SINGLE MOTHERS WHO KEEP THEIR CHILDREN

An exploratory study to investigate how the needs of keeping single mothers were met in Victoria between the years 1969 to 1975, with special reference to the Council of the Single Mother and Her Child

by


A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Social Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne, in fulfilment of the requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts February 1976.
CORRECTIONS:

p. 115  Footnote 18, line 1, should read: "Both nuptial and ex-nuptial births taken by age group as a percentage of total".

        Footnote 18, line 2: "The" should be substituted for "This".

p. 116  Table 3:

        Bank 1  line 7  column 5  should read 10  instead of .10
        line 8  "  2  "  "  5  "  "  2
        line 8  "  3  "  "  2  "  "  5
        line 9  "  2  "  "  4947  "  "  4949
        line 9  "  4  "  "  6.96  "  "  100

        Bank 2  line 7  "  5  "  "  9.5  "  "  10.53
        line 9  "  5  "  "  6.87  "  "  100

        The following note should be added to Table 3:  (a) Some of these figures differ slightly from those in Table 2. The latter were taken from The Australian Year Book, 1974 and the figures in this table from the more detailed Statistics of Victoria: Demography, 1972, 1973, which were published at an earlier date.

p. 121  Paragraph 2, should be amended to read:

        "Again, commenting on the figures of the U.S. National Centre for Health Statistics, Cutright considers that commitment to marriage among the sexually active unmarried is not greatly influenced by the marital status of the alleged father or by social stigma. He writes: [24] 'When the level of non-marital sexual activity among couples not committed to marriage is high, and the control over conception and gestation is low, the out-of-wedlock conceived birth rate will be high. In such a population, the legitimated role may be high, but the illegitimacy rate will also be high. The high illegitimacy rate is not caused by social or other factors that depress legitimation.'"

p. 160  Table 6:

        Banks 1 and 2 - Labelling of horizontal axis should be centred.

p. 169  Footnote 80: For lines 1 - 5, the following should be substituted.

        "In the U.S., comparative studies of birth data between 1940 - 1968 also show that, among white ex-nuptial mothers who later marry, there is a higher completed fertility than among women whose first child was not ex-nuptial. However, among ex-nuptial mothers who do not marry, completed fertility is lower than the mean. Thus, among all white mothers the mean number ever born was 2.83, and for the never-married white mothers it was 1.63."

p. 197  Next to last line should read or instead of of.
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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.S.W. Australian Association of Social Workers
A.B.C.S. Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics
A.C.O.S.S. Australian Council of Social Services
A.S.B.R. Age Specific Birthrate
A.S.E.N.B.R. Age Specific Ex-Nuptial Birthrate
A.S.S.D. Australian Social Security Department
C.S.M.C. Council of the Single Mother and Her Child (Victoria)
N.C.B. National Children's Bureau (U.K.)
N.C.I. National Council of Illegitimacy (U.S.)
N.C.S.M.C. National Council of the Single Mother and Her Child (Australia)
N.C.U.M.C. National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child (U.K.)
N.C.O.P.F. National Council for One Parent Families (formerly N.C.U.M.C.)
O.W.C.B.R. Out of Wedlock Conceived Birthrate
P.W.P. Parents Without Partners (Victoria)
R.W.H. Royal Women's Hospital, Carlton, Victoria
S.M.B. Supporting Mothers' Benefit
S.W.D. Social Welfare Department (Victoria)
V.C.O.S.S. Victorian Council of Social Services
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

"Environments are invisible.
Their ground rules, pervasive
structure and overall patterns
elude easy perception."

Marshall McLuhan, The Medium is
the Massage.

Societies have had varying attitudes to sexual relationships,
but, according to Malinowski, none has equally approved of both
legitimate and illegitimate births. In other words, "illegitimate"
or "ex-nuptial" births have usually been seen as posing a social
problem of one kind or another. In most western societies this
problem traditionally has centred around the absence of a legally
identifiable father and husband, for it was the father and husband
who made and "defined" the family. Without him child and mother
did not constitute a family unit in the full sense.

