual family camping holiday provide predictable opportunities for family members to show that they care for one another (Bella, 1992:13). Nurturing the family's interpersonal relationships as well as "producing" the ritual itself, have been prescribed to women by familist and patriarchal ideologies (Bella, 1982:12-13). The large amount of work women put into these rituals, demonstrates not only the ethic of care but also the value placed on, and the enjoyment gained from, family leisure by women (Shaw, 1992:283).

The next chapter describes the research setting in which women who participated in this study found themselves during their family camping holiday ritual. Data collection techniques that underpin this study as well as research issues that evolved during the research process are discussed, particularly as they relate to interviewing and the unknown observer.



## CHAPTER 3

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### METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

This chapter outlines why the qualitative method of fieldwork was used for this study and gives details of how the method was applied. Many studies relating to household labour and women's leisure, including those conducted by Bella (1992), Davidson (1996), Dempsey (1997a), Goodnow and Bowes (1994), Hochschild (1989) and Oakley (1985) have used qualitative research methods.

#### Fieldwork

Combining research techniques such as observation and unstructured interviewing for the purpose of studying social phenomena is sometimes termed 'fieldwork' (Tolich and Davidson, 1999:3). Lofland and Lofland (1995:19) point out that participant observation and unstructured interviewing have a certain "mutuality" about them, with one enhancing the other. The aim of fieldwork is to create a consistent in-depth picture of the phenomena being studied through the integration of data gathered during observations and unstructured interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:2). A researcher can be more certain of any results gained from the study if consistency occurs between what is being said and what is being observed (Adler and Adler, 1994:382; Glancy, 1986:61; Tolich and Davidson, 1999:34). In addition, a triangulation of methods enables "the researcher can gain a more holistic view of the setting" (Morse, 1994:224).

Fieldwork research methods provide a depth and fullness of understanding which is unable to be matched by quantitative methods in terms of validity. This richness of understanding is brought about through the flexible, open ended nature of the fieldwork design as the researcher melds and reshapes the lines of enquiry during the data gathering phase (Adler and Adler,

1994:382). The knowledge thus gained is particularly valuable when there is limited theoretical and empirical knowledge on the research question (Campbell, 1970:227). Endowed with an aptitude to "maximise discovery and description" (Campbell, 1970), fieldwork can reveal the subtleties of human attitudes and behaviour (Babbie, 1986:240) that are not so easily discovered using other research techniques.

'Being there' in the field as a participant observer gives fieldwork its strong validity (Babbie, 1986:260). The setting is not contrived as can be the case with experimental research; nor can the deep, contextual results be called superficial. In taking on the same roles as the observed, the researcher can gain a clearer understanding of "those aspects of a situation which shape behaviour or contribute to the formation of various attitudes" (Campbell, 1970:231). However there is need for the researcher to be aware of the possible danger of over identifying with the observed, which may lead to a distorted interpretation of the data (Campbell, 1994). While no specific measures were put in place to guard against possible over identifying in this study, awareness of the possible problem and the short participant observation periods were considered to be sufficient safeguards. Adler and Adler (1994:381) note that over identifying can be partly overcome through using several observers. For this study though, use of multiple observers was not an option.

While fieldwork results have strong validity, they have a far lesser degree of generalisability and reliability than those obtained through quantitative methods (Babbie, 1986:261-262). This is not a concern for qualitative fieldwork where each researcher gives her/his own interpretation to what has been observed or spoken about in the research location during the data gathering exercise (Babbie, 1986:261). Another researcher may make different but just as valid interpretations as her/his own data gathering evolves during the research process. The fieldwork method, unlike quantitative methods, does not produce statistical analyses which could confirm the significance of observed patterns or trends (Adler and Adler, 1994:381). My goal is to provide sufficient clear and concise examples of these women's stories so as to allow the reader to see the path that led to my own conclusions.

Adler and Adler (1994:38) are of the view that generalisability of qualitative research can be enhanced if the observations are conducted systematically and repeatedly over different conditions to see if the same results or patterns occur. As this family camping holiday study is exploratory in nature and of short duration, no attempt was made to conduct observations along the lines suggested by the Adlers.

A study of outdoor activities such as a family camping holiday is well suited to participant observation (Campbell, 1970:227) as it can be conducted unobtrusively (Adler and Adler, 1994:382) without intruding on the people being observed (Glancy, 1986:62). As I did not want research requests to intrude on women while they were holidaying with their families participant observation was an attractive option. However the unobtrusiveness of such research can be a two edged sword. Even though the activities observed are being carried out in a public place such as a camping ground kitchen the observation may be interpreted as an invasion of privacy (Adler and Adler, 1994:388). To temper my desire to know with a sensitivity to the privacy needs of the unknowing public (Adler and Adler, 1994) I was prepared at all times to identify myself and the research focus if approached. Furthermore the jotting down of notes in public was only carried out when the situation made writing an acceptable and natural activity in which to indulge.

Fieldwork was not the only qualitative method considered for this study. The phenomenological approach using semi-structured interviews as Davidson did in her Australian study was also examined. So too were the use of time-use diaries.

### **Phenomenological approach**

This approach seeks to find how meaning is constructed in experiences; in Davidson's case the experiences of labour and leisure for women when holidaying with young children (Davidson, 1996:89). Davidson's study led her to conclude that women "find value, meaning and relaxation in these experiences, even in spite of the limited emotional and physical support for them to access holidays" (Davidson, 1996:102).

This qualitative research method would have met the first of the two research aims of this current study (to develop an understanding of how New Zealand women experience household labour and leisure while on a camping holiday). Being a non-causal approach however, it would not have enabled me to achieve the second aim of tentatively explaining why the patterns found relating to household labour and leisure persist.

### **Time-use diaries**

Writing up time-use diaries both as a single method and as part of a triangulation of methods could have revealed much useful information about how much time was spent on leisure and on household labour both behind the caravan door or tent flap, so to speak, and outside, as well as what household labour tasks were performed.

This technique though is not without its drawbacks. When time-use diaries are used as a single research method the researcher is unable to follow up on points of interest such as task and responsibility issues and Deem (1986:88) notes that such diaries do not provide a good understanding into the various relationships between men and women which underlie housework and leisure. Recording the time spent each day on various activities while camping with the family may be seen by women as an intrusion into the family holiday. Furthermore, Shelton and John (1996:301) report that it can be difficult to get respondents to complete time-use diaries during major holidays. While some researchers report that the time-use diary method is "relatively robust" (Harvey cited in Shelton and John, 1996) there is a difficulty in how to record housework tasks which are performed simultaneously (Nichols, Warner, both cited in Shelton and John, 1996). Due to possible problems such as these outlined here, it was therefore decided not to use time-use dairies for this study.

This does not mean though that time-use diaries have no place in research on household labour, especially in its intersection with family and individual leisure. Some valuable research has already been produced using time-use diaries. For instance Shaw (1985:272) arranged for married couples to complete a two day time-use diary to gain an understanding of the effects of various variables including "family workload" on leisure time.

Each couple was then interviewed. Shelton (1992:22) also researched time spent on housework, but instead of asking respondents to complete time-use dairies, she analysed time-use data already collected in two different studies conducted by other researchers.

Another problem with time-use diaries gets at the heart of this study. Who would fill in the diary? Would it be the men's task or the women's responsibility? I now turn to describing the research setting.

### **The setting**

The data for this ethnographic study, was collected over the summer and early autumn of 1998 in various New Zealand camping grounds. Participant observation took place in one large commercial camping ground and one small remote camping ground, both of which were known to be popular with families. The individual women interviewed had camped in a variety of commercial or remote camping grounds in New Zealand, although these were not necessarily the same camping grounds where the participant observations took place.

Camping grounds usually consist of communal and private space. Payment of a camping fee entitles campers to use the provided communal facilities as well as roads and walkways within the grounds. The fee also entitles each camping family to their own private space on which to erect a tent or park a caravan or other type of camping vehicle.

The commercial camping ground provided kitchens in which campers could prepare food, cook and wash their dishes. There were also several ablution blocks, laundry blocks with coin operated automatic washing machines and clothes driers, and a shop. The remote camping ground which catered for those who wished to 'get away from it all' was small and lacked electricity. There were no kitchens, showers, laundries or hot water. At both camping grounds cold water was supplied via several taps dotted throughout the grounds. While almost all the camping sites at the commercial camping ground were occupied during my summer school holidays stay, the sites at the remote camping ground were approximately a quarter occupied due



partly to participant observations at the latter taking place during a less popular camping period, namely the Easter school holidays.

The two camping grounds were occupied almost exclusively by families of European origins camping in either tents, caravans or mobile homes. This made it easy for me and my husband, middle aged pakehas camping in a tent, to blend in with the other campers. Only one family that may have identified themselves as Maori was seen camping. On no occasion was I approached by campers curious to know what I was doing, even though I engaged in informal conversations unrelated to the substance of this study with some campers. The lack of curiosity may have been due largely to all jotted notes being recorded either in private in the tent or the car, or in situations where other people were either writing or reading thus assisting my blending in to the setting.

Approximately forty per cent of the occupied sites at the commercial camping ground contained tents, ranging from two person 'pup' tents to large tents that featured two or three separate 'rooms' and a porch. Small, medium and large caravans were parked on approximately a little less than sixty per cent of the occupied sites with the remaining approximately two to three per cent containing mobile homes. While caravans still dominated the occupied sites at the remote camping ground, there were more mobile homes than at the commercial camping ground. Most of these appeared to have their own self contained cooking, showering and toileting facilities. Approximately thirty per cent of the occupied sites contained tents, again ranging from two person 'pup' tents to the large multi-room tents.

In a camping situation it is most difficult to determine people's class position purely from observations. Neither the type of camping equipment such as a tent or a caravan nor the location of the camping ground can be relied upon to accurately indicate class position. Camping is a great leveller as far as some campers were concerned. As one of the informants, Tessa, camping with four children, who annually went to the same remote camping ground told me:

*Everyone is on an equal footing. You know, if people have a big flash house or they've got a terrible little house or they've got all the problems at home, they've gone and everyone is*



*the same when they are camping. So you don't actually see people for what they have got. You see people for what they are. The differences are not there. Everyone is on the same level.*

Due to the lack of reliable indicators and also because the central variable in this study is gender, no attempt has been made to determine the class position of campers encountered during the participant observation phase of data gathering.

### **Participant observations**

Participant observation, as part of the fieldwork method used in this study, involved me in camping for three days at the commercial camping ground and two days at the remote camping ground. It was originally intended that this observation period would be approximately seven to ten days long and that only one camping ground would be observed. Due to a change in my own family holiday arrangements, and the lack of facilities available at the camp site for me to transcribe my "jotted notes" (Tolich and Davidson, 1999:129) into amplified field notes, code, and then interpret them, I decided to undertake the observations at two different time periods. This change of plan enabled me to carry out the second set of participant observations at a remote camping ground.

To gain access as a participant observer, I paid camping fees entitling me to use the communal facilities and to my own private space on which to erect a tent. After arrival at each camping ground I sought out the manager in order to advise her/him about the nature and purpose of my study and that I could be observing what other campers were doing. In both cases the managers gave their verbal approval for participant observation and did not place any restrictions on me. Not only were they given an assurance that no campers would be approached for an interview, they were also assured that any informal conversations with campers that moved in the direction of the study would not be allowed to develop further. Instead, I would identify myself and the nature of my research before gaining the camper's permission to enable a follow up contact to be made once the camper had returned home. This arrangement was proposed in order to avoid formal research intruding on a family holiday.

Informal conversations did occur between me and the campers but none of these people's names were recorded. Such conversations were always initiated by the campers but no doubt encouraged a little by me through a friendly smile and perhaps through me being seen as a fellow camper due to my being dressed in normal camping attire of shorts and t-shirt. While no conversations resulted in me declaring myself as a researcher on one occasion I did give serious consideration to identifying myself. I reasoned however that if I declared my participant observation status to my neighbour in order to overcome the ethical dilemma of 'unknown observer' I may have created a 'spied on' feeling for my neighbour and upset her holiday.

Directly opposite my camp site was a woman camping with her six to eight year old daughter. One day she approached me regarding coins for the washing machines and at her instigation we engaged in conversation about camping. My field notes record the dilemma I found myself in:

*On the one hand I wanted to be friendly to this woman but I did not want to overstep the ethical mark of gaining information from her without her consent. Yet at the same time I felt that if I declared by research focus to her she may have felt 'spied on' for the rest of the time she was camping opposite me and thus I could ruin her holiday. In addition I was aware that she had no other adult with her to either talk over any concerns she may have about having me opposite her, or to engage in ordinary everyday conversation. The only way I could see out of this dilemma was to talk with her as if the topic of my research focus never existed and not to record anything she said once I became aware that the conversation was getting 'deeper'.*

No matter how well a researcher has prepared for the field the unexpected will still occur due to the emergent nature of fieldwork (Lofland and Lofland, 1995:30). It is this emergent nature that makes fieldwork with its participant observations and unstructured interviewing so applicable for exploratory research such as this study.

The participant observations, which centred around experiencing and observing the daily life of camping families, covered a time span from morning (8 a.m.) to late evening (10 p.m.) with the duration of the observations ranging in time from about five minutes to one hour. To give some focus to the observations, a guide was constructed (see Appendix I) prior to my observations commencing. Throughout the time span the observations were interspersed with me either retiring to my tent to write up full jotted notes from memory, or taking 'time out' from being an observer. Even so, if an interesting event occurred while I was taking 'time out', as did happen on one occasion, it was noted mentally and jotted notes were written up as soon as possible.

Full jotted notes were generated from events occurring while carrying out usual camp routines such as preparing food, cooking, washing dishes and washing clothes. Ambling slowly past camping sites as though taking a walk, sitting on the beach, or sitting outside my tent also provided good observational sites. The latter two sites provided an opportunity during observations to jot down notes on a letter writing pad, appearing, I hoped, as though I was writing personal letters. Sitting in the car listening to the radio on the one wet morning I encountered, provided an excellent position for observing activities people engaged in outside of the confines of their tent or caravan when it rained. It also enabled me to make jotted notes unobtrusively. None of the notes made identified either the camp or the names of campers.

### **Unstructured interviews**

The second part of this qualitative study involved unstructured interviewing with thirteen women who had been on a camping holiday with their families.

All except one of the interviews took place during the interval between the first and second set of participant observations. The final interview which was with a woman who regularly camps with her family at a remote camping ground, took place after the remote camping ground observations had been completed. Staging the interviews in this manner enabled me to

follow up on points noted during the observations and interviews that required clarification.

Two methods of obtaining a sample of women who had been on a camping holiday with their families were used. Snowball sampling of four women whose names had been suggested to me and who later agreed to be interviewed, involved me in writing to the women enclosing an information sheet and a note setting out their rights (see Appendices II, III and IV). The information sheet advised them what the study was about, how the interview would be conducted and who was conducting the study. They were also given an assurance regarding the confidentiality of their names and the removal of any other information from final documents that could lead to their identification. This point is particularly important considering that the size of the New Zealand population is no more than that of many small overseas cities (Tolich and Davidson, 1999:77).

The remaining nine women in the total sample were obtained through writing to six early childhood education centres, primary and intermediate schools (see Appendix V) requesting that a short notice be placed in their next newsletter to parents. Enclosed with each letter was a suggested short notice about the study (see Appendix VI), who was conducting it and why, and a section asking women who were prepared to be interviewed to contact me. Notices for staff and parent notice boards were also enclosed (see Appendix VII). Fourteen women phoned me. The last five were not interviewed due to the number exceeding my sampling total.

The prospective informants were then sent a letter along with an information sheet on the study and a note setting out their rights (see Appendices III, IV and VIII). A few days later a follow-up telephone call to see if the prospective informant was still willing to take part in the study was made and all of the women agreed to be interviewed. Once consent forms were completed (see Appendices IX and X) eight face to face interviews and five telephone interviews took place using an interview guide (see Appendix XI).