(1) B. Malinowski, Parenthood - The Basis of Social Structure in
Robert W. Roberts (ed.), The Unwed Mother, Harper & Row, N.Y. &
London, 1966, p. 36. "Broadly speaking, it may be said that freedom
of intercourse though not universally is yet generally prevalent in
human societies. Freedom of conception, outside marriage, is,
however, never allowed, or at least in extremely few communities
and under very exceptional circumstances."
See p. 34: "Roughly speaking, an unmarried mother is under a ban,
a fatherless child is a bastard. This is by no means only a
European or a Christian prejudice; it is the attitude found
amongst most barbarous and savage peoples as well".
Consequently, the child without a legally identifiable father did not have full family identity and status; similarly, the woman who had given birth to a child without having a legally identifiable husband did not have complete family identity and status. And since social status depended to a large extent upon family status, both the fatherless child and the husbandless woman also lacked full social status. They were, so to speak, socially anomalous.

Although attitudes to marriage and the family have changed very radically, this whole traditional view has nevertheless persisted and it has had a powerful influence upon our current views about and our attitudes towards so-called single mothers and their children. In other words, single or ex-nuptial mothers still are viewed as being essentially different from other one-parent families (families where the legal husband and father has died or has deserted or has obtained a legal divorce) and as constituting a social "problem".

The Problem to be Studied

This study investigates some of the problems encountered by single or ex-nuptial mothers and their children. It also is

(2) Ibid., p. 35. "Through all these variations there runs the rule that the father is indispensable for the full sociological status of the child as well as of its mother, that the group consisting of a woman and her offspring is sociologically incomplete and illegitimate. The father, in other words, is necessary for the full legal status of the family."
concerned to examine the problems faced by society in providing for the needs of this "disadvantaged" group. Since it would be impractical to consider these problems in a general or global way, attention has been concentrated upon how the needs of single or ex-nuptial mothers have been expressed in the state of Victoria and how those needs have been met in Victoria by community provisions, between the years 1967 and 1975. And because those needs have been formulated and expressed in Victoria mainly by the Council for the Single Mother and Her Child (C.S.M.C.), this study is also centrally concerned with the adequacy of the Council as a representative of single mothers as a group and as an organisation attempting to influence the formation of social policy for this group.

Although a great deal of research has been done overseas on the special problems of single mothers and their children, relatively little has been done in Australia. This study, then, seeks to indicate how overseas research provides a perspective for investigating the situation in Victoria, and it also attempts to assemble the fragmentary information available in Australia. It can, in fact, lay claim to being the first study to provide an overall and systematic account of the situation of single mothers in Victoria and, because most of the action apropos this issue has occurred in Victoria, in Australia at large.

Put in more precise terms, this study has a dual aim: first, to provide an exposition of what is known (and what still
needs to be known) about the problem of ex-nuptial mothers and their children; and second, to provide a "case study" of the Victorian Council for the Single Mother and Her Child as an organisation that has been centrally concerned with the needs of ex-nuptial mothers. Of course, given the enormous range and scope of the issues involved, the present essay must necessarily be a kind of "pre-enquiry", that is to say a preparatory study that will pave the way for more complete and definitive studies.

History of the Problem

Prior to 1960 the problems of single mothers who kept their children in the state of Victoria were met in an ad hoc way. No special social provisions were made for them, though there have been, from the earliest times, institutions - mostly residential maternity homes - which cared for pregnant unmarried mothers. Further, by the time that the professional training of social workers had commenced in Victoria in the 1930's, adoption was an accepted and approved practice. There is no record of research into the implications of adoption, or of the keeping alternative, in Australia before 1965, so it seems likely that professional practitioners concerned with single mothers and their children generally accepted the findings of overseas studies without much question.

Again, throughout the nineteen fifties, ex-nuptial births were stable in number, following a post-war peak, and the number

(3) See Appendix B, Table 2.
of children available for adoption was more or less balanced by
the number of approved parents. The only apparent problems arose
from the break-down of unsupervised private adoption arrangements. (4)

If, however, the issue of single mothers and their
children was not an urgent one before 1960, it certainly became
so in the 1960's. First, the number of ex-nuptial births, both
absolutely and in relation to all other births, began to increase
sharply from 1961 onwards. Second, from 1969 the proportion of
adoptions began to decline. This led to an increased number of
single mothers bringing up their children - children for whom no
provisions, financial or otherwise, had been made. Third, certain
professional workers began at this time to question the adequacy
of the child-care provided by the single mothers who kept their
children. (5) Fourth, as a consequence of the above factors, the
situation of childless couples anxious to adopt but not able to
because adoptable children were no longer available, itself became
a factor. So, for example, it was said that some children were
being unwisely retained by young mothers instead of being given up

(4) The 1964 Victorian Adoption of Children Act imposed much more
stringent regulations on adoption practices and required
supervision of adoptions by qualified principal adoption
officers in social welfare agencies.

(5) Professor V. Collins, Department of Pediatrics, University of
Melbourne, claimed, for example, that a high proportion of ex-
nuptial children suffered from a "failure-to-thrive" syndrome:
cited in an unpublished paper by Dr. N. Johns, V.C.O.S.S. Confer-
ence, November, 1972.
to good adopting parents who could guarantee the future welfare of the children. (6)

About this time, in 1967, a group of ex-nuptial mothers joined together to put their side of the case and to fight for the kind of social, legal and financial support that would allow them to keep their children without severe hardship. This group of single mothers put their case extremely well and forcefully at a time when public attitudes towards disadvantaged minorities were more sympathetic than in the past. As a result, the questions they raised about their position and their special needs sparked a great deal of public interest.

The Problems of Single Mothers

Let us look in more detail at the complex of specific issues that are contained within "the problem" of the single mother and her child.

First, it seems obvious enough that the needs of single mothers and their children are a function of their inequality vis-à-vis mothers and children in more typical and "orthodox" families. It may seem, then, that the best way of investigating their special needs would be to look closely at a representative sample of single mothers and then to generalise from the findings. But the represent-

(6) This point was made in private discussions with the author by members of the Committee of the Victorian Family Council, and Sr. Kiely of Hartnett House (maternity home for unmarried mothers) Melbourne.
ative character of any group of a total population is very difficult to establish, and certainly the more one attempts to specify and identify a representative group of single mothers, the more elusive the concept of "single mother" becomes. (7) A basic problem, then, is to decide just who "single mothers" are.

Second, it is clear that the problem of ex-nuptial mothers and their children raises issues concerned with family functioning. Is a one-parent (i.e. female parent) family, for example, viable? (8) What are the specific needs of mothers and children in such families? (9) Would we be any nearer understanding what they needed from the community as a whole if we knew something about the dynamics of the matriarchal family?

Third, there is the question of just who "single" mothers are? How many ex-nuptial mothers live a completely solo life? How long does their single situation last? Is their single situation simply a stage, and are they typically, in fact, in a process of transition towards the more usual two-parent family? Further, what happens to the children of ex-nuptial mothers after the age

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(7) Indeed, so many contrary ideas about single mothers emerged through discussions and reading that at one stage the author contemplated developing a typology of stances apropos ex-nuptial births.


(9) Studies of attitudes of single mothers show, for example, that they see their main needs as "having someone to love me" and "having enough to live on". See Wilson and Smith, "They Kept Their Babies: A Follow-up Study of Thirty-eight Unmarried Mothers Fifteen months after Confinement", Australian Journal of Social Work, 27, 2, June, 1974; N. Johns, The Health of Babies kept by Their Single Mothers, unpublished M.D. thesis, Univ. of Melb., 1974.
of school entry? There is some evidence about these children in their pre-school period, but the evidence becomes very slender after they reach three years of age. (10)

Fourth, it might be asked whether the problem of the ex-nuptial mother and her child is not best seen as part of the more general problem of deprived mothers, so that the father's capacity or willingness to support the ex-nuptial mother and her child becomes less relevant? The community as a whole now recognises that it should financially support deprived mothers (that is to say wives who have once had legal partners, but whose partners are now dead, or have deserted, or divorced them) and after 1973 it also equally has supported mothers who have never had legal partners. (11) The tendency, therefore, seems to be for the single mother to become absorbed within the more general category of the deprived mother instead of being considered as a special class.

Fifth, on the level of policy, if it is agreed that ex-nuptial mothers and their children are a disadvantaged group, should there be some kind of positive discrimination for them in the short term, and should there be an attempt to secure general equality

(10) See Chapter 2 for details. Perhaps, after the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit in July, 1973, it may be possible to secure information about these children from pension records. (11) In Victoria no payments were made to ex-nuptial mothers until the passing of the Commonwealth States Grants Act of 1968. Ex-nuptial mothers were granted full equality in respect of financial assistance by the Supporting Mothers' Benefit of 1973.
between them and other disadvantaged single-parent and two-parent families in the long term? Once again, may it not be more correct and more just to consider them as part of the general class of disadvantaged families?