Recording the telephone interviews involved me in using two telephones simultaneously. The receiver of one was placed next to a micro cassette

recorder while the other was used by me for speaking and listening. For face to face interviews the micro cassette recorder was placed as unobtrusively as possible to the side rather than directly in front of the informants. Household labour was carried out during the interview by two women, both of whom felt the necessity to ask if I minded them making tomato sauce and ironing clothes while being interviewed.

Jotted notes on the main points were taken during all the recorded interviews to act as a backup in case the recording failed for some reason, and also to aid my concentration on what the informant was saying. As Tolich and Davidson (1999:119) point out, tape recording of interviews can lead to complacency. Instead of concentrating on listening, the interviewer may mentally concentrate on the next question to be asked, missing the opportunity to ask follow up questions.

During the face to face interviews two informants involved their husbands to varying degrees. The first woman asked her husband, who was within hearing distance, to answer a question relating to why the clothes washing while camping was her job and not his. The second woman invited her husband who came into the room, to take part in the interview. The resultant two way discussion between them provided me with an insight into how this husband saw household labour while on a family camping holiday.

The questions contained in the unstructured interview guide (see Appendix XI) acted as a flexible outline of points to ask about. Exactly the same questions were not asked each time. Rather, the framing of them was adjusted to fit in with the informant's 'conversation' with me as I endeavoured to encourage them to speak freely in their own way. This enabled me to explore new points arising out of the analysis of the data collected. For instance, during the interviews it became apparent that being together as a family while camping was an important consideration for the women, yet in the initial questions developed for the research this was not considered. Also it became apparent from the interviews that participant observation should include a remote camping ground as several informants camped in such grounds. The flexible format of fieldwork



enabled these new lines of thought to be accommodated within the existing research.

At the conclusion of the interview, the women were offered a copy of the transcript and advised they could decide how the tape would be disposed of. Two women requested a transcript which they were asked to check and advise me of any alterations they would like made. No alterations were requested, although in one case further information was given to me. All women decided that how the tape was disposed of was up to me. Therefore, after transcription, each tape was wiped. Finally a thankyou letter (see Appendix XII) was sent to each informant.

Of the thirteen women interviewed, one was a sole parent. Although I set out to interview women from only two parent families this particular interview was included in the study because it enabled me to see the differences as well as the samenesses between that informant's camping experience and that of women where a man was part of the family camping holiday. All the women interviewed were Pakeha. They ranged in age from the early thirties to the mid forties and each had at least one child under the age of thirteen years. All the women were responsible for seeing that the housework and the child care work were carried out at home. Three combined this with full time paid employment and five with part time paid employment. The part time and full time paid employment occupations ranged from professional positions to semi-skilled positions.

During the course of planning the interviews I became aware of the issue of reciprocating interviewing and I now move on to outlining this issue and how I dealt with it.

### **Reciprocating interviewing**

Interviewing, whether it be of the more closed structure style such as survey interviewing, or of the more open, unstructured style as used in this study, is not usually a reciprocal process but rather an hierarchical one, placing the informant in the "subordinate position" (Fontana and Frey, 1994:369). Oakley (1981:38) is of the view that this is brought about through traditional masculine interviewing conventions regarding 'proper'



interviewing where gaining information and therefore emphasising the interviewer's needs is seen to be of greater value than giving information that meets the informant's needs (Oakley, 1981:40). She asserts that such conventions place a higher value on "objectivity and detachment" and a lesser value on "subjectivity and involvement" (Oakley, 1981:38). The former coincide with male cultural values and the latter with female cultural values (Oakley, 1981; Tolich and Davidson, 1999:49).

As the interviewer usually defines the roles of the interviewer and informant she/he therefore has the power to determine whether the relationship will be one of hierarchy or one of equality (Oakley, 1981:40), involving some form of reciprocation during the interview. During the usual interviewing process there is no reciprocation on the part of the interviewer, who has been trained not to give her/his own opinions or to answer direct questions (Fontana and Frey, 1994:369). The "guided conversation" to use Lofland and Lofland's term for an unstructured (or intensive) interview (Lofland and Lofland, 1995:18), is not a real conversation at all according to Oakley. Instead she regards it as a pseudo conversation as it lacks the warmth and personality exchange characteristic of conversation (Oakley, 1981:32-33).

Oakley (1981:42) endeavoured to overcome this hierarchical one way conversation dilemma when she interviewed women for her study concerned with the transition to motherhood. When women asked her questions during interviews she answered their questions, responding in a woman to woman manner. Oakley felt this was one way she could establish a more equitable relationship and give something back to the women who were prepared to share their personal and intimate matters with her (Oakley, 1981:43). While answering questions, especially informational ones, does not necessarily establish reciprocity (Ribbens, 1989:584), such a method does acknowledge that the informant as well as the interviewer have needs, albeit different, within the interview situation.

While this study did not ask questions of such an intimate nature as Oakley's study did, none-the-less the women informants were prepared to share details about their private lives with me. I therefore resolved that if the women asked me questions about my camping experience or personal

life I would answer as best I could. However I would not volunteer information as it may interrupt the flow of information from the women or be unwelcomed by them (Ribbens, 1989:584).

This departure from conventional interviewing enabled me to work towards some form of reciprocation in a very small way with women who were prepared to share not only their personal information with me but also their hospitality, including cups of tea and biscuits. It also helped to establish a more equal footing between us, lending some caring qualities to what may otherwise be seen as mechanical interviews.

Interviewing terms such as 'informant' or 'respondent' according to Oakley (1981:35) can clearly indicate whether or not the interviewing relationship is seen as involving equality. As I was seeking to establish some form of equality in the interviewing relationship in this study, I chose to use the word 'informant' to indicate that I saw the person being free to decide what information to give me, in an atmosphere tilted towards equality.

During one interview a woman asked whether putting up the tent with my husband strained our relationship. My reply, which exposed a personal part of my life to a stranger, developed into a two-way personal conversation which, while I recorded it on tape, I did not transcribe it as I felt uncomfortable doing so. I found myself justifying my stance on the grounds that the information I supplied to the informant did not strictly relate to the research. Another woman at the end of the interview engaged me in a conversation about why I was not interviewing men as well as women for this study and then discussed studying for a degree extramurally. This time I had no hesitation in transcribing my reply which centred around a non-personal part of my life.

In seeking to account for my own inconsistencies, it occurred to me that while I was prepared to take other women's personal worlds out into the public domain (with their permission and confidentiality of their names assured), I was not prepared to give permission to take my personal world out to the public where it could be identified with me. Putting aside the issue of confidentiality that also arises here, I, as interviewer, had the power to decide what personal information about informants' lives was

exposed thus placing me in a dominant hierarchical position. Even though Oakley, (1981:41) argues that an equality of relationship between interviewer and informant can be established through shared gender, this does not address the 'power to decide what to expose' issue which cuts across gender.

Cotterill (1992:604) is of the view that once the researcher begins to analyse and interpret the data gathered in the field, the researcher holds the power and therefore has the responsibility of accurately representing the informants' accounts, knowing that informants may not always agree with the final interpretations (Cotterill, 1992). Perhaps this whole matter is best summed up by Ribbens (1989:590) when she says:

*Ultimately we (researchers) have to take responsibility for the decisions we make, rather than trying to deny the power that we do have as researchers.*

Out of the interviews and participant observations came a growing mountain of typed transcripts and field notes which needed coding. This consisted of marking (or coding) sections of each transcript or field note to indicate the general topic area, for example 'barbecuing', 'child care work', 'leisure' or 'packing up'. Information needing a follow up with subsequent interviews or observations, or points for improving data collection were also noted before photocopies of the coded material were cut up and filed in individual folders according to the codes. The material in each file was then used to generate the description and analysis of household labour and leisure when the family was on a camping holiday.

In the next chapter, the first of two snapshots capturing the family camping holiday of Sharon and the other women who participated in the study, I show that while some family members performed some self-allocated and imposed tasks, the ultimate responsible for household labour while camping still fell to the women and this affected the way they experienced such a holiday.

## **CHAPTER 4**

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### **THEIR TASKS: HER RESPONSIBILITY**

A family camping holiday brings about a temporary change not only in the location of the family but also a change in the context of household tasks and the responsibility for ensuring that they are performed. Such changes are often perceived as indicating that a life of leisure, albeit a temporary one, is under way with the performance and management of any essential camping household labour tasks being shared. This present chapter aims to expose such myths through exploring aspects of household labour that accompany the family on their camping holiday, including preparations for the holiday and unpacking afterwards.

The chapter is chronologically organised, beginning with the women's stories of how they experienced pre-camping preparations and setting up on the camp site. It then moves on to relate their experiences centred around the themes of daily 'house'keeping tasks, food and child care before rounding off with experiences of de-establishing the family camp and the inevitable return home.

#### **Getting Established**

Camping ground facilities impacted on holiday household labour, determining not only the amount of time and effort devoted to such labour but also what food and equipment to take. While some campers arrived at the site with fridges and automatic hot water jugs, others brought gauze covered food safes which they hung in a nearby tree and blackened kettles for suspending over an open fire.

A 'tried and true' list of what to take, and boxes of camping equipment stored in the garage between holidays, were the backbone of many families'

camping preparations. Checking the equipment over and locating missing items were tasks often allocated to different family members. Katie, who usually went camping in a remote area with her husband, two children and two youths, was anxious that everything was packed. She said:

*I've got the list and Angela and Russell (Katie's teenage daughter and husband) check it and it is all ticked off. But I then personally go and tick it off myself so that I know that everything is there.*

While the task of initially checking was Angela's and Russell's, and important though it was, the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that everything was packed was Katie's. She was the manager of the task. If either Angela or Russell failed in their task to pack everything Katie who had the ultimate responsibility would do their work for them. Most pre-camping tasks exhibited this style of gendered division of labour.

Barbara, an experienced camper, told me about who did what when she and her husband Ken packed up for camping:

*So he (Ken) gets it (the tent) out and checks it over before we go. He likes to put it up to make sure that everything is okay. And he does all that sort of stuff while I do **the inside stuff**. I have a huge list of things and I just work through the list in between jobs....I pack the food and that type of thing but Ken packs it in the trailer.*

Here the less visible, inside tasks of packing household items and food and assembling everything ready for loading into the car and trailer appeared to be 'women's work'. In Barbara's case these tasks were sandwiched between other household labour tasks and bore characteristics such as 'open-ended', 'semi-visible' and 'side by side tasks'. Such tasks are often regarded as "feminine tasks" (Dempsey, (1997a:36). Ken, like most of the husbands/partners of the women interviewed, performed the "masculine" (Dempsey, 1997a) more visible, outside tasks with well defined boundaries that could be completed in a larger dedicated time block free from constant interruptions. It was 'men's work' to check over the vehicles and the tent before loading everything into the trailer and car.



Where young children were in the family it was 'women's work' to pack the children's clothes and personal belongings. Women frequently packed the clothes for older children as well. However with youths and men (with one exception) they were expected to undertake this personal task themselves. In the case of the one exception, Mike, his wife Alison packed his clothes to avoid him "pack(ing) the wrong clothes".

Before leaving home, camping families usually purchased groceries, often using a list developed over the years or alternatively a list was prepared as the holiday approached. The responsibility for planning these lists and purchasing the groceries was left to women in all but one instance. It became their imposed task. Even where husbands were sharing in creating the list, this 'sharing' was more aligned with helping with the task rather than accepting the responsibility for the family's grocery needs. Pam who was in part time paid employment explained their family's procedure:

*We usually do the list together. We do that over a few days. I might write some things down and then he might add to the list things that he wants me to buy. Then I usually go shopping as I have more time.*

Having the time was the given reason why most women and one man did the shopping. Yet research continually shows that women's total labouring time per day is much greater than that of men (Chambers, 1986:319; Deem, 1986:103; Dempsey, 1997a:65; Shaw, 1994:10; Shelton and John, 1996:299-300). Hochschild (1989:3) estimates these extra hours total one extra month of 24 hour days per year. Although the women in the present study said they shopped for the groceries because they had the time, in reality it was just another imposed task for which they accepted responsibility and sandwiched into an already demanding day.

Katie who needed to shop for sufficient groceries to last three weeks for two adults, two children and two youths, described her grocery shopping experience in the following way:

*It is a huge effort and it's quite a big job. I went to the new supermarket and would you believe it they don't take 'Visa'*



*and I had no other money and I had to leave it all there. It had taken me over an hour to get it. I was nearly in tears.*

Shopping for groceries was hard work but not all the women found the grocery shopping an unpleasant experience like Katie did. Pam described it as "fun" and found it more relaxing than normal grocery shopping.

The task of packing the trailer and car though was not seen by any of the women as a simple relaxing one. In discussing the packing arrangements for the camping holiday, Barbara, whose husband packed the trailer each year, concluded:

*Really it is a marathon exercise and it causes all sorts of conflicts and it is a real performance trying to fit it all in.*

This rising stress level that Barbara talked about was commented on by several women.

For Leanne, who went camping with her husband and three children at the same remote site each year, the stress level became apparent not prior to departure but when she and her family tumbled out of the car at the camp site, after a three hour journey. Much of this drive was over a dusty, winding road. She recalls:

*Well, God! (Sigh). You get two older children demanding to go for a swim and that they are hungry...and they get out and basically we spend probably the next two hours unpacking the cars....We then put up the tent, blow up the air beds and put everything away.*

In Leanne's story meeting the demands of children while striving to establish a makeshift holiday home had little relationship to leisure. Instead it had the hallmarks of household labour as did unpacking and setting up camp. These latter two activities took some families all day and usually involved a gendered division of labour. Again men performed the visible outside tasks of positioning the caravan or erecting the tent and unpacking the trailer and car with assistance from the family. Men also set up outdoor tables, chairs and the barbecue sometimes in positions as directed by the women. Women's invisible labour related to making up

beds, unpacking the boxes and bags from the trailer and car, finding a place for everything and accepting responsibility for remembering where everything was put.

Karen was uncharacteristic of the women interviewed for this study. A camper since childhood, she took the lead role in erecting the tent while her husband helped. For her this arrangement was practical as she knew what to do whereas her husband, who was new to camping, did not. Practicality, and a reflection of their roles at home were the reasons given by Barbara for the gendered division of labour associated with getting established at the camp site. Being of small build herself, she reasoned that it was far more practical for her husband to do the heavy lifting while she turned the tent into a temporary holiday home.

Christine who performed the vast majority of household labour at home echoed the idea that camping preparation roles flowed on from the division of everyday work performed at home. Because of her household labour experience at home she felt she achieved a higher standard of holiday household labour than her husband would have.

Once a family has set up its makeshift home on the camping site it can settle in to its holiday. It is this phase that families considered to be what a family camping holiday 'was all about'. So how did the women in this study experience what camping 'was all about'?

### **Settling In**

It may be thought that having established a makeshift home, temporary liberation from both paid and unpaid labour would commence. However the family's requirements for meals, clothes, beds and child care and their expectation that a certain level of hygiene, tidiness, safety and emotional care would prevail while camping, necessitated the continued performance of unpaid household labour tasks and the exercising of ultimate responsibility for these tasks.

The family camping holiday was characterised by an expected absence of routines imposed through paid labour, schooling and scheduled activities.

It enabled the holiday household labour to be performed at a more relaxed pace, with less demanding standards and more people potentially available to share in the tasks and accept some of the ultimate responsibility. These changes in place and pace Davidson says can lead to differences in the processes used in performing the tasks and in the results achieved, compared with performing the same tasks back home (Davidson, 1994:99-100). These tasks can be divided into three spheres of inside, outside and daily tasks (such as washing clothes). As meal preparation, cooking and dishes span all three, it is dealt with separately. Child care is also dealt with separately.

### **Inside the tent**

The nature of several camping tasks - tidying up, making beds and sweeping the floor - required them to be performed primarily inside the tent or caravan. For the families involved in this study, the limited space in the tent or caravan often made tidiness an issue and keeping everything orderly frequently meant jobs for the whole family, especially where the children were considered old enough to help. The children's involvement however primarily revolved around making their own bed and keeping tidy any space regarded as their own. Supervision to ensure that these self care tasks were carried out satisfactorily was a task fairly evenly divided between the men and women who were camping with the children. However, tasks such as making the marital bed or sweeping and tidying the communal spaces in the tent or caravan were more likely to fall to women.

The arrangements in Erin's family as to who performed what housekeeping tasks, for example, were typical of many camping families. Erin, camping with her husband Murray and four children told me:

*I'll sweep out and tidy up and that sort of thing. Murray will often check on the children's beds and sometimes he'll make the younger children's ones, but I always do ours. The older children have jobs to do, but being children they will often get away on you before you have managed to get them to do their jobs....Well, sometimes I'll fetch them back and then sometimes I'll just do the job myself.*

While some tasks were imposed on members of Erin's family, if they failed to do them, it became Erin's responsibility to follow up and make sure that

someone (often herself) performed the task. This is the fundamental difference between self-allocated and imposed tasks, and ultimate responsibility. In the small confines of a tent or caravan the performance of many of the inside tasks could not be left to a time best suited to the individual on whom the task had been imposed. This made it imperative that the person holding the ultimate responsibility either ensured the individual performed the task more or less straight away or that the task was imposed on some one else. Frequently in this study women imposed the task on themselves.

Recognising that for the smooth running of the camping holiday a particular task needed to be performed and then self-allocating, was a pattern used by a few couples as a way of deciding on the allocation of some tasks. Sally, who went camping as an alternative to holidaying with her husband's parents explained to me:

*We don't sit and discuss it or say 'You do this and I'll do that.' We just do it as it needs to be done.*

For Tessa, camping with her husband Ray, two children and two youths, the experience was similar. She mentioned that Ray "likes the camp site tidy so he sweeps it out and tidies it up".

Self-allocating a task because the person felt it needed performing also meant that if neither of the couple chose to perform the task, it invariably became the responsibility of the woman. Because of the small number of self-allocated tasks undertaken by men, women tended to find themselves performing a large number of tasks.

In exercising their role of having the ultimate responsibility for all household labour tasks, women sometimes chose to impose a few tasks on family members as Erin did. The 'left over' tasks, of which there were usually many, were then performed by women. Leanne, camping with her husband Keith and three children explained:

*I always tidy the tent out every day. Like I always made the beds, got the kids' clothes, umm, swept all out, opened the tent windows. I would have done that every day. I got Roger to boil the water in the thermette on the fire. That was his job.*

In spite of doing these tasks daily, Leanne mentioned that she was prepared to accept a lesser standard while camping. She said:

*Well, if the tent didn't get swept out that day it wouldn't worry me but at home if something didn't get done like, umm, (pause) the dishes, it would annoy me....I mean some days we had the breakfast, lunch and tea dishes to do at tea time. Whereas that wouldn't happen if you are (sic) at home.*

While measures such as these reduced the immediate time involved in performing the tasks, sometimes the inconvenient circumstances under which they were eventually performed at camping grounds could result in no overall saving of time.

This situation of task allocation and ultimate responsibility which resulted in an inequality of labour time disadvantaging women, was not confined to tasks inside the tent. It was replicated in tasks performed outside the tent as well. Refuse disposal and the supply of water were two cases in point.

### **Outside<sup>1</sup> the tent**

Refuse was often placed by the family in household plastic buckets or in large supermarket type plastic bags. Neither the weight of the refuse nor the distance it needed to be carried to the refuse collection point made it an impossible task for older children, youths or adults to perform. While such people in most families did perform this task, in two families women indicated that it was they who performed the task, not through choice though but through no-one else performing it. Christine described to me how she came to be the one to usually dispose of the refuse:

*Yeh, it's (refuse disposal) anyone who wants to do it. No one person. I must say I did it most of the time this holiday, because it was over-flowing and it used to brass me off so I would go and get rid of it.*

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<sup>1</sup>Performing household labour tasks outside does not convert them into outside domestic division of labour tasks. The former are tasks that relate directly to the daily running of the household, such as meals and child care while the latter relate indirectly to the daily running of the household such as mowing lawns, tending the garden and repairing equipment.



As Christine was ultimately responsible for household labour, when no-one else performed a task, she had to do it.

Alison who was camping with two sons and her husband felt annoyed at having the responsibility for emptying the refuse bucket and refilling the water tank imposed on her while the males in her family pursued leisure. She talked of how she solved this problem:

*I got sick of emptying the slops bucket and I got sick of topping up the water tank because my husband was really good at, um, (slight pause) um socialising.... I put my foot down and now we all have our jobs. No. I just told them....He (son) is a nice strapping young man who can lift the slops bucket and fill the water tank so that is his job.*

The irony of Alison's situation was that in spite of endeavouring to pass the responsibility to other family members by imposing the tasks on them (which they did perform), there was no way she could absolve herself from the ultimate responsibility. As the person ultimately responsible for holiday household labour and therefore responsible for ensuring an adequate standard of hygiene was maintained, she still needed to oversee the performance of the refuse disposal and water supply tasks she allocated to other family members.

Carrying water from an outside cold water tap to the tent or caravan and later carrying away the waste water was a labour intensive camping task usually performed by men. The general inconvenience of carrying water was further compounded when water needed to be heated before use. While electricity supplied to the site or the use of bottled gas made the heating of water relatively quick and simple, the task became more labour intensive if reliance was placed on heating the water over a wood fuelled fire as so often happened in remote camping grounds. Karen, camping with two children, commented on the arrangements she and her husband Richard made to keep the fire burning in order to have a ready supply of hot water. She said:

*We heated the water by fire so whenever you went to the toilet or the kitchen area or whatever, you put a log of wood*



*on the fire and the men tended to cut all the wood up and they had to split it with an axe and dry it out and then put it in the fire to get it going to heat the water.*

While such arrangements to maintain a supply of hot water were labour intensive, they were usually tasks men allocated to themselves and were usually not seen as a chore by the men involved. Tessa who went camping with two children and two youths talked about her husband Ray's involvement in heating water for household use. She said:

*He likes to go back to pioneer days over the fire. He will boil all the water up on the open fire and he will cart the water to the shower, you know. But he organises the showers for us, but he does it because he likes it. Well it is not a chore for him. It is a pleasure.*

Being able to choose to perform enjoyable tasks was not a position enjoyed by most of the performers of household labour tasks in this study. Such tasks were usually carried out through necessity rather than choice and pleasure. Irrespective of whether or not heating water over a fire was "a pleasure", the task of carrying the water mostly, but not always, fell to men or male youths. The exception which saw women carrying water was when the males failed to supply a sufficient quantity of it. Remedying this situation, just like remedying any other holiday household labour situation was the ultimate responsibility of women.

In remote camping grounds it was men who mainly filled solar shower bags each day with water and hung them in the sun. When needed at the end of the day, these were carried by men or women to the shower tent or cubicle and placed on an overhead hook. "Be quick and don't waste the water" instructions were sometimes reinforced by mothers whose task it appeared to be to monitor the length of time young children took to shower. The women thus exercised their ultimate responsibility of ensuring an adequate water supply for hygiene purposes was maintained .

Not all washing tasks required heated water. Washing the clothes daily required copious quantities of cold water. Again the responsibility for the

task fell to women. If this refrain of ultimate responsibility is laboured in this text, it was laboured first by these women.

### Daily tasks

Many commercial camping grounds provided coin operated automatic washing machines and driers which required the women to be present in the communal laundry for only two or three minutes, but no such home comforts were found in remote camping grounds. Here the washing was most likely done by hand in cold water using a tub or bucket and in the company of other women. Katie, who did the daily washing for the six people in her family while in a remote camping ground described the situation. She told me:

*I actually quite like washing. You go and stand there. There are lots of other ladies there every morning. You stand and all do your washing together and you help each other put it through the wringer and not many men go there. So it is actually like the old African ladies down by the river. So we go there and chat to people....I would rather do the washing than sweep the tent and make the beds and tidy up. Well when the children were little it was something I could do where I could think as I was doing it. It is just finding head space for me really.*

Washing clothes by hand was a task that Katie enjoyed even though it was more time consuming, produced a lesser standard of cleanliness than that achieved at home with a washing machine and involved more strenuous labour. Not only did it create an opportunity for her to enjoy the company of other women, it also created a temporary freedom for her from her family and space for herself and her thoughts.

Like Tessa's husband Ray, who as noted above enjoyed his self allocated task of heating water for the family over an open fire, Katie too chose to perform a task which she enjoyed. The difference however between Ray and Katie is that of ultimate responsibility. If Ray did not choose to maintain a supply of hot water, the responsibility for getting it done was not his because as a man he was not ultimately responsible for holiday household labour. For Katie though if she freely chose not to do the washing, it became her responsibility to either find someone else to do the

task or to impose it on herself. As a woman she was the one ultimately responsible for the holiday household labour.

Sally, camping with her husband and two children, felt that there was a degree of compulsoriness associated with the tasks that she performed for the family and saw the tasks "as things that just had to be done really".

While performing these compulsorily imposed tasks was not an issue for Sally, it was for Leanne when it came to doing the washing. Leanne who had been camping with her husband Keith and three children loathed doing the washing. Here are her comments:

*But its a chore, a real chore. I mean it was a chore, because, I mean. We struck a few years over there when it has poured with rain and we have actually run out of clothes. So it is like a case of having to do it on a nice day so that it dries and the kids have something semi-clean to wear. But I mean I would love not to have to do washing. Oh God! It would be wonderful.*

Like it or loathe it, while on holiday the washing had to be done in order to keep the family supplied with reasonably clean clothes. It was a task though with which a small number of the children or youths assisted.

Alison liked to achieve high standards with the clothes washing and preferred to do much of the work herself. She folded the clean washing because she "likes to know that things are folded properly". Even so, she delegated one helping aspect of the job to her two sons:

*The boys will go down and check that the washing machine is finished for me and they will bring it (the washed clothes) back but mother (Alison) does the washing and mother does the hanging out and mother does the bringing in and mother does the folding up and putting away.*

Pam, camping with two school age sons and husband Tony saw no reason why they should not participate in washing clothes expecting "the boys to wash their own underwear now that they are older. They also have to wash out their togs".

Barbara who ironed the family's clothes while I interviewed her at home, felt she was not justified in asking her two sons to wash their own clothes:

*I don't see other boys doing their own washing. I do it with the family washing. After all they need a leisurely holiday time too without too much work.*

The reasons the women gave as to why they performed the task of washing while on a family camping holiday were extremely varied. Barbara did the task because she felt that an absence of washing would give her two sons a more leisurely holiday, although they did not do the washing at home. Katie and Sally did it because it provided them with an opportunity to enjoy some social interaction with the other women in the communal laundry. In addition, Katie along with Alison, were dissatisfied other family members' washing standards. Christine found it easier and quicker to do the washing herself while Leanne, Leslie and Karen did it because they do it at home.

Keeping up the supply of clean clothes for the family in wet weather put pressure on the women. For Sally camping was a new experience and she talked about the lack of clean clothes in wet weather:

*Well, we had a bit of a melt down while it was raining. We ran out of knickers and sort of got thoroughly irritated by the show....Jim (husband) doesn't think about the consequences of whether or not we have clean clothes.*

Jim's non-concern about the standard of cleanliness of the clothes stemmed at least in part from it not being his responsibility. Christine and Leanne were also not concerned about the standard of cleanliness of the clothes while on a family camping holiday, even though the ultimate responsibility was theirs. Both acknowledged that they gave the clothes only a token wash. While the standard of cleanliness obtained might be considered unsatisfactory for life in suburbia, they were unperturbed with achieving a lesser standard while camping.

Irrespective of the desired standard of cleanliness, maintaining a supply of clothes for the family to change into was the task and ultimate responsibility of women. However, with some aspects of camping household labour, namely the barbecued dinner, men played a prominent

role. Does this lead them to having the ultimate responsibility role for such meals and thereby relieve women of that responsibility?

### **Food For Thought**

Meals were a complex and demanding task for campers involving gathering food together at home, purchasing other food items, preparing, then cooking and 'doing' the dishes afterwards. In addition meals also established a rhythm in daily camp life when the other normal rhythm makers of paid labour and school were absent.

The conditions under which food was prepared and cooked varied greatly, depending mainly on the camping ground. Remote camping grounds with their scarcity of 'mod cons' left campers to provide their own food storage and cooking facilities. Barbecues and gas or spirit fired cookers were then the rule, although some campers relied on open fires. To keep food cool, campers normally used 'chilly bins' packed with ice bought each day or two from the camp manager or they hung an air cooled food safe in a tree.

Commercial camping grounds, in contrast, provided communal fridges and cooking facilities. In many cases each camping site had its own individual electricity supply enabling campers to have their own fridge or stove or microwave if they wished. Most campers also used their own barbecues and spirit or gas fired stoves. What follows divides the food tasks into preparation and cleaning up.

#### **Preparing and cooking meals**

Camp meals were simple. Dinners frequently consisted of barbecued meat or fish, potatoes, easily prepared salads and maybe vegetables. Preparing food and cooking it, especially if a barbecue was involved, appeared to be gendered tasks with much of it based on an inside/outside dichotomy.

An analysis of who performed what labour tasks at the family camping barbecue shows that while most women prepared food inside their tent, caravan or the communal kitchen, most men cooked food outside on the barbecue. Women brought the prepared barbecue food outside and



sometimes gave verbal instructions to the men who were waiting anxiously by 'their' heated barbecue. The men then placed the food on the barbecue. With a glass of wine or a can of beer in one hand and barbecue tongs or a fish slice in the other, the men periodically turned the food over. One man added a dash of show'man'ship to the procedure. From across the way outside my own tent I watched. Before a small audience of children waiting for their dinner, the man tossed meat patties about 50 centimetres into the air and as the patties fell back onto the barbecue plate, the children cheered.

While women placed cutlery, plates and all the non-barbecued food on the outside table and supervised the serving of this food, the men served the barbecued food. At the conclusion of the meal, women usually cleaned up, assembled the dishes for washing and either washed the dishes or delegated the job to other family members. Cleaning the barbecue was done by the men, often much later in the evening. Such gendered behaviour was found in Cerullo and Ewen's study of family camping in the USA . They noted the existence of the same gendered inside/outside labour surrounding food (Cerullo and Ewen, 1984:41).

Men's labour at the barbecue was totally visible, often amounting to a public performance and gave the mistaken impression that the men were responsible for dinner. The interviews with women though revealed the men were helping while the ultimate responsibility of co-ordinating the meal and seeing that the various aspects were completed was the women's.

Barbara was under the impression that her husband Ken had most of the responsibility for the barbecue dinner and that her role was one of helping with the tasks. Here is what she said:

*Well in some ways Ken is doing the bulk of it (getting dinner) and I'm just helping. I mean he doesn't do everything like any dishes or things like that. The boys do them. Neither does Ken prepare the food. He cooks it.... Well I normally prepare the salads, get out the plates, set up stuff like that. Then I'll have a glass of wine and Ken will have a beer or something like that. You can enjoy it because you tend to relax more than when you are rushing around the home.*

Barbara not only prepared the food and made the salads, she also set the table for dinner. The boys did the dishes. Yet Ken, who put the food on the barbecue, periodically turned the food over and served it when it was cooked, was seen by Barbara as carrying out most of the tasks associated with the barbecue. The ultimate responsibility for the meal was Barbara's, even if she did not acknowledge it. If Ken refused to cook on the barbecue it would still be Barbara's responsibility to produce the evening meal for the family because as a woman it was her role to manage the holiday household labour.