Finally, with specific regard to the C.S.M.C., a number of organisational issues arise. For example, how representative is the Council of the interests of the single mothers as a whole? And how successful has it been in securing changes in community attitudes and policies towards ex-nuptial mothers? Again, to what extent is it a "self-help" participatory movement, or on the other hand an "élitist" movement? And to what degree does the C.S.M.C. exemplify a "natural history" of voluntary organisations?

Method of Enquiry

We begin first with a survey of the available research literature on ex-nuptial mothers and their children both overseas and in Australia. This will provide a general theoretical perspective for the concrete and particular enquiry undertaken in the following chapters.

With regard to this latter enquiry into the needs of ex-nuptial mothers and their children in the state of Victoria, and into the work of the C.S.M.C., we have been concerned first to extract, assemble and systematise the information contained in the various pieces of local research, statistical data, reports, etc. which bear partially and obliquely upon our problem. This has involved
consulting parliamentary legislation and proceedings concerning, for example, the Supporting Mothers' Benefit (1973) and the Status of Children Act (1974/5); demographic data from the Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics on ex-nuptial birth-rates and ratios; (12) agency records on children in need of care; admittance records for day-care and reception centres, and C.S.M.C. publications, reports and records.

Further, faced with the dearth of comprehensive local studies on the problem of ex-nuptial mothers and their children, we have been forced to rely to some extent upon informal evidence gathered from discussions with ex-nuptial mothers, members of the C.S.M.C. and other organisations concerned with single parents such as Parents Without Partners and Women's Liberation Headquarters in Melbourne, professional workers in the fields of pediatrics and child-care (infant-welfare sisters, municipal, hospital and agency social workers) and non-professional voluntary workers in contact with single mothers.

Although these discussions have not been formal and systematic data-gathering exercises, they have nevertheless been conducted at some depth and with a concern to be as representative and as thorough as possible. Thus, an attempt has been made to contact all persons and bodies in Victoria centrally concerned with

(12) In the collation and interpretation of these data extensive and valuable help has been given by Mr. W. Bach and Mr. D. Coglan of the Australian Bureau of Census & Statistics; Mr. P. Salmon, Agricultural Extension, University of Melbourne; Associate-Professor P. Praetz, Department of Economics, Monash University; and Professor R. Bell, Department of Sociology, LaTrobe Universi With regard to official birth records, insofar as they are relevant to the description of the ex-nuptial population, there
the problem of ex-nuptial mothers. Similar bodies in Adelaide and Canberra also have been contacted.

Again, as well as having two years' practical social work experience with single mothers in a major agency (Melbourne Catholic Family Welfare Bureau), the author attended all the meetings of C.S.M.C. between 1972 and 1974, was appointed a member of the Welfare Rights Sub-Committee of C.S.M.C., and in 1975 was appointed as a professional adviser to C.S.M.C. by the executive committee of that organisation. The author was also invited by V.C.O.S.S. to assist in the revision of its handbook for single mothers.

Although, as has been said, the discussions with people directly concerned with single mothers and their children were not of a formal and systematic kind, they do provide something more than mere anecdotal and impressionistic evidence. Thus, some fifty carefully planned discussions were conducted and records of these discussions were made. Seven in-depth discussions (consisting of two to three sessions each) were held with ex-nuptial mothers chosen as examples of different categories; five interviews

(12) are several factors which place limits upon the accuracy of these records. First, there is a considerable likelihood of under-reporting: (a) marital status is taken on the unchecked statement of the mother; and (b) married and separated women who give birth to ex-nuptial children are recorded as "married". Second, there is important information about ex-nuptial mothers which is not recorded at all. Thus, no information is recorded about the socio-economic class of the ex-nuptial mothers, their place of residence, the birth order of the child, etc.