The relaxed, slower pace of meals commented on by Barbara was linked by some women to the lack of time constraints felt throughout the camping holiday. Christine who went camping with her family in February because the camping ground was "half empty" at that time of the year, also spoke of the lack of pressure. Her comments were:

*There is no pressure....Like the biggie is that I just haven't got other things to, (pause) to, you know, think of. Like when I have finished this I have got to do such and such. And then I've got to be at school in half an hour and, you know. It is a more relaxed frame of mind and lack of pressure.*

Leanne, whose family were camping with another, explained how no time constraints affected their evening meal:

*A lot of the time the kids are exhausted so their tea was at five o'clock and our tea was at eight o'clock and we were still eating our tea at nine thirty at night. There is (sic) no time constraints. Yeh. Time is a big part of it.*

While lack of time constraints lead to a relaxed slower pace, the simplicity of the meals and help from men with some of the tasks were also said to contribute to the laid back atmosphere. Just as night followed day though, so too did cleaning up follow a meal.

### **Cleaning up afterwards**

The only dishwashers at the camping grounds were of the human type, some of whom queued at peak times for a sink in the communal kitchen

and having secured a sink, found a shortage of hot water. Others washed their dishes at their camp site, sometimes heating the water first on the barbecue or open fire and then pouring it into a bowl set up outside on a table.

Standards for doing the dishes varied. A casual approach was adopted by first time camper Sally and her husband who were camping with their two young children. Sally explained:

*In fact we often didn't dry the dishes at camping. We just sort of said 'Let's put them in a plastic bag and they will sort of dry themselves'.*

Reducing work standards while camping was a coping mechanism used by some women to create time for leisure activities. Others increased their standards. Sharon, like the other women, had the ultimate responsibility for family hygiene while camping. Concerned about the possible lack of cleanliness of communal kitchen facilities she cleaned all surfaces before use with copious quantities of 'Janola'. But this was not the only increased work standard she used to ward off possible holiday infections that could spoil the family's holiday. She explained to me that "it doesn't take that long for me to do the dishes....I like to know that the dishes are done in absolutely boiling water".

Unlike Sharon who did the dishes by herself, in most families it was a family affair. Even so, there appeared to be a set order as to who washed and who dried, giving tacit recognition that women were responsible for cleanliness. Whenever a woman, including a teenage woman, was involved, she washed. When women were absent but a man was present, he washed and the children dried. Children and male youths only washed dishes when no adults were present.

Doing the dishes is characterised by a lack of creativity and in Oakley's study it was the second most disliked housework task (Oakley, 1985:49). While one woman in the present study "got sick of doing the dishes", Leanne, who loathed washing clothes did not see washing dishes as a chore. She explained:

*We (Leanne and another woman camper) end up doing the dishes probably most of the time, but by then the kids are in bed and it is quite nice outside doing the dishes. I mean it is not actually a chore. So, no. It is actually fun.*

Leanne then went on to discuss the atmosphere that made it fun:

*I don't know actually. Ummm. (Pause). Because you are outside doing the dishes you are looking around at everyone else doing the dishes and the conversation is usually, 'Well, how are you?'. You know. Ummm. I don't know. Probably because we are with friends and it is like you are verbally flat out that you probably don't notice that you are doing dishes.*

The socialising opportunity that doing the dishes provided was the reason offered by Barbara as to why her husband who enjoyed talking with other people, sometimes did the dishes in the communal kitchen:

*Ken will sometimes do the dishes on the odd occasion. Like he will go over to the kitchen for some social interaction and that sort of thing. So he needs something to do over there.*

Doing the dishes for Ken appeared to be an ancillary task that he chose to do in order that he could socialise. For most women though, doing the dishes was the primary task involving little if any choice. Any socialising that took place was secondary, although socialising could have created a more congenial work atmosphere than the isolation experienced at suburbia's kitchen sink.

The ultimate responsibility for family meals while on a camping holiday lay with women. While the preparation, cooking and cleaning up afterwards were tasks that frequently involved many family members and men may have cooked aspects of the evening meal on the barbecue, these roles were task allocation ones, not ultimate responsibility ones. For some women the changed atmosphere under which they performed tasks made that task more enjoyable than at home. None-the-less family meals were work

performed for the benefit of the family's holiday. While all this went on though there were still children to be looked after.

### Child Care

Due to the less convenient circumstances of the camping ground and its generally more relaxed atmosphere, meeting child care needs while on holiday had the potential to affect the work load and stress level of the care givers. Generally, the intensity of child care reduces as the child grows, making caring for babies and preschool children in a family camping environment more time consuming work than the care of older self-managing children.

Caring for young children was compounded by the lack of fences around the family's camp site to keep preschool children safe. To prevent them from straying to another site or into the pathway of a moving vehicle some families erected a temporary fence made from wind break cloth. Vigilance was still required though.

The impact of young children on a camping holiday was talked about by Leanne who would like to have a child free holiday sometime in the future. She compared this year's holiday with those of several years ago:

*Well it's flat out. It used to be quite relaxing when it was just Keith and I. Like it was 'Let's go for a swim.' 'Let's read a book.' 'Let's do nothing.' But now it is, whenever it is a nice day, get up and have breakfast....do the washing and I make the beds, sweep out the tent and tidy it up.*

Camping with young children had a dramatic effect on the holiday. It substantially increased Leanne's labour and reduced the amount of time available for her to have leisure time of her own.

Sometimes both parents such as Pam and Tony shared the task of caring for their young children while camping. Even so, Pam, well used to young children through her paid employment, and her husband Tony found young children tiring work. She outlined their sharing arrangements:



*We used to take turns when they were little and we got tired. Tony would usually do the early morning shift as he is a very early waker. And then I would do the after lunch shift so I could sleep in the morning. He would have a rest in the afternoon. But now that they are older it is much easier because you don't have to be quite so vigilant.*

Just how demanding the care of young children can be while camping was mentioned by Katie's husband Russell, who at Katie's invitation joined in part of the interview. Here is what Russell said:

*When you've got a young family like we had three or four years ago, our work rate was enormous. Like we sometimes would not be able to get any time to ourselves until say half past ten in the morning. I mean when you look back you wonder why the hell do you do it.*

Katie added that the task of supervising their youngest son's leisure was shared on an "hour on hour off" basis. While such arrangements did free one parent temporarily from child care, splitting the supervision task prevented the parents from participating together in their own shared leisure.

As some interviews progressed it became apparent that for several women 'shared care' really meant sharing only the task of supervising children's leisure. Often such sharing took place while the family enjoyed a leisure activity together such as swimming. The intimate aspects of child care such as showering or toileting, or meeting the child's emotional needs were invariably tasks undertaken by the mother with the father helping as requested. Karen, camping with an emotionally dependent or "clingy" two year old and another child, explained the effect of being responsible for the task of caring for the two year old:

*Like if Richard (husband) wanted to go to the toilet he just went to the toilet. Whereas you know I had to make sure that Kylie (2 years old) knew where I was going otherwise she would start crying if she could not see Mum.*

With Kylie being emotionally reliant on Karen this severely restricted Karen's activities, and due to the camping ground facilities being less convenient than those at home, increased Karen's work load. Sickness struck Kylie and her sister while camping, adding even further to their mother's restrictions and work load. Karen recalls her feelings:

*I got sick of kids being sick....The first week I said that if I had to come back over this hill one more time (for medical attention) I will bring the tent and all. So the first week was a nightmare. I thought 'My God! Why did I ever come camping?'*

Young, sick children, one of whom was emotionally dependent on Karen, and the accompanying increased work load created a stressful situation for her when that time was purported to be one of leisure. The recognition that younger children were more demanding on the care giver was lived out in the leisure boating experience of some campers. The oldest children accompanied their fathers on boats while the younger children were left at the camp site under the watchful eye of their mothers.

While some of the women interviewed indicated that irrespective of the age of the child, its care while on a camping holiday was an equally shared task, the reality was that the ultimate responsibility still belonged to the women. Unlike the men, who could choose whether or not to participate in child care, that same choice was not available to women. Erin who went camping with her husband Murray and four children was a case in point. Sometimes she was left with the task of supervising the children while Murray relaxed although there did not appear to be a reciprocal arrangement. This is what she told me:

*Murray goes for a walk or a bike ride....He does get pleasure out of it though. He's allowed because he does work hard but I have to plan for that (his leisure absence) happening. Sometimes he will take one of the kids....I know the nature of my husband's work. He really needs a rest so I just let him have one and try to keep the children quiet.*

Even though back in suburbia Erin's total hours of labour, exceeded that of her husband's, (she is in part time paid employment and has responsibility

for the household labour), her entitlement to and need of leisure took second place. Further more, she performed extra child care tasks in order that he could enjoy his leisure.

Some women were quite aware that holiday child care was their task. Their husbands' role was helping with the task, with the men often helping more than at home because the holiday gave them more time. The reason the women gave as to why holiday child care was their task related to maintaining the status quo. Leslie who went camping with her husband Ralph and their two children felt she had no time during the day where she was 'child free'. She explained why the status quo prevailed in their family:

*I think being more aware of what the children are doing and where they are would be my role because that is just what I have always done. Well it would take more than a week's holiday for Ralph to get to know like that.*

Any thoughts that her husband may be able to develop some child care skills enabling him to assume some tasks while on holiday (and therefore by inference perform some child care tasks at home), were dismissed by Leslie who preferred the status quo even though the child care arrangements were unequal.

While child care work was seen as demanding, the work associated with packing up at the end of the family camping holiday was also demanding.

### **Homeward Bound**

All camping holidays eventually end. Once more everything was packed, loaded into the trailer and car and on arrival at home, unpacked, sorted, cleaned if need be and put away. Similar in many ways to packing up and getting established on the camp site at the beginning of the camping holiday, this homeward bound phase was seen by the women unambiguously as work involving both women and men and to a lesser degree older children and youths. Katie and her family occupied three tents for three weeks and when asked about packing up to return home, she said:

*Oh I hate it! Oh I can't bear it!. (Pause). It's awful!. It's so much work because we have so much stuff....We got up. We had breakfast. We probably started at nine o'clock in the morning and we arrived home (a three hour journey) at 7.15 at night.*

While most families did not take a goodly portion of the day to pack up, it was still seen by them as hard work. It required organisation to ensure that everything was packed correctly and to minimise stress, especially if the day was wet. Pam who usually camps for about four days at any one time had a coping mechanism to deal with the stress of packing up. She told me:

*If the kids are fighting its a bit difficult. So we generally try to work it out. Now last time I think I took the kids for a swim and Tony did some preliminary packing up. And then when we came back we did the tent together. Sometimes we have packed up together as a family if the kids are co-operative. Then sometimes we have packed up, just Tony and I if the kids are peaceful and playing. So we try to make it as low stress as we can.*

'Packing up together' was a description used by several women. It generally referred to men and women having separate and defined packing up roles. Christine, a regular camper at the same remote spot, talked about her family's packing up routine:

*It is the same for when we are unpacking. He just sort of goes for things like the barbecue and he dismantles the cooker and I just automatically go in and pack up the kids' clothes and, yeh. It is probably just what we would do at home. The sort of area. You know the old stereotype thing.*

Christine's 'old stereotype thing' revealed a gendered division of labour when packing up that was very similar to when they unpacked at the camp site at the beginning of their holiday. Again her tasks were performed mainly in private and were unseen by others while his were seen and therefore could be publicly acknowledged.

Back home after the family camping holiday, unpacking and putting everything back in its place reflected the pre-camping preparation roles. However arriving home was more than finding a place for everything. For Katie who camped at a remote site with no electricity it meant:

*To have a hot shower in a nice tiled shower. Hot water running! It is lovely! You know. Not this old concrete draughty thing with a solar bag hanging above you.*

Home was not a place of relaxation under a hot shower for Barbara who had been camping in a modern commercial camping ground. Rather it was busyness and tension that was on her mind when she arrived home:

*Well it is full on for me from the time I hit the door. I come back to book work for my clients, all the camping washing and unpacking, kids to get ready for school again and that type of thing. And you might have all those phone calls for Ken for work. You know clients wanting work done....I always find it hard going when I get home. You start to get all tensed up again.*

Busyness also caught up with Christine when she arrived home. Having been able to do the family washing only by hand in cold water at an isolated camping ground, life in suburbia now meant more demanding standards of clothes cleanliness leading her to "chuck(ing) whatever in the washing machine....everything needs washing when you come back home".

The need to wash 'everything' once the holiday was over was echoed by several women and it was women in all but one case that carried out this ritual. Although the post holiday wash was time consuming, for the women the task was able to be done in the comfort and convenience of their own home, using their own washing machine and warm or hot water if they chose. What they could not choose though was whether or not to perform the task. The ultimate responsibility for the washing was still theirs irrespective of the location being the camping ground or the home. With this change in location the lesser standards of cleanliness, the harder work and the inconvenience that were acceptable in the camping ground became unacceptable once the women returned home.



The tempo of suburbia was different. It was beating to the rhythm of routines and time pressures as women responded to the normal multiplicity of demands. The clean washing flapping on the clothes line reflected a form of 'normality' in suburbia and is still one of the few products of inside household labour that can be regularly viewed and admired by outsiders.

What about leisure though? After all is that not what family camping holidays are all about? The next chapter tells the stories of how the women in this study experienced leisure while on the family camping holiday and finishes with a brief examination of women's attitudes towards this type of holiday.

## **CHAPTER 5**

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### **LEISURE: MYTH AND REALITY**

Freely choosing a self-enhancing experience that gives a person a sense of 'my space' while on a family camping holiday can vary greatly between members of the same family. For Tessa it meant a half hour run, for Minette it meant resting on a bed while reading and for Leanne's preschoolers it included making sand castles at the beach. Within the women's narratives in this chapter are several instances of family members' leisure incorporating the labour of women, yet this labour may be defined as leisure for that woman. In other instances women themselves classify aspects of their labour as leisure with labour and leisure becoming entwined, as they, for example, simultaneously supervise children and sunbathe and chat with other women. This does not mean that the women do not have leisure of their own, but rather that women's leisure is accorded a lesser priority and is entwined in the leisure of other family members.

This chapter explores how the women involved in this study experienced both family leisure and their own leisure time while on their family camping holiday. In particular it looks at how the leisure of others impacted on the women. The final part of the chapter explores how the women perceived the inequalities they experienced, rounding off with comments from the women on their overall impression of their family camping holiday.

#### **Women and Family Leisure**

The temporary absence of paid employment, school, and time commitments to organised leisure activities and voluntary work creates opportunities for the family to participate in leisure together. Much of the family leisure in this study centred around water, beaches and bush. This was not surprising given that all but one of the camping grounds were situated close

to either a river or the sea with a backdrop of native bush in many instances. The ready accessibility of river, sea or bush were seen by many women to make family leisure an easy, relaxing experience.

Leanne has camped for several summer holidays with her husband Keith and three children and another family at the same remote sea side camping ground. For her, camping was relaxing, especially as the time pressures experienced in suburbia were absent. She described family leisure at the beach:

*You take the buckets, the spades, the boogie board, everything. And you have swims and spend most of the time there. Keith and his friend Damien and the kids, a couple of the kids, will go out fishing in the boat. And then we always take some toys for the (other) kids like balls. We set up a swing ball. There's a umm. We go for walks around the rocks....I mean I will take them down to the beach. It doesn't worry me. I can sit down there or paddle around or come back. Umm. They are quite good at entertaining themselves. They will do anything. I mean, I am always sitting there anyway so it is like, well you know what it is like. They will push a doll around in a pushchair for an hour if they want. It is so nice.*

For Leanne, family leisure at the beach involved her working. Not only did she ensure that all the required equipment was gathered and taken to the beach, she also supervised the two youngest children (female preschoolers) playing in and near the water. Because of the age of their daughters and the close proximity of water, supervision would have been near constant for Leanne.