(13) Three of these mothers were over 25 years of age and had retained care of their children. One was living alone, and two were living with their own mother. A fourth mother retained care of her child and subsequently married a man not the child's father. The fifth was a 16 year old migrant girl who requested adoption of her child at 3 months, and the seventh was a young single mother who planned to have her child adopted but later married the putative father and retained care of the child.
with medical, social work and psychological researchers were arranged; discussions were held with senior social workers at the Royal Women's Hospital, the Queen Victoria Hospital, the Mercy Hospital and the Western General Hospital; the principal adoption officer of the Melbourne Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, and social workers of the Methodist/Presbyterian Child Care Service, of the Buoyancy Foundation (for drug addiction), and of St Joseph's Maternity Homes in Adelaide and Melbourne were also consulted; an interview was arranged with the senior social worker of the Melbourne City Council (which is responsible for four day-care centres) and a visit was made to the Ethel Nielson Day-Care Centre. Social workers were also contacted at the Maternal and Infant Welfare Section of the Victorian Department of Health, at the Cairnmillar Institute (which runs a group for single mothers who are not members of C.S.M.C.), at the Australian Government Poverty Commission, at the Australian Department of Social Security in Canberra and Adelaide, at the Brotherhood of St Laurence, at Allambee Reception Centre for children in need of care and protection. The research officers at the Victorian Social Welfare Department and at the Australian Social Security Department were interviewed, as was the executive of the Victorian Family Council and the secretary of the Social Questions Committee of the Victorian Council of Churches and the Welfare Officer in charge of services to single mothers from the Australian Department of Social Security.

In addition, an extensive interview was conducted with the Director of the Family Welfare Division of the Victorian Social
Welfare Department, and discussions were held with the senior social worker of the Family Counselling Section of the same Department, and with a number of other people in direct contact with ex-nuptial mothers such as a magistrate concerned with assessing applicants for family assistance, a welfare officer and a community liaison officer in the Australian Department of Social Security, a desk clerk and a field officer attached to the Family Assistance Section of the Victorian Department of Social Welfare. Two social workers instrumental in founding C.S.M.C., Mr. Eric Benjamin and Mrs. M. Wilson, also were interviewed. Finally, discussions were arranged with three people in private non-professional agencies concerned with ex-nuptial mothers and their children - Rev. Glover of the Peace and Freedom Mission, the Director of the Victorian Association for the Deserted Child, and Mrs. Carmel Brennan of the Pregnancy Support Service. The author also corresponded with overseas research workers in Holland and New Zealand.

Plan of the Study

This study begins, as already indicated, with a survey of the research literature, overseas and Australian, bearing upon the problem of ex-nuptial mothers and their children. It then presents a profile of C.S.M.C. in order to expose the issues as they are perceived by single mothers, and it goes on to evaluate the achievement of C.S.M.C. in the light of its own objectives in expressing the needs of single mothers and in providing policies to meet those needs.
The following three chapters are concerned with the wider implications of the whole ex-nuptial situation. Thus the demographic data relevant to ex-nuptiality is considered, four general categories are developed to describe the possible "outcomes" of the ex-nuptial situation, and the principles underlying the current legal and social provisions relating to ex-nuptial mothers and their children are examined.

Chapter 7 then returns to assess C.S.M.C.'s achievement in the light of this more general and more complete account of the ex-nuptial situation. And the final chapter provides a summing up and attempts to sketch out what remains to be done in this area of research.

A Note on the Term "Single Mother"

At first sight it seems appropriate enough to use the term "single mothers" to describe ex-nuptial mothers in general. However, in fact, the indiscriminate use of the term "single mother" perpetuates many of the prevalent confusions about these mothers and their children. "Single mother" is only a useful term if it is used in a precise way and it is seldom so used.

The words "illegitimate", "ex-nuptial" and "single mother and her child" have all been used synonymously to refer to the situation where a child is born to parents who have no legal union. They all refer to the reciprocal marital status of the parents at the time of the child's birth. However, these same terms are also
used in different and distinct senses. Thus, for example, "single mother" is sometimes used of mothers who have been widowed or divorced.

In this study the term "illegitimate" refers to situations where the child is born outside the accepted legal parental structure which, in the western world, is marriage. The term "ex-nuptial" is a more precise way of saying the same thing, as some societies in the past have accepted the children of concubines as "legitimate". The term "ex-nuptial" is also considered by many people to be a more neutral term, and normally it will be used in this study.

The term "single mother" is a fairly new one, and it can have a wide variety of meanings. Single parents may be separated, widowed, or divorced from their spouses, or they may not have been married at all. When the term "single mother" is used to refer to mothers who have never been married, presumably it will include many who are in stable common law unions. It would be incongruous to refer to these women as "single mothers" when, for instance, deserted married women living alone with their children, and who are much more "single" in the ordinary sense of the word, are not so called. However, if the definition of single mother is formulated too widely it will include, from a policy point of view, some (for example, widows) for whom other provision may be made.