While Leanne felt she was having leisure and could choose how she spent her time, her choices were governed by their daughters' leisure, causing her to limit her own leisure choices to sitting on the beach, paddling in the water, swimming or returning to the camp site. Leanne's leisure was incorporated into their daughters' leisure. Time which she could claim as her space for her leisure was non-existent as she was engaged in providing full time child care.

By taking the school age son fishing with him, Keith was involved in some tasks too but not to the same extent as Leanne who was supervising two female preschoolers. A further difference for Keith was that their son was incorporated into Keith's leisure. It was Keith's leisure that dictated the event; in Leanne's case it was their daughters' leisure that dictated the event.

Leanne and Keith experienced family leisure differently. While they were sharing child care tasks by each having only part of the family with them, Leanne had the part of the family that required the most intensive labour. It was her labour that enabled the rest of the family, including her husband, to experience a less labour intensive leisure. Yet in describing her experience as "so nice" Leanne indicated that she gained at least a degree of pleasure from it and that she saw value in spending time at the beach with the children.

The pleasure and value that Leanne gained can be linked to Gilligan's 'ethic of care' (Gilligan, 1982). Caring is an important yard stick against which women measure their actions (Gilligan 1982:82). If they feel they have put the needs of others, such as the leisure needs of Leanne's children, ahead of their own needs they are more likely to feel a degree of satisfaction than the selfishness they may feel if they put their own needs first (Gilligan, 1982).

Embedded within the ethic of care is the importance of nurturing relationships (Gilligan, 1982:17). Women (as was noted with Sharon in Chapter One), often saw family leisure as an opportunity to nurture relationships. Through participating together in leisure activities, it gave family members the opportunity to gain a better understanding of one another.

For Barbara, family leisure on a camping holiday provided family 'togetherness' and she attributed the success of their last holiday to this. In suburbia she was employed in two part time jobs as well as being responsible for the household labour. This left her with very limited time to engage in family centred leisure. She commented:

*The secret of our last holiday is that we did a lot of things on our own as a family and it is very low key and we played tennis and things like that. It is quite relaxing in that respect. You know when you are at home you don't get a lot of opportunities to do things together because you are all rushing about doing your own thing and you don't have the same time to spend with one another as a family unit.*

The pressures of suburbia were seen by Barbara as an impediment to spending large amounts of time together as a family unit and she saw this in turn as limiting the opportunities for building a strong family unit. Family leisure while on a camping holiday enabled her to temporarily remedy the situation.

Minette, a sole parent camping with her three daughters, gave insight into this family centring holiday. She said:

*It is really a family time. At home I am busy doing work and the kids are sort of playing and I don't spend as much time with the children at home as I would do at camping.*

The family camping holiday was not just experiential but involved building too. It afforded time for family leisure and its ensuing outcome of providing opportunities for the nurturing of family relationships.

Penny Davidson in her study of Australian women's holiday experiences notes how her informants placed significance on nurturing relationships during holidays (Davidson, 1996:97) and suggests that the women may classify such nurturing themselves as leisure rather than as labour, even though their labour was involved (Davidson, 1996:100).

In this present study women's labour was an important component in family leisure. This does not mean that men's labour was absent for they too were involved in performing tasks relating to family leisure. However women performed more of the tasks associated with family leisure and also had the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the leisure was successful in both a physical and emotional sense. While the two genders experienced family



leisure differently, men's and women's experience of their own individual leisure also involved gendered boundaries.

### Gendered Boundaries

Men frequently enjoyed clear cut boundaries between their paid employment and leisure. It was different for women though. The boundaries between household labour and leisure were often intermingled or blurred, making it less likely for the women to have large discreet blocks of leisure time that often characterised men's leisure. Boating, for example, provided men with several consecutive hours of leisure of their own choosing. When women accompanied their husbands on a leisurely boating trip, that leisure was interspersed with providing food and care for those on board.

Responsibility for the different aspects of boating including launching and driving the boat at sea, lay in all instances with men. Women sometimes accompanied the men on the boat, but more often than not it was either a 'men only' or 'men and self-managing children' activity with the women staying behind with all the children or at least those children still needing close management.

Christine found boating with her husband Pat and his friend uninteresting. Therefore being left behind was her preferred choice. She told me:

*I don't ever go with him but it doesn't actually worry me. You know. He has offered to stay so that I could go out in the boat. But I am not really interested in the boat for three or four hours waiting for a fish to bite. I don't mind going out for an hour or so but that is about my limit. I get bored. I'm quite happy to stay at the camp and just play with the children.*

The leisure that Christine was invited to enjoy was not her own choice of leisure but that of her husband Pat and his friend. Even though Pat offered to stay behind with the children while she went on the boat, the men had predetermined the nature of Christine's leisure activity: she was expected to tag along, much as a child would. There was no chance for her to change

that activity if she wished to go for a cruise around the coast. Even if Christine had gone with Pat's friend on the boat for the trip and not actually fished, the boat would still have travelled its predetermined pathway to the fishing ground and not to a location of Christine's choosing. She saw providing child care in the form of playing with her children as a better option than fishing. During the interview she told me that if she was completely free to choose a holiday leisure activity she would not "blob out on the beach" but "go somewhere" with her husband "seeing things and doing things" without the children.

Christine practically ignored the male dominated leisure activity of boating and fishing which had failed to hook her. When 'man the hunter' returned with his catch Christine did not involve herself at all in the preparation or cooking of the fish, adding that it was "nothing to do with me". None-the-less she was still incorporated into her husband's boating leisure through providing child care. Although child care gave her some pleasure, it was a task for which she had the ultimate responsibility. It was through her performing this task that enabled Pat to have his leisure.

Some women were involved in boating but that involvement was passive and supportive. Alison's husband Mike was a keen scuba diver and most mornings she organised the food for the day's lunch while he made the boat ready. Along with their two sons they then went boating. Alison talked about how she experienced the daily boating trip:

*I just enjoy the sun. I sit on the deck and relax. You see Mike, my husband is a scuba diver. He is off. It is 'Goodbye Mike' and I just sit in the sun and umm drink coffees and the boys are good. They just sit in the boat and they will swim around the boat depending on where we are. If we are away out (at sea) they are not so fussed on the lilo, but, umm we always find a beach for lunch, and umm, we have a swim and the boys will do some snorkelling and, yeh. It is just a lazy day. I watch my husband's bubbles to make sure he is still alive.*

Alison enjoyed being in the boat. To her it was leisure. Her choice of leisure activity for herself such as sitting in the sun had to fit in with her

husband's and sons' activities and was accorded a lower priority. The prime reason she was on the boat was not to indulge in her leisure activities at all but rather for 'husband care'. She was needed to assist in Mike's scuba diving, for without someone to ensure air bubbles were rising to the sea's surface it would be unsafe for him to dive. Servicing her husband's leisure in this way and supervising their sons in the water was not leisure for her at all. It was her labour, dressed up and labelled as leisure. Such disguised labour also veiled other women's own lack of real leisure and denied them a fair share of time which they could call 'my space'. The context and the labour provided by Alison was remarkably similar to Christine's experience. Both women intermingled labour with leisure so that their husband's could enjoy uninterrupted leisure.

This does not imply that Alison (or for that matter, Christine) had no leisure while their husbands were away. However the scope of the leisure activities were restricted and intermingled with their labour. This created a snatching at leisure which in Alison's case was fitted around monitoring Mike's diving progress and providing child care. This diffusion of labour and leisure that she experienced was in contrast to the more dichotomist division experienced by her husband where the boundaries between labour and leisure were more clearly separated.

### Women's own Leisure

In pursuing a leisure of their own the women in this study engaged in a variety of activities, both active such as swimming, walking and running, and passive such as reading, sunbathing, socialising and snoozing. While most of these activities have the flexibility to be taken in an either snatched fashion or a longer time block, some of the women purposely sought out longer time blocks, particularly if they were wanting to read novels.

Christine enjoyed reading. While camping she felt she had more leisure time which she could call her own than she had at home. She discussed the reason why she chose to read while on holiday:

*I usually jam my nose in a book. It is the only chance I ever get to finish a book. I really like reading but it is not worth starting a book at home because you are always picking it up*

*and putting it down so it is not worth starting it. But over there I can sit over there and not worry about stuff and you don't have to worry about phones and things. You can get stuck into a book.*

The fragmentation of time that frequently characterised Christine's activities at home as she juggled leisure with household labour tasks was not so evident while camping. The larger blocks of time free of interruptions that became available to her on holiday made reading more enjoyable and worthwhile for her.

The family camping holiday also provided Katie and Alison with more leisure time than they experienced at home. This mainly resulted from them spending less time on household labour tasks due either to a redistribution of some of these tasks to other family members, lowering of standards or to camping requiring less labour on some tasks. While her husband performed the task of child care for the day, Katie, who was still ultimately responsible for child care, engaged in 'women only days', spending the time walking in the bush with other women. In return for each day she was away she looked after the children while her husband went on 'men only days'.

For Minette, a sole parent camping with three children, staying in a camping ground that provided supervised children's activities enabled her to have leisure time all of her own. She told me:

*Sometimes I would lay in the sun or go for a walk. I did a lot of reading. If I wanted to go for a swim I did but usually I would read. I would lie in bed on my stretcher....It is a luxury to me to just lie there on my bed and read.*

Although Minette was still ultimately responsible for child care, being relieved of the supervising task for an hour and a half or so enabled her to have the "luxury" of a larger block of time all to herself. To enjoy this luxury though involved Minette in the task of seeking out a camping ground that provided children's holiday activities and ensuring that both she and her children were comfortable with those activities.

Leanne felt she did not have much leisure time of her own while camping but what time she did have she used to read. Moreover, she described how she found it necessary to protect her leisure time. She told me:

*I mean this year I actually took a book which I couldn't put down and I would say quite loudly 'I'm in here reading. Don't come in here. I've got two chapters to go.' No, you don't actually need it (time for her own leisure) terribly much over there. It is so relaxing anyway.*

On the one hand Leanne wanted time to herself to read and erected a barrier to ensure she got that time. On the other hand she felt the holiday atmosphere practically negated any entitlement to a leisure of her own even though as I noted earlier she was content to let her husband go out in a boat fishing while she stayed behind and cared for the two youngest children. The type of ambivalence to her own leisure that Leanne experienced underlies the lower priority accorded to women's leisure and suggests she feels that this lower priority was somehow fair.

Much of Leslie's leisure time was fragmented with the supervision of her two children, a task which for her became "quite nerve racking" when her children were out of her sight. The only larger blocks of time that Leslie could find for her own leisure was in the evening when the children were in bed. She then went walking by herself while her husband remained in the vicinity of the sleeping children. Even though her husband then took over the task of child care, Leslie was still ultimately responsible.

Larger blocks of time for her own leisure were absent on Sharon's camping holiday. Family walks decided on by her husband took priority, leaving her with no time to open a book and only time enough to complete "twelve rows of knitting", an activity in itself that could be associated more with labour than with leisure.

### **Is It Fair?**

Most of the women felt they had enjoyed a holiday equal to that enjoyed by their husbands. This comparison was in spite of some women performing camping household labour and child care while their husbands were away pursuing their own leisure, or of women having their own leisure accorded



a lower priority, or of women servicing the leisure of other family members.

In endeavouring to account for the unequal being seen as fair, Brannen and Moss (cited in Dempsey 1997a:148-149) suggest that women may not want to "admit to an interviewer that some aspect of their marriage is unfair" as they may feel in doing so that they are exposing shortcomings of their own or being disloyal to their husbands. Furthermore if women gain outcomes which they value from performing an imposed task, for instance clean clothes, stronger relationships or exercising control they may judge the unequal as fair (Dempsey, 1997a:151-157). Women who adhere to the traditional ideology that the domestic division of labour is 'women's work' or those who feel appreciated by their husband performing some tasks (as regularly occurred during the camping holiday) are also likely to see the unequal as fair (DeMaris and Longmore, 1996:1065; Dempsey, 1997a:157).

When Sharon was asked if she felt she had as much leisure time on the camping holiday as Seth had, she replied:

*Definitely. I mean it doesn't take that long to do the dishes and the cooking because they are fairly easy meals...I mean it takes sort of next to nothing. I feel that with leisure time, well. I love being out walking. I love being outside. So no, I didn't feel hard done by or say to myself 'Why am I doing this while they are enjoying themselves?'. I know I sound as though I didn't have as good a holiday as Seth because I am mad with the Janola bottle, but....I would go away more if we could.*

Sharon played down her unequal work load and access to leisure ("It takes sort of next to nothing") and indicated that to her it appeared fair, ("I didn't feel hard done by"). The unequalness she experienced was compensated for by the improved relationships that developed out of her nurturing efforts during the family walks. Such nurturing efforts signal a commitment to the care ethic espoused by Gilligan (1982).

Erin also thought the unequal was fair. She sometimes looked after the children while her husband Murray went for a walk, a bike ride or slept.

Even though there was no reciprocal arrangement, Erin remarked "Well I think it is pretty much fair really". She also mentioned that Murray "works hard" so he is "allowed" leisure time of his own, suggesting that for Erin the valued outcome of exercising control was sufficient compensation for the unequalness.

When women are assessing the fairness of their leisure or household labour arrangements Dempsey (1997a:159) notes the women tend to make intra-gender comparisons because such comparisons are frequently more favourable to them than inter-gender comparisons. Dempsey along with Hochschild point out that women often reason that gender differences are innately determined and therefore inter-gender comparisons are not applicable (Dempsey, 1997a; Hochschild, 1989:55).

While several of the women in this study did make 'its unequal but fair' type comparisons with their husbands it was in response to a question that invited them to make such a comparison. However, Katie as she talked on, revealed a intra-gender comparison. Whenever her husband was absent from the camp site enjoying leisure time of his own for more than an hour and leaving Katie responsible for the children, on his return Katie had the equivalent time for her leisure. Katie went on to explained to me why she felt entitled to equivalent leisure time:

*I feel I deserve it because I work (paid employment) full time you see. I mean I'm not someone like who during the term I'm at home and the children are at school and I get time to myself. The only leisure time I get is when we are, well is in the school holidays. And I make sure I get it.*

Although Katie was justifying to me her having holiday leisure time equal to that of her husband, she did not compare herself with her husband who was also in full time employment. Instead she made an intra-gender comparison, comparing herself with women who were full time home makers. It was this type of comparison that led her to conclude that her entitlement to leisure was fair. If she had made an inter-gender comparison she may have concluded that the inequality of total leisure time was indeed unfair.

While Leslie had little time for a leisure of her own, she was reluctant to say that she felt there was unfairness, or indeed fairness. Only Karen, who had to cope with sick children and a "clingy" two year old while camping was prepared to indicate there was some unfairness in the holiday. When asked if her holiday was equal to that enjoyed by her husband she replied: "Ummm. (Pause). Probably not quite as much. He had sleeps in and that sort of thing and I didn't".

Even though Karen was tired from the demands that their sick children made on her, it was her husband who had the privilege of sleeping in. On this occasion none of the compensating factors which appear to make the unequal seem fair to women were sufficient. For Karen the unequal was unfair in this instance.

Viewing the unequal as fair was also reflected in the women's comments when asked to consider their family camping holiday overall. All but one 'just loved it'. I will let some of the women speak for themselves:

**Katie:** *I mean I just love it (holidays). (Laughter). In fact you know I would be quite happy to pitch my tent and be there for six weeks. I just love the freedom. I like being there. I like the fresh air and space. I get a lot of pleasure out of it....I really find it is a holiday.*

**Karen:** *We had a really nice time and we will go back there next year again. We met up with some nice people and we said we would see them again next year.*

**Leanne:** *Basically once I am set up there I am very happy. The first day I think 'My God! Let's go' (home)....And the weather is nice. I mean it is so easy over there wasting three or four hours building sand castles and the kids jumping waves. I mean that's how easy it is.*

**Sharon:** *We had such a good time that when we came back in the New Year we went and bought a big family size tent and went back again.*

**Erin:** *I would say I have had a real holiday. Well once I have got over the packing of the van, I really find camping a pleasure.*

**Sally:** *For a variety of reasons this holiday was a real holiday for us. And when I say 'holiday' it was really relaxing.*

**Pam:** *Tony likes cooking and that makes a big difference for your holiday. It is what makes a real holiday of it for me.*

Leslie however was not totally convinced she had a real holiday. Her response to a question about her impression of her holiday and did she think she had a real one, was: "(Pause). Ummm. (Pause). Yeh. (Pause)". She was responsible for child care while on holiday and found it stressful. While her husband helped with the tasks of cooking and tidying the tent, his help rarely extended to child care tasks resulting in her only personal leisure time being when the children were asleep in the evening. Even though the women enjoyed their family camping holiday their stories reveal inequalities. In Chapter Six the links between these inequalities and the power and politics of the society in which we live are explored.

## CHAPTER 6

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### LIFTING THE TENT FLAP

The previous two chapters outlined how the New Zealand women involved in this study experienced holiday household labour and leisure while on a family camping holiday. Throughout this present chapter I revisit the thirteen women's stories, 'lifting the tent flap' to expose the inequalities in both labour and leisure brought about through the women's ultimate responsibility for household labour tasks while the women are on holiday. Antonio Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony' suggests that the family camping holiday with its inherent inequalities masks power and politics, reproducing ideology ensuring the continued domination and legitimation of patriarchy and familism.

#### **The Not So Innocent Family Camping Holiday**

On the surface the New Zealand family camping holiday appears to be a practice that is free from the interference of overt power and politics. Women as a subordinate group were certainly not coerced against their will to go on a family camping holiday. Nor were they coerced to take ultimate responsibility for household labour or to place the rest of the family's leisure before their own while camping. Instead agencies of the superstructure such as the family, society and the media (Hall, 1977:333) have managed to win over the women by convincing them of the benefits for all family members, including themselves, of 'getting away from it all' and having 'a relaxing holiday'. Does this mean then that both men and women have an equal entitlement to an equal holiday?

The common sense understanding we have of the way things are in New Zealand society is that regardless of gender, those who perform paid



employment in the public sphere earn the right to a holiday unencumbered with the demands of their paid employment. Indeed such a right is enshrined in New Zealand's 'Holidays Act 1981'. Woodward and Green (1988:135) point out though that if there is a need within the family to prioritise who gets the earned leisure, gender comes into play, with women's leisure taking a lower priority than that of men.

While there is a clear demarcation between the time a person spends in the workplace and away from it making it easy to identify non-work time, including leisure and holiday time, there is no such clear separation when household labour is involved. This labour which is usually performed by women in the private sphere of the family home is intermingled with snatched snippets of leisure (Deem, 1986:81; Dempsey, 1997(a):57). This contrasts with the larger blocks of time devoted wholly to either work or leisure which are associated with paid employment. This does not mean that women responsible for household labour do not have longer intervals of leisure, but when this does occur the leisure is frequently subject to a variety of constraints including responsibility for child care and other household labour tasks (Deem, 1982:35-36). Unlike those who are in paid employment, the performers of household labour are seen as not having earned a holiday completely free from their work demands (Deem, 1986:61-62; Henderson, 1990:239; Woodward and Green, 1988:135).

Whether or not payment is made for labour can affect how women feel about accessing leisure time of their own (Henderson, 1994:3). A study of English women and their leisure conducted by Deem (1986:36) revealed that those women involved in full time household labour at home were more likely to feel they had no right to leisure of their own. This is in contrast to those women involved in paid employment who were more likely to "assert their need" for leisure of their own, and to create clear boundaries between their work and their leisure (Deem, 1986). Pahl (cited in Kay, 1996b:51-52) also noted that women in paid employment felt more entitled to leisure than those who were not in paid employment, while Henderson (1990:239) records that "many women do not believe they deserve leisure". Linking holiday entitlements with only paid employment negates the work women do in performing unpaid household labour and makes holiday entitlement a matter of gender.

This feeling that household labour performed by women is somehow unworthy of a leisure entitlement was echoed in the comments of two of the women involved in the present study when they spoke about camping holiday leisure. Firstly there was Erin. She was involved in part time paid employment in addition to her household labour and at various times during the family camping holiday she supervised the children while her husband rested or went walking. Her acceptance of her imposed task while he partook of holiday leisure revolved around her idea that "he does work hard". For Erin this paid employment performed by a man conferred his entitlement to holiday leisure. The matter of Erin's own entitlement to holiday leisure arising out of her part time paid employment and household labour was seen by her to be of little importance and masks the power relations that ensures women's leisure is a lower priority than that of men.

Secondly there was Katie. Both she and her husband were in full time paid employment and both said they shared evenly in the holiday household labour tasks, although the ultimate responsibility remained with Katie. Katie "ma(de) sure" when she went camping that she had a similar amount of leisure time to that of her husband. She felt she "deserve(d) it" as she "work(ed) full time" and was not "like someone who during the term (was) at home".

Erin's and Katie's holiday leisure raises three important points. Firstly, they both linked only paid employment with a holiday leisure entitlement. Secondly, Katie suggested that those engaged in full time household labour should have a lesser entitlement to holiday leisure than those in paid employment. Finally, the secondary position of Erin's holiday leisure, in spite of her part time paid employment, indicated that the conferral of a leisure entitlement to those in paid employment was not automatic. Rather it was revealed as gender based for it was men's paid employment that enabled men's leisure to take precedence over women's leisure (Kynaston, 1996:230).

In Dempsey's study of a small Australian town he showed that most of the men and women believed that men's paid employment gave men the right to more leisure than that received by women (Dempsey, 1991:91). The

reason why women are not encouraged to see their leisure as a right is that any change in the status quo would reduce men's leisure time and on a family camping holiday they would be ultimately responsible for an equal share of the holiday household labour tasks. Clearly this would not be in the interest of men nor would it reproduce the ideology of patriarchy and familism. Such an ideology gives primacy to men's leisure and sees paid employment with its accompanying holiday entitlement as men's primary responsibility. Women's primary role is being ultimately responsible for household labour tasks and this role is not accompanied by a holiday entitlement.

The representations or versions of holiday entitlement presented by patriarchy and familism are only those which fit within their frameworks, that is those representations which give primacy to men's holiday leisure, making entitlement a matter of gender. The inequalities found in the power relations between patriarchy and familism (acting as a bloc) and subordinate groups such as women enable the bloc to create and sustain unequal holiday entitlements which on the surface appear to be fair and legitimate. Such unequal holiday entitlements have implications for the labour and leisure that occurs on a family camping holiday.

### **Labour and Leisure as Ideology**

Unequal holiday entitlements mean the way women experience the family camping holiday is different from the way men experience it. The women in this study were responsible for ensuring that holiday household labour tasks were carried out. Even though the tasks were performed at a different place, pace and standard they were still work with a degree of compulsoriness about them as Sally indicated. The leisure needs of the rest of the family were also the responsibility of women. However the women had little choice in the matter for they were not given the power to decide whether or not they wanted these responsibilities. This power remained and continues to remain with patriarchy and familism via the ideological framework which favours men and enables them to dominate and direct (or lead). The only decision-making given to the women in this study related to the finer holiday details on matters which mainly affected the comfort of other family members, such as what gear to take, what to

eat, when to wash the clothes or where to place the camping gear inside the tent.

In order for the women to have holiday leisure of their own it was necessary for them to construct it within the existing ideological framework giving primacy to men and putting the needs of the family before those of women. One of the ways the women endeavoured to do this was to impose on men, and self-managing children, some of the holiday household tasks, thereby reducing the amount of time the women needed to devote to such labour. Pam involved her two school age sons by getting them to wash their own underwear and Tessa's husband allocated himself the tasks of heating water on the open fire and sweeping the tent floor saving her the time and energy from doing it. On the other hand Leslie's husband did not perform or help with child care tasks at all and this resulted in her having no time for her own leisure until the children were in bed.

The strategy of involving others in the holiday household labour tasks was able to be accommodated within the existing patriarchal based ideological framework because it was only a temporary holiday measure with minimal effect on men's own leisure time. In addition women still remained ultimately responsible for the tasks.

Often the informants like Barbara and Leanne said the men were performing particular camping household labour tasks such as the barbecue dinner. An analysis though of who was performing what tasks in connection with the dinner revealed a different story. The men's real role was one of helping with an aspect of the task of getting dinner and this was almost always limited to barbecuing meat and perhaps vegetables in public and cleaning the grimy barbecue plate much later in the evening. It was Barbara and Leanne who were ultimately responsible for ensuring that all the arrangements relating to dinner, not just barbecuing the meat and cleaning the barbecue plate later, were carried out. Behind the tent flap so to speak the women decided on the menu, gathered up the food, prepared it including the meat, made the salads, decided when the men should start barbecuing, set the table, supervised the meal, stacked up the dirty dishes afterwards and maybe washed them. This division of tasks associated with a barbecue dinner was similar to that observed by Cerullo



and Ewen in their study of camping in Canada (Cerullo and Ewen, 1984:39).

The gender roles that surrounded the holiday barbecue dinner usually resulted in men helping in public with one or two of the tasks while women performed the bulk of the tasks and accepted the ultimate responsibility for the dinner. This reflected the roles that both genders engaged in back in suburbia. There women's role is one of ultimate responsible for household labour and men help by performing some allocated tasks. More importantly the barbecue reproduced ideology and this reproducing of ideology is a corner stone for ensuring the continuing dominance of patriarchy. The ideology of patriarchy and familism sees the primary role of men being one of working in the public sphere (barbecuing the meat in public) while women's primary role is seen as performing household labour in the private sphere (preparing the food inside the tent or caravan). Being a family gathering, the barbecue also provided an opportunity for the children to be socialised into gender based roles.

On the surface, the barbecue dinner on the family camping holiday appeared to be an innocent activity free from politics and power. However both politics and power were involved for the dinner reproduced ideology and masked the power men use to ensure that their boundaries and authority remain in tact. Patriarchy and familism enable this to occur through reinforcing gender roles, disguising the inequality of power relations and accommodating temporary changes that are non threatening to men's authority. The true extent of the women's involvement in the meal was concealed behind the tent flap. It is misrepresentations such as this that help lead women like Barbara into incorrectly concluding that it is they who are helping men with the task of producing dinner.

I do not want to convey the idea that the women were gullible and could not see through the fraud. Rather it was that the version of barbecuing shaped by patriarchal and familist ideology was presented in such a way that made it appear perfectly natural (that is "culturally expected and legitimate") (Dempsey, 1997b:221) to equate barbecuing the dinner with responsibility for dinner.



The roles the men and women played in the holiday barbecue dinner enabled the inequality of power relations to be disguised. While women had the ultimate responsibility of ensuring that dinner was produced for the family, it was the men who exercised the power of deciding whether or not they would perform the task of barbecuing the meat. If the men decided not to perform this task, the women would be forced to find alternative cooking arrangements such as cooking the entire meal themselves in the camp kitchen and this would be less advantageous to them. While hegemonic authority ensured that men's task-performing role was optional, women's responsibility role was not.

### my **THEIR** Leisure

According to Deem (1982:32) women may willingly forego their own leisure activities in favour of servicing those of their husband, or facilitating family leisure. While this means leisure for husbands or family, it is labour for women and diminishes the time which they could use to pursue their own leisure activities (Henderson and Allen, 1991:104). Being involved in the holiday leisure of family members usually meant physical and emotional work for women like Sharon as she trudged along a walking track encouraging the family to complete the walk, or Christine as she supervised children's swimming, or Alison as she sat in a boat watching air bubbles rise to the sea's surface to indicate that her scuba diving husband was alive. Yet this work, some of which is "demanding" and "obligative" (Bella, cited in Henderson, 1990:232) was generally seen by the women in this study to give them pleasure. Why is this? Gilligan suggests an 'ethic of care' comes into play.

Women place emphasis on family leisure, often seeing it as an opportunity to nurture family relationships. Nurturing is emotional work which women enjoy and can be linked to Gilligan's ethic of care, which suggests that women may feel guilty if they put their needs first (Gilligan, (1982:73-74). Women define their identity through relationships and judge that identity "by a standard of responsibility and care" to others (Gilligan, 1982:160).

This same ethic of care was manifest in the efforts Sharon went to ensure that daughter Emma who was feeling a little "upset", was able to spend

time walking alone with Seth, her father. Karen too reflected the ethic of care through nursing sick children during the camping holiday and driving 50 kilometres to take them to the doctor.

Just as holiday household labour reproduces ideology and involves power relationships, so too does holiday leisure. Women's work in facilitating leisure for other members of the family while on a camping holiday reinforces the dominant/subordinate gender based power relations disguising women's work as leisure and also disguising women's unequal share of a leisure time that they can call their own.

The base for this deeply embedded exploitation of women can be found in patriarchal power structures (James and Saville-Smith, 1994:49) that give women and their leisure, a lesser status than that given to men and their leisure (Green et al., 1990:ix; Wimbush and Talbot, 1988b:127). Men have given themselves the control over the way the concept of leisure is defined (Henderson, 1990:236). Such definitions benefit men and are characterised by reflecting only men's experience of leisure which is time away from paid employment (Bella, 1992:11; Green et al., 1990:31; Henderson, 1990; Kynaston, 1996:230).

This ignores women's different experience characterised by an intermingling of work through being ultimately responsible for household labour, and leisure (Henderson, 1990:236). During observations for this study, I noted that whenever a man and a woman were sitting on the beach while their children played nearby, it was almost always the woman who interrupted her leisure to attend to the children's needs. Although the women intermingled leisure with work, the responsibility of work always took priority. Because the context of the work though was leisure (sitting on the beach), attending to the needs of children was seen as leisure, not work. The work women do to enable the family to enjoy leisure is thus disguised. This type of masking of women's work that has its base in gendered ideology, endeavours to hide the contradictions that arise when only men's experience of leisure is used as the valid defining standard.

The workings of ideology go even further than this and surreptitiously lead to women themselves classifying their own family holiday leisure work as

leisure, especially if that work involves nurturing family relationships. Leanne who took on the task of looking after the children at the beach while her husband went boating did not see her imposed task as work, but rather as one of leisure which was "so nice". Monitoring her husband's scuba diving and supervising their sons' activities on the stationary boat and in the water was classified by Alison as a "lazy day". To her it was not work. Sharon enjoyed the family walks and she did not associate her nurturing work that occurred on these walks as work. My informants, just like the women involved in Davidson's study (Davidson, 1996:100), placed great emphasis on nurturing relationships and saw this as an important outcome of the holiday. The fact that women may gain pleasure and satisfaction from this type of work does not convert the work into leisure. There are many men who gain considerable pleasure from their paid employment but they would not classify their employment as leisure, nor indeed would they be expected to do so.

Women on the other hand are encouraged to see their family leisure work as leisure (Bella, 1992:11; Hunter and Whitson, 1991:220) for patriarchal and familist reasons. Firstly, to classify the work as work may mean a call for men to assume all or some of the responsibility and a demand from women for their leisure to be given more importance. This would lessen men's own holiday leisure time (Deem, 1988:14) and pose a threat to the patriarchal leadership. Secondly, by women classifying their work as leisure obviates the need for women to be convinced through coercion that their work is their leisure. Hegemonic control of women's lives is gained through women consenting to their subordinate position, thus obscuring the role of patriarchy and familism in according women's leisure a lower priority.