In this thesis, the term "single mother" will refer to ex-nuptial mothers who are looking after their own children, and who
are not living on a continuing basis with a male partner. These are, for instance, the mothers described in government records as "supporting unmarried mothers". If the term is used in this specific way, it means that only a certain proportion of ex-nuptial mothers will be described as single mothers, and it implies that there is more than one category of ex-nuptial mothers. \(^{(14)}\) Examination of data in Chapter 5 supplies evidence to support this idea.

\(^{(14)}\) For example, mothers who release their children for adoption; mothers who enter into a two-parent relationship (either de facto or de jure); mothers who bring their children up on their own; mothers who neither release their children for adoption nor retain custody of the children themselves but allow the child to be brought up by relatives or in institutions, etc.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinions in good men is but knowledge in the making."

John Milton, Areopagitica.

There is a considerable body of literature about the history and social implications of "illegitimacy" and the ex-nuptial situation. This literature provides a general perspective for a consideration of ex-nuptial mothers in Victoria in that it allows us to see what theoretical approaches have been taken towards the problem, what areas have been investigated, and what practical arrangements and provisions to meet the needs of single mothers have been tried or suggested.

This literature is so diverse and so much in "theoretical disarray"(1) that certain principles of selection have been employed. First, particular attention has been given to descriptive accounts of

the historical, legal, demographic and social aspects of whole populations of ex-nuptial mothers and their children. Second, special attention has been given to research studies dealing with the specific difficulties, needs and problems of ex-nuptial mothers. For the first, British sources tend to be the most generally useful, and for the second, sources from the U.S. (2)

It is truistic to say that research work on ex-nuptiality generally reflects the historical circumstances in which it was written. (3) Thus, in the late nineteenth century the causes of illegitimacy were seen in terms of ignorance, carelessness or ill-will on the part of the individuals concerned, and provisions to aid those in the illegitimacy situations, insofar as they existed,

(2) Overall demographic studies in the U.S. are limited by the lack of uniformity of recording procedures between States and by the diversity of sub-cultures. Again, much research has been directed towards restricted groups such as hospital patients or agency clients. British research, on the other hand, while taking a wider view, lacks the array of specialised studies which the U.S. literature provides. Margaret Bramall, Director of N.C.U.M.C., defends this lack of specialisation in her foreword to Born Illegitimate, by Eileen Crellin, M. L. Kellmer Pringle, and Patrick West, N.C.B. Study, National Foundation for Educational Research, London, 1971: "Any isolation of them (ex-nuptial mothers) in our thinking or highlighting of their specific problems may work against their welfare because of society's hostility towards unmarried mothers and their children" (p.11); "The major concern (of N.C.U.M.C.) is with the whole social group" (p.12). One exception in British writing is Jean Pochin's Without a Wedding Ring, Constable, London, 1968, which is concerned exclusively with agency mothers.

were mainly on an individual basis. However, most of the literature of interest to this study has appeared since the First World War. In the 1920’s investigation into illegitimacy was based mainly on genetic theories of causation. Thus, illegitimacy was often seen as the effect of mental retardation. Again, appeal was made to evolutionary theories, so that illegitimacy was seen as due to the mother’s inferior social development.

During the 1930’s, environmentalist theories became popular, and the origins of illegitimacy were seen in poverty and family instability. Immediately after the Second World War, however, psychological theories came into their own, and widespread use was made of the psychoanalytic approach. Then, ex-nuptial births were seen as the expression and working out of the mothers’ psychic conflicts.

Each of these theoretical approaches had direct implications for dealing with the social problems which arise through ex-nuptial births, at the practical policy level. During the nineteenth century, the policy towards ex-nuptiality largely was one of discouragement through the use of such coercive and punitive measures as removal of the child from the mother, or the institution of legal bars against illegitimate children. On the other hand, in the 1920’s policies towards ex-nuptiality usually were couched in terms of environmental manipulation – the provision of maternity homes for unmarried mothers,

surveillance of foster-care and adoption procedures. Again, in the late 1940's, when the cause of ex-nuptial births was seen as the product of a psychological stress, policies emphasised the widespread provision of clinical counselling. Or, where the cause of illegitimacy was seen in terms of social environment (the result, for instance, of the mother coming from a working-class culture) policies stressed the provision of better social services and education for the group concerned. Finally, when demographic studies revealed changing patterns in ex-nuptial births and the existence of diverse sub-groups within the whole ex-nuptial population, the implication at the practical policy level was for legal reform to relieve long-standing and common problems and the provision of differential services for the various groups (for example, pregnant school girls will have very different needs, and require different kinds of help, from older single mothers who keep their children).