Women often feel selfish about having a leisure time of their own and some believe they do not deserve it (Henderson, 1990:239) especially if they feel motivated by the ethic of care (Shaw, 1994:11) or bound by gender obligations to meet the physical, emotional and leisure needs of others ahead of their own needs (Woodward and Green, 1988:139). As patriarchy has the authority to specify the wider agenda and to "shape preferences" (Clarke) et al., 1976:38) the holiday leisure alternatives offered to women are only those that can be fitted around women still

meeting their prescribed gender obligations. Even with Katie, who aimed for equality of leisure time, her day away from the camp with other women was accompanied by constraints which were strongly associated with her identity as 'mother'. Before departing she completed her early morning household labour including doing the family washing, and spent a subsequent day at the camp being responsible for the children while her husband took his day off.

Unconstrained leisure alternatives, including those which may involve women in leisure outside the identity of 'mother', are seen as a threat to men's authority and are therefore not offered to women as an alternative. Family leisure reinforces the identity of 'mother' and expresses familism and the dominance of patriarchy.

Although the women in this study experienced more leisure time while on a family camping holiday than in suburbia, due in part to their families helping more with holiday household labour, the women, apart from Katie, experienced far less leisure time than their husbands when camping. In addition to their working at family leisure, some of the women involved in this study used their labour so that their husbands could pursue leisure. Incorporating women's labour into men's leisure reinforces the gender based dominant/subordinate relationship and further reduces the amount of time women have available for holiday leisure of their own.

The inequality of personal leisure time while on holiday was acknowledged by some of the women but at the same time they saw it as fair and natural due to men being classed as the main income earner and in Erin's case, "working hard all day". Ideology serves to disguise the contradictions, the power relations and the resultant inequalities that arise through associating a leisure entitlement only with paid employment and then prioritising that 'earned' entitlement on a gender basis that favours men.

Equality of leisure time poses a threat to gender based boundaries. Minor changes however such as increasing women's leisure time while on holiday can be accommodated within the boundaries as the temporary nature of the changes is of little challenge to men's authority. Accepting such inconsequential changes are evidence of patriarchy and familism

successfully accommodating an opposing interest. It is this ability to accommodate an opposing interest in a manner that does not pose a threat (Hall, 1977:334) and gives the subordinate groups a "stake in the status quo" (Tester, 1994:17) that enables patriarchy to continually gain the consent of the subordinate groups. Thus patriarchy and its arch supporter, familism, continue in their position of leadership and the subordinate groups, having been convinced that the status quo is in the group's best interest, are reluctant to alter this unequal relationship for fear of losing any gains already made (Tester, 1994:17-18). This prevents the subordinate groups from fully completing any agenda of their own (Bennett, 1986:xv) which may openly threaten the leadership of patriarchy and familism.

Yet in spite of the gender inequality in a family camping holiday, the women involved in this study said they enjoyed their holiday and most were looking forward to the next one. Cerullo and Ewen (1984:38) reported a similar finding in their camping study. This raises the question of why was it that a holiday which clearly disadvantaged the women should be seen by them as enjoyable?

### **A Change is as Good as a Holiday**

Hunter and Whitson (1991:220) comment that many women may gain enjoyment from 'doing' family events like Christmas and family holidays even though it is taken for granted that women will be responsible for all the arrangements including the emotional management of family relationships. The enjoyment that women experience from their family camping holiday may relate at least in part to the pleasure they gain in nurturing family relationships and also to the change in place, pace and standards.

Minette a sole parent camping with three children, acknowledged that a family camping holiday still involved her in some household labour, yet she felt she had a holiday. She summed up the situation as:

*You then feel as if you have had a holiday, whether you have had one or not. You feel as if you must have had a holiday and so you behave like you have one.*



How a family camping holiday is presented to women influences their attitude towards it. As the terms of most family camping holidays favour the ideologies of patriarchy and familism, (which means women take their household labour responsibility with them and their leisure continues to be a lower priority), the family camping holiday is presented to women in terms of leisure, that is 'holiday' and not labour. Even though holidays are work for women, ideology endeavours to make it appear perfectly natural and legitimate that the change in place, pace and standards accompanied by women feeling satisfied with the outcome of their work in nurturing family relationships, is somehow a holiday for them. Ideology leads women into feeling they have then had a holiday and conceals the contradictions and inequalities between their style of holiday and that enjoyed by other members of the family.

## CHAPTER 7

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### CANVASSING THE FUTURE

The summer camping holiday has become an almost ritualistic part of the New Zealand way of life for many families who each year pack up their caravan or tent, plus the housework, and head for a holiday in the bush or at the beach. This exploratory study using the fieldwork technique has examined how thirteen New Zealand women experienced household labour and leisure while on their family camping holiday. The study points out that such holidays reproduce the gendered based inequalities practiced every day in the family home in suburbia and in everyday leisure. Yet in spite of these inequalities of labour and leisure, the family camping holiday was seen by these women to be a holiday for all the family, including themselves.

Central to this study was a desire to gain an understanding of inequalities found in household labour and leisure while on a family camping holiday and to explain why these inequalities persist. The study suggests that, just like at home in suburbia, women on a family camping holiday are ultimately responsible for the household labour tasks and experience inferior access to a leisure time of their own. The holiday acts to reinforce and reproduce the patriarchal and familist ideology found in the family home.

For the women involved in this study the family camping holiday involved several hours of work performed each day in a leisure setting. They still washed the family's dirty clothes, often by hand, and were still responsible for child care and the other household labour tasks. While the place of holiday household labour differed from that at home, and the pace and standards of housework were less demanding, both the home and the camping ground were sites of the gendered division of household labour.

Just like at home, the women on a camping holiday shoulder an unequal share of responsibility for that labour. This does not mean that the men and the children did not participate in the holiday household labour, but rather that their role was mainly one of performing either some self-allocated tasks or imposed tasks. The men were in a helping role.

The women's role, on the other hand, was one of ultimate responsibility. Where tasks were not self-allocated, they had the responsibility of imposing those tasks on other family members including the men and ensuring that the tasks were completed satisfactorily. The women usually imposed on themselves all the unallocated tasks or those not performed satisfactorily by others. The difference between self-allocated tasks and the tasks the women imposed on themselves is that with the former there is a choice, while the latter occurred in order that the women could fulfil patriarchy's dictate that women are ultimately responsible for household labour tasks, irrespective of the location of the family.

Within this study there were occasions where the men performing a task were misinterpreted by informants as the men being responsible for a much wider task. The evening barbecued dinners for Barbara's family were a case in point. She was not only ultimately responsible for the dinner, she performed all the meal arrangement tasks from deciding on the menu, preparing the food, to setting the table. Her husband Ken's role was limited to placing the prepared meat on the barbecue and periodically turning the meat over. Yet Barbara saw Ken as being responsible for the entire barbecue dinner, while in reality he was performing only a small part of the overall task.

Being responsible for most of the household work load while on holiday meant that these women experienced less access than their men to leisure time and less time to call their own. Even family leisure, such as Leanne's day at the beach caring for the younger children while her husband was away boating, entailed much work for her. This type of caring means that women are not only denied the same leisure opportunities as the rest of the family. It also denies the acknowledgment of their work, as such work is thought of as leisure for women. As a result women's lack of leisure time which they could call their own was disguised.

The family camping holiday provided women with a pleasurable opportunity to nurture family relationships. The walks undertaken by Sharon and her family were happily used by her to monitor and encourage better relationships between the children and their father. While the informants placed a high value on such opportunities they usually involved women's physical and/or emotional labour. In spite of the inequalities of labour that resulted from women being ultimately responsible for holiday household labour tasks and thereby performing most of the tasks, and in spite of the women having less leisure of their own than their husbands' had, the women enjoyed themselves. They said they experienced the family camping holiday as a 'real holiday' which Katie "just love(d)" and Sally found "really relaxing". The women were happily prepared to repeat such holidays year after year.

A goal of the thesis was not only to describe this practice of women willingly performing the bulk of holiday household labour tasks and accepting less holiday leisure than men, but also to explain the practice. This study suggests that the family camping holiday is not what it seems to be. Far from being an 'innocent' practice free from politics and power, it reinforces hegemony or the domination of men over women. Within this domination some flexibility on the part of men such as carrying out some extra holiday household labour tasks, is required in order to accommodate peripheral requests from women. By men like Tony, Jim or Russell agreeing to accommodate these minor requests, the likelihood of a challenge to men's privileged position is reduced.

On a family camping holiday hegemony is reinforced through its ability to reproduce the ideology and to mask the power relationships found in the family home. The ideology reproduced on the family camping holiday is one that favours patriarchy and familism. Patriarchy and familism see women as being ultimately responsible for household labour. Women may impose a few tasks on men or other family members, but as the person ultimately responsible, women perform the vast majority of the tasks including those to facilitate the leisure of others. As a result, women's leisure time of their own is reduced.

The more or less surreptitious way patriarchy allows men to dominate women while on a camping holiday obscures the inequalities embedded within that holiday. The extent of women's holiday work remains hidden as some of their work such as helping to make family leisure an enjoyable experience for other family members is labelled as women's leisure. The workings of patriarchy are such that it appears as 'natural' that women are responsible for holiday household labour and 'natural' that their holiday leisure is a lower priority than that of the rest of the family.

The suggestion that the gendered ideology found in the family home in suburbia is reproduced on the family camping holiday, has implications for change towards equality of labour and leisure. This also poses the question 'Is the family camping holiday an effective place to initiate such a change?' While the answer is a simple "yes", the question itself is complex.

It is not sufficient to dismiss on biological grounds the call for change to equality of household labour and leisure. Although there appears to be no known biological reason why men are less suited to perform household labour than women, Dempsey (1997a:215) notes that many women "believe that men lack the temperament and the nurturing skills to carry out effectively much of the caring and routine work women perform at home". This may relate to the limiting definitions New Zealanders impose on masculinity and femininity. These definitions are based on weakened but still alive stereotypes of the 'good keen man' (Phillips, 1996:288-289) and the "Cult of Domesticity" (James and Saville-Smith, 1994:55). These stereotypes need to be challenged in such a way that both genders are freed from men dominating women (James and Saville-Smith, 1994:94) and are free to develop alternatives which enhance the lives of both men and women, and encourage equality.

The advantage of initiating a change towards equality at the level of the family camping holiday rather than at the level of the family home is that such a change will be initially limited to the duration of the holiday<sup>1</sup>. This

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<sup>1</sup>This initial change should not be seen as ruling out the idea of a change to equality in the family home also occurring in due course, but rather that the family camping holiday is a good base from which to begin.



impermanence renders the change less threatening than change initiated from the family home. The relaxed atmosphere where both men and women are free from their paid employment responsibilities provides opportunities to talk through the implications of the existing inequalities. Having the time during the camping holiday aids the negotiating of sharing of responsibility and the access to equal leisure as well as the discussion of problems as they occur during the equality process. (Coverman's (1985:94) research indicates that men having the available time is an important consideration in getting husbands to do more housework). The holiday atmosphere is also conducive to humour and understanding being exercised as each partner manages their new roles based on equality.

One of the vital keys in a successful change towards equality is first acknowledging that tasks and responsibility are different. Without this acknowledgment, any change will most likely be unsustainable in the long term due to a lack of understanding about it and commitment to it. A second vital key is both partners negotiating a sustainable plan for equal access to leisure of one's own and also of who will be ultimately responsible for which holiday household labour tasks. Not only will compromises over holiday household labour tasks be needed to ensure that both partners have an equal share of 'best' and 'worst' tasks, but also an acceptance by both partners of a possible difference in pace of performing holiday household tasks and in the standard of work achieved. For some women this may involve a 'letting go' of some standards and some tasks that currently give them pleasure or a sense of achievement. Neither should there be an expectation that the changes made towards equality will be identical for each family. Rather they should reflect the partners' responses to their own circumstances. For example where there are preschoolers in the family or a remote camping ground is being used, sharing of holiday household labour responsibilities may be quite different from that which takes place when the family consists of self-managing children or a full facilities camping ground is used. With men accepting equal responsibility for holiday household labour including child care, there should be a freeing up of time for women, giving them access to leisure time that is similar to that to be enjoyed by men.

Resistance to change in the present patriarchal climate where women are a subordinate group will inevitably occur. But this thesis has not been so much about seeking solutions but about unblurring the boundaries of leisure and demarcating tasks and responsibilities. When responsibilities are shared the problem will be solved.

The central point that emerged from this study was that irrespective of whether the family was at home or on holiday, the women were still ultimately responsible for household labour. While the men allocated some holiday household labour tasks to themselves and the women imposed some tasks on the men, the bulk of the tasks were performed by the women. These women did not perform the tasks by free choice. Rather they performed them because patriarchy has determined that household labour is women's responsibility. Whether it was washing the family's dirty clothes, preparing food, supervising children's play or walking with the family, much of the work that the women performed revealed a caring ethic.

The women welcomed and enjoyed the increased opportunities camping provided to nurture relationships, even when this work was categorised as leisure due to it taking place in a leisure setting. Consequently this disguised the women's unequal access to a leisure time of their own. Although the women experienced more leisure time of their own than they experienced back home in suburbia, they still did not enjoy access to as much leisure time as the men.

In spite of the inequalities of responsibility for holiday household labour tasks and inferior access to a leisure time of their own, the women gained much pleasure from their family camping holiday. This is attributed at least in part to the increased opportunities to nurture family relationships, the change in the location of household labour and the reduced pace and standards of the tasks performed.

The family camping holiday is not the innocent practice it is generally portrayed as. It involves power and politics where the role of the holiday is to reinforce and reproduce patriarchy's ideology. Such ideology decrees that women are ultimately responsible for household labour and that this

labour is not worthy of the holiday entitlement allocated to paid employment.

I assert however, that women's labour performed in the home is worthy of leisure on the same terms and conditions as that enjoyed by men. A change such as this can only come about if there is an equal sharing of the ultimate responsibility for the household labour tasks. In seeking to make a change, I suggest that the family camping holiday with its relaxed atmosphere is a good place to start. Any changes that occur there will be limited to the duration of the holiday and therefore viewed as far less threatening than changes initiated in the family home which may be viewed as having a degree of permanency about them. There will be a need for each couple involved in a change to equality of responsibility to exercise both understanding and some 'give and take' as each person adapts.

It will not be 'plain sailing' though. Some resistance will be encountered as most men will not welcome giving up their privileged position but a first concession is to demonstrate this privileged position. Support from other women and groups advocating equality for women will be important if change is to succeed which in due course could lead to the change being replicated in the family home.

This present study which centred on the inequality of household labour and leisure time of one's own which women experience when the family is on a camping holiday, was an exploratory one. As this is an area that has seen little previous research it should respond positively to further research and provide social researchers with an challenging and rewarding topic. While we know something of how men control women's everyday lives we appear to know very little about how they control women's 'holidays' and how a change towards equality could take place.

There is an urgent need to conduct further qualitative studies into holiday labour and leisure using fieldwork techniques to learn the stories of other women on a family camping holiday. This present study involved open ended interviews with a very small sample of women. Studies that involve much larger samples of women, including Maori and Pacific Island women, and studies of other types of self catering holidays such as baching or

moteling, should also be of benefit in accumulating a knowledge base. Interviewing men to learn their stories about the family camping holiday could provide an valuable understanding of their perceptions of holiday household labour and access to leisure. Time-use diaries kept while on holiday and at home may also prove fruitful in analysing the extent of differences between men's and women's household labour contributions as well as their leisure time.

The topic would benefit from studying the same families both at home and while on a family camping holiday. This may provide a valuable insight into changes, if any, in both responsibility for household labour tasks and in access to leisure time of one's own at the two locations and how any changes are brought about. Knowledge may be gained as to the continued success of any new sharing of responsibility or increased leisure time for women once the locality of the labour and leisure has changed, helping us to better understand the factors that surround successful change. Indeed a qualitative study of a small number of families over several years of family camping holidays to monitor for both successful and unsuccessful changes in holiday household labour and leisure may help us to answer questions like "What factors initiate the change?", "How does the change take place?" and "What contributed to the change being successful or unsuccessful?". The study of unsuccessful changes should not be neglected for much can be learned from them.