As has been suggested, there is a kind of watershed between the research into the ex-nuptial situation before 1960 and that after 1960. It is for that reason that we have considered the former in a simple chronological way, and the latter in a manner that takes account of its diversity.

Research Literature 1916-1960:

The 1916 annual report of the Registrar General of Great Britain included statistics on perinatal mortality which confirmed the impression of many British child welfare workers that the death rate among illegitimate children was far higher than that among
legitimate children. (5) The resultant discussion led to the formation of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child in 1918. The aim of the Council was to work for legal reform, to provide and co-ordinate welfare services for unmarried mothers, and to act as a clearing-house for information about the unmarried mother and her child. The Council has had considerable influence ever since its inception and it was, more than any other body, responsible for the setting up of the Finer Committee on One Parent Families in 1974. (6) Publications of the Council provide a thorough documentation of thinking and practice concerning ex-nuptial mothers in the United Kingdom over the past forty years and they are an invaluable source of primary data. (7)

Fisher's work on the activities of the Council up to 1946 (8) refers to the conditions of unmarried mothers and their children before 1918 when the "bad blood" idea prevailed and when the usual practice was to separate illegitimate children from their mothers and to put them out to foster-care. Fisher also underlines the difficulty of changing this punitive and deterrent policy to a more constructive one.


(7) The list is extensive; the Council's publications since 1964 have been included under National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child in the bibliography.

(8) L. Fisher, Twenty one Years and After..., op. cit., p. 7.
Meanwhile, more sharply focused research was being done in the U.S. - this reflecting the work and interests of professional social workers in the 1920's. Thus Hosmer (9) refers to studies by Guibord and Parker in 1922 and Donahue in 1929 where it was found that samples of ex-nuptial mothers who had retained custody of their children were managing satisfactorily five and eight years respectively after the birth of their children. According to these studies success in keeping was correlated with the mothers' subsequently becoming married (as many did) or being supported and accepted by their own families, or by being in steady employment. In other words, the environment was decisive.

The most extensively documented approach to the ex-nuptial situation has been that of psychological causation. A typical example is the 1948 study by Viola W. Barnard (10) who argues that "the effort to formulate differential diagnosis between clinical types (of unmarried mothers) as early in the contact as possible permits quicker selection of an appropriate plan of help." (11) There had been earlier writings in the same vein, (12) but from 1945 onwards a whole school of thought based on the clinical experiences of social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists dominated the study of the ex-nuptial


(11) Ibid., p. 2.

situation and influenced practical policies towards single mothers. The most influential writer in this school was Leontine Young. Thus, she wrote in her 1945 study "Personality Patterns of Unmarried Mothers": "There must be certain defined emotional patterns that lead to the creation of the problem (of ex-nuptiality)". In 1954 she published her now celebrated Out of Wedlock, in which she described this emotional pattern as a kind of universal neurosis among unmarried mothers. As she put it: "The evidence of emotional pathology in unmarried mothers lies in their insistence upon having a baby despite their knowledge of the social attitude and the consequent cost to themselves". For Young, then, the root of the ex-nuptial mother's disturbance lay in her individual relationship towards her own parents. Because this idea tied in with current psychodynamic theory and adapted well to agency practice, it had a widespread influence upon thinking at the time. The idea of the purposive nature of the apparently "unwanted" pregnancy has indeed been extraordinarily persistent and much empirical evidence has been advanced to support it.

(13) In The Unwed Mother, ed. Robert W. Roberts, p. 82.
(15) Ibid., p. 115.


This whole approach, whatever its inadequacies, has made a positive contribution in that it has directly attacked the "negative sanctions" approach to ex-nuptiality (i.e. that if unmarried mothers are punished in some way they will cease having illegitimate children) and also opposed the still influential idea that supporting unmarried mothers might undermine the more typical family structure. (17)

This approach has also been productive in that it has led to many challenges by researchers who claimed that the psycho-dynamic approach had been based on studies of restricted samples (for example, in the U.S., mostly white, unsupported, and young girls) and that it had excluded many other factors which might appear significant on wider-scale studies.