The findings of this present study suggest that because women are ultimately responsible for household labour tasks while on a family camping holiday, they are considerably disadvantaged. While the holiday may provide a change in place, pace and standards, it serves to reproduce and reinforce New Zealand's gendered culture which allocates to women a subordinate and disadvantaged position. Further research around this whole matter should give us a clearer picture of holiday household labour and leisure which in time could lead to the development of strategies so that women can enjoy a family camping holiday that is just as much a holiday for them as it is for their husbands.

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## Appendix I

### OBSERVATION GUIDE

**Who does what - holiday experiences while camping with the family.**

**Generic questions.**

1. How do people spend their time when camping?
2. How do different family members experience leisure at the camp when on holiday?
3. What responsibilities do individual family members undertake on behalf of the family while camping?
4. What tasks, if any, are gendered?

**Themes to look for:**

|       |  |                   |       |
|-------|--|-------------------|-------|
| Food: | Preparation  | Shopping for food | Meals |
|       | Cups tea/coffee/wine etc   |                   |       |
|       | Barbecuing - who is doing what at the barbecue; women barbecuing; who serves the food; what do the women/men do while other barbecues?   |                   |       |
|       | Cooking - who appears to be in charge;   |                   |       |
|       | Take-aways - observe for use of  |                   |       |
|       | Dishes - Unwritten rules; queues organised informally/formally; queue jumping; socialisation occurring during dishes ritual (circumstances, gender); who washes and who dries. |                   |       |



|                      |  |  |                                      |
|----------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| Child care:          | At the beach<br>Upset children<br>At the camp<br>Meal time<br>Settling disputes<br>"Just minding"/"encouraging/extending" children (gender related?) - men encouraging and women "just minding"?<br>Men doing child care while women at leisure.                         | Showering children<br>When 1 adult absent<br>Toileting | Emergencies<br>Bedtime<br>Discipline |
| Combined activities: | Child care with - leisure, food, barbecuing, dishes.<br>Leisure with - food. sport with - socialisation.   |  |                                      |
| Making Camp:         | Setting up camp;<br>Who is driving car with caravan/trailer  |  |                                      |
| Maintaining Camp:    | Keeping caravan/tent clean and tidy<br>Collecting water<br>Emptying rubbish<br>Laundry - Socialising activity? (Men doing it; how do men do it)<br>Securing camp when it becomes insecure;<br>Who does what outside re maintaining camp<br>What "mod cons" do they have? |  |                                      |
| Breaking Camp:       | Dismantling camp   |  |                                      |
| Leisure:             | His leisure<br>What happens when he goes off for day.  | Her leisure  |                                      |

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## **Appendix II**

### **LETTER INVITING PARTICIPATION IN STUDY**

(My address)

Dear

I am a post graduate student at Massey University working on my thesis for my Master of Arts degree in sociology. You will see from the attached that my thesis topic focuses on how families experience holidays when camping together. It has been suggested to me that you may be interested in taking part in this study.

My purpose in writing to you therefore is to ask if you would be prepared to take part in a telephone interview of approximately 45 minutes duration sometime in the next few weeks. If you say "yes" I will arrange a suitable time with you for me to phone you at your home (or another location if that is more suitable to you) to conduct the interview. The cost of the phone call to you will be met by me. Your responses at the interview will be completely confidential to me so no one else will be able to identify your particular responses. The information that I obtain from you will be grouped together with those from the other people that take part in the interviews and with that gained from my observing families camping. I will then be able to better understand how families experience their holiday when camping together. We do not have a lot of knowledge about this and the information you supply to me will provide a welcome addition.

My completed work will become my thesis and submitted to the university for grading. One copy of the thesis will be held in the Massey University

Library and will be available to library borrowers. Other copies will be held by the School of Sociology and Women's Studies and by me.

Supervision of my work for my thesis will be undertaken by Dr Martin Tolich of the School of Sociology and Women's Studies of Massey University. If you have any particular concerns about my work at any stage you are welcome to contact Dr Tolich direct. His phone number is 06 356 9099 and his address is:

School of Sociology and Women's Studies  
Massey University  
Private Bag 11222  
PALMERSTON NORTH.

I will contact you in a few days time to see if you are able to help me and if you say "yes", to make arrangements about the telephone interview. If you have any queries in the meantime please feel free to ring me at home (phone number supplied). When I am not home I leave my answer phone on.

I hope you will give me the privilege of interviewing you.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Henry

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## **Appendix III**

### **INFORMATION SHEET WHO DOES WHAT - HOLIDAY EXPERIENCES WHILE CAMPING WITH THE FAMILY**

#### **What this study is about**

Along with buzzy bee, black singlets and pavlovas, the annual summer camping holiday with the family is part of the New Zealand way of life. On the surface it may appear for all members of the family the holiday will be filled with countless hours of leisure or "doing nothing". However what occurs in reality can be different.

The aim of this present study is to explore how families experience holidays when camping together. How do they spend their time at the camp? Who does what in the way of "housework"? How do the different family members experience leisure at the camp and away from the camp when on holiday? How do family members decide what is leisure when on holiday and what is "housework"? Who organises what for the holiday before leaving home? What responsibilities do individual family members undertake on behalf of the family while camping?

I am also interested to learn about what patterns of experiences exist. What patterns if any have persisted over time when camping with families and why do they continue to persist?

#### **Objectives**

This study is required in order to write my thesis for my Master of Arts degree in sociology at Massey University. The study will be written up, bound in a volume and submitted via my supervisor, Dr Martin Tolich, to

Massey University for grading. The goal of the study itself is to gain an understanding of how families experience holidays when camping together.

### **What will you have to do?**

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to be available for **one** telephone interview of about 45 minutes. The cost of any toll calls will be met by me. The telephone interview would take place at a time convenient to you, will be tape recorded and at my end of the telephone will take place in private. I suggest that you may also be more comfortable if you have privacy at your end of the telephone too. You will be asked about your recent experiences camping with your family. What "housework" and leisure activities were you involved in while camping? How did you decide who did what in the way of these activities? What organising did you do before leaving home? What things are different/the same as when you are at home?

### **Who is conducting the research?**

The research is being carried out by **Elaine Henry**, a post graduate student of the School of Sociology and Women's Studies at Massey University and is being supervised by Dr. Martin Tolich.

Elaine Henry  
(My address supplied)

Phone and fax:  
(Number supplied)



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## Appendix IV

### INTERVIEWING - YOUR RIGHTS

If you take part in this study, you have the right to:

- (a) Refuse to answer any particular question, and to withdraw from the study at any time
- (b) Ask any further questions about the study that occur to you during your participation
- (c) Provide information on the understanding that **it is completely confidential** to the researcher and her supervisor and that you will not be able to be identified in any reports that are prepared from the study
- (d) Determine the disposal of interview tapes and transcripts.

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## **Appendix V**

### **LETTER TO EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES**

(My Address)

The Head Teacher  
(Address)

Dear

I am a post graduate student at Massey University working on my thesis for my Master of Arts degree in sociology. You will see from the attached that my thesis topic focuses on how families experience holidays when camping together.

While much of my research work has already been completed, I still need to interview eight more women who have been camping recently with their families.

My purpose in writing to you is to ask if you would be prepared to place a small notice in your next newsletter to the parents asking if any women interested in the study would contact me. For your convenience I have attached a draft notice which you may like to consider using.

The women will be asked about their recent experiences camping with their family. What "housework" and leisure activities were they involved in while camping? How did they decide who did what in the way of these

activities? What organising did they do before leaving home? What things were different/the same as when they were at home?

The interviews will be confidential and when the written material is used in any publication such as my thesis all names and special characteristics that would lead to identification of the women taking part will be changed.

The research itself is being supervised by Dr. Martin Tolich of the School of Sociology and Women's Studies of Massey University.

I realise that getting this type of request put into the newsletter to parents is a big ask. In the interests of academic research however, I hope you will be able to say "yes".

I will contact you in a few days time to see what your response is. If in the mean time you wish to ask for further details, please do not hesitate to contact me at (phone number supplied). When I am not home I leave my answer phone on.

In case any of the women on the staff might be interested in taking part in the research, I have also attached a small notice for your staff room notice board.

Thankyou for considering this matter.

Yours sincerely,

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## **Appendix VI**

### **SUGGESTED NEWSLETTER NOTICE**

We have received a request from Elaine Henry, who is a student at Massey University. She wants to interview women who have been recently camping with their families. In particular she wants to find out how the women experienced their holiday - what "housework" and leisure activities where they involved in while camping; how did they decide who did what in the way of these activities. Your participation will be confidential.

If you are able to help or want further information, please phone her at (phone number supplied). She is very keen to hear from you.

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## **Appendix VII**

### **HOW DO WOMEN EXPERIENCE FAMILY CAMPING HOLIDAYS?**

**A Massey University student completing her Master of Arts thesis would like to talk with women about their experiences when camping with the family.**

**She wants to find out what 'housework' and leisure activities the women were involved in while camping; how did they decide who did what in the way of these activities.**

**Very little research has been done in this area and your information will be very welcome.**

**Can you help?**

**Participation will be confidential**

**Researcher: Elaine Henry**

**Phone (number supplied) if you can help or want further information.**



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## **Appendix VIII**

### **LETTER TO PROSPECTIVE INFORMANTS**

(My Address)

Dear

Thankyou for responding to my request for people to be interviewed regarding their experiences when camping with the family on holiday.

As explained in the newsletter, I am a post graduate student at Massey University working on my thesis for my Master of Arts degree in sociology. My thesis topic focuses on how families experience holidays when camping together.

My purpose in writing to you therefore is to confirm that you are prepared to take part in a telephone interview of approximately 45 minutes duration sometime in the next few weeks. If you say "yes" I will arrange a suitable time with you for me to phone you at your home (or another location if that is more suitable to you) to conduct the interview. The cost of the phone call to you will be met by me. Your responses at the interview will be completely confidential to me so no one else will be able to identify your particular responses. The information that I obtain from you will be grouped together with those from the other people that take part in the interviews and with that gained from my observing families camping. I will then be able to better understand how families experience their holiday when camping together. We do not have a lot of knowledge about this and the information you supply to me will provide a welcome addition.

My completed work will become my thesis and submitted to the university for grading. One copy of the thesis will be held in the Massey University Library and will be available to library borrowers. Other copies will be held by the School of Sociology and Women's Studies and by me.

Supervision of my work for my thesis will be undertaken by Dr Martin Tolich of the School of Sociology and Women's Studies of Massey University. If you have any particular concerns about my work at any stage you are welcome to contact Dr Tolich direct. His phone number is 06 356 9099 and his address is:

School of Sociology and Women's Studies  
Massey University  
Private Bag 11222  
PALMERSTON NORTH.

I will contact you in a few days time to see if you are able to help me and if you say "yes", to make arrangements about the telephone interview. If you have any queries in the meantime please feel free to ring me at home (phone number supplied. When I am not home I leave my answer phone on.

I hope you will give me the privilege of interviewing you.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Henry

---

## **Appendix IX**

### **LETTER TO INFORMANTS**

(My address)

Dear

Thankyou for agreeing to my interviewing you about your holiday experiences while camping.

Enclosed are two copies of the consent form which I would be pleased if you would sign. Please keep one for yourself and return the other one to me in the enclosed envelope.

I am looking forward to phoning you about 7.30 pm on Friday 13th March. As I mentioned before, if when I phone it is no longer convenient for whatever reason for me to interview you, please feel free to let me know.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Henry

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## Appendix X

### **CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PROJECT: "WHO DOES WHAT - HOLIDAY EXPERIENCES WHILE CAMPING WITH THE FAMILY"**

I .....consent to participate in the research project "Who does what - holiday experiences while camping with the family". I accept the assurances:

- (1) That at any time I may tell Elaine Henry, the researcher, that it is not convenient for me to talk with her and that this will be respected.
- (2) That confidentiality will be kept through the following measures:
  - (i) all names and special characteristics that would lead to my identification will be changed
  - (ii) interview tapes will only be listened to by Elaine Henry.
- (3) I am free to withdraw from the research project at anytime.
- (4) That at any time I can renegotiate this agreement with Elaine Henry.

I give permission for Elaine Henry to use the information gained during the research in any publication she may write.

Signed:

..... (Participant)

.....(Researcher)

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## Appendix XI

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### QUESTIONS, THEMES, PROMPTS 'WHO DOES WHAT - HOLIDAY EXPERIENCES WHILE CAMPING WITH THE FAMILY'

**Aim:** To develop an understanding of how New Zealand women experience the domestic division of labour while on a family camping holiday.

**Topic** Domestic division of labour

**Researcher:** Elaine Henry

**Informant:** **Interview date:**

1. I would like to start at the very beginning of your camping holiday by first of all focusing on the preparations that you and your family make before you leave home. How do you go about as a family deciding where to go for your camping holiday, booking the site etc?

Themes to check for:

Deciding on location - how?  
Responsibility for booking site  
Children take part in helping to decide?

2. What sort of camping preparations are
- a) you responsible for doing before you leave on your camping holiday
  - b) what sort of things are the rest of the family responsible for?

Themes to check for:

Pre-cooking of food      Purchasing food      Packing, incl. caravan



Checking over vehicles, tent, caravan, boat

Stopping mail, newspapers

Alerting neighbours

How are responsibilities decided

Who helps with what

3. When you arrive at the site what happens?

Themes to check for:

Putting caravan/tent on site

Unpacking

Deciding what goes where

Supervising children

Who is responsible for what

Who helps with what

How are responsibilities decided

4. Would you like to tell me about the sorts of things that you do at the camp during the day

Themes to check for:

Food - preparation, shopping, cooking, dishes, takeaways  
(urban camping grounds)

Barbecuing - planning menu, preparation of food (incl. time taken), cooking (incl. time taken), cleaning up, partner's activities while other is cooking. Is it work or leisure?

"Housework" - bed making, tidying site, laundry,

"Outside" work - removing rubbish, collecting water, disposing of waste water,

Securing camp when needed

Queuing - kitchen, laundry, shower. Importance re socialising opportunity

Supervision of children- dressing, personal hygiene, playing, sleeping, during adults' leisure

How are responsibilities/helping decided

Leisure activities -self and partner

5. What sort of things do you do when your husband/partner goes away from the camp site for the day and you stay behind?

Themes to check for:

Stays at camp -who does what prior to his departure

Supervision of children   Meals   Leisure for self and children

When he returns

Goes with him - who does what prior to family's departure  
 Supervision of children   Meals   Leisure for self and children  
 On return to camp.

6. When it is time to pack up and leave the camp site what happens?

Themes to look for:

Dismantling tent/awning  
 Packing things away  
 Who is responsible for what  
 How are responsibilities decided  
 Who helps with what  
 Supervising children

7. How are things different for you when you go camping compared with when you are home?

Themes to check for:

Housework   Child care   Leisure   Visitors  
 Husband's/partner's assistance/responsibilities with above.  
 Domestic work at camp - is it work/leisure/intertwined?  
 Is having more time a factor?  
 Being together as a family

8. What is your impression of your holiday - did you have a real one just like your husband/partner?

Themes to check for:

Own preference for holiday - why

9. Is there anything else you think would be useful for me to know about camping for my research? I am looking at who does what when the family are on a camping holiday.

**Prompts:**

Can you give me another example of that?  
 Did that happen all the time?  
 How did you feel? How do you think they felt?  
 I don't really understand  
 Really  
 That sounds interesting

Can you say a little more about that?

Why is that?

Mmmmmm

It sounds like it was a very .....(difficult/stressful/pleasant/fulfilling  
etc) situation for you.

Was.....a consideration

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## **Appendix XII**

### **THANKYOU LETTER TO INFORMANTS**

(My address)

Dear

Thankyou very much for giving up your time for me to interview you. I do appreciate your willingness to help me complete my study and hope that I have not intruded too much on your free time.

Kind regards

Elaine Henry

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### Statutes

Holidays Act 1981