Thus, Bernstein (18) points out that Young had neglected the "crisis factor" in unmarried motherhood and she cites evidence to suggest that it could be the fact of pregnancy that produces the neurotic symptoms rather than, so to speak, the neurotic symptoms which produce the pregnancy. Again, Vincent, (19) after pointing out changes of fashion in professional writing, reports on a comparison of 500 young ex-nuptial mothers in California with a group of single and non-pregnant women on the basis of psychological tests. Vincent claims that the tests showed no significant differences between the two groups, although he also found some socio-economic factors which could be influential.

(17) See for instance Clare Isbister, "The Family, Past Present and Future", Medical Journal of Australia, Vol.2, April 14, 1973, pp.762-764: "It is absurd that our society should encourage unmarried teenage mothers to rear fatherless children by giving them the same allowance as the deserted wife" (p.764).
(18) Rosa Bernstein, "Are We Still Stereotyping the Unmarried Mother?", Social Work, 5 July 1960, pp.22-38.
Similarly, Pauker\(^{20}\) traced the idea of psychological determination from its early days and claimed that contrary evidence existed. He obtained records of pre-pregnancy M.M.P.I. psychological tests of 117 girls who had become pregnant while still at school and compared them with a matched group who were tested at the same time but who did not become pregnant. Pauker found that there were neither significant pre-pregnancy differences between the two groups nor significant differences between them later. The only consistent difference, and this applied to 13 per cent only of the samples, was that the girls who had become pregnant were more likely to have come from homes disrupted by death, separation or divorce.

It is noticeable that both Vincent and Pauker were the first to insist upon the need for more representative samples of ex-nuptial mothers and to initiate the sociological interest that has characterised much of the best work on ex-nuptiality from the late 1950's onwards. Both these concerns are reflected in such wide-ranging surveys of many aspects of sexual behaviour in the 1950's as the Kinsey Report and the studies of Martin and Christiansen in the U.S. and Croog in Scandinavia and Finland.\(^{21}\) Again, the use of vital statistics was assisted by the publication of demographic


summaries such as the Special Report of the U.S. National Office of Vital Statistics on "Illegitimate Births" in 1960 and the collations of National Statistics Relating to Illegitimacy in the annual reports of the National Council of the Unmarried Mother and her Child in the United Kingdom. (22)

Research Literature 1960-1975

As we have said, since 1960 there has been an explosion of research studies on the ex-nuptial situation and its personal and social implications. And as has been noted also, what is distinctive about this research from the 1960's onwards is that particular samples of ex-nuptial mothers are examined in their total demographic context.

In Great Britain, an important forerunner of this approach has been Barbara Thompson's "A Social Study of Illegitimate Maternities" which analysed birth registrations, almoner department records, medical registers and all maternities in Aberdeen between 1949 and 1952. From this she obtained a considerable amount of information on the circumstances of illegitimate pregnancy in 582 of the 701 cases. This information included details about civil status, parity, social class, relationship with putative fathers, attitudes to pregnancy and family relationships. Thompson noted that while there was a correlation


(23) Barbara Thompson, "A Social Study of Illegitimate Maternities", British Journal of Preventive & Social Medicine, 10, 1956, pp.75-87.
between illegitimacy and broken and unhappy homes, Young's compulsive
neurotic unmarried mother was not typical of the group. She also
criticised Young's thesis for ignoring the inequality of social
distribution. (24) Thompson's study has been a reference point for
subsequent research in the United Kingdom. This research has enabled
changing trends among the ex-nuptial population to be documented. (25)

A study by Weir in 1970 (26) uses Thompson's findings, and
other studies of wide-ranging samples of illegitimate maternities in
the U.S. and the U.K., to examine a random sample of 288 ex-nuptial
mothers in Scotland. This detailed study provides valuable information
about the mothers and it also provides a perspective on long-term
changes occurring in this group. For example, Weir notes that her
sample is nearer the general population of similar age than the
samples in previous studies. She also finds that the over-25 group
has a higher proportion of problems than do younger mothers.

One of the most valuable background studies for the purposes
of this thesis, and for any general consideration of the ex-nuptial
situation, is the English National Children's Bureau study entitled
From Birth to Seven. (27) Although this study was begun in 1958, the
publication of results did not commence until 1966. The focus of

(24) Ibid., p. 86.
(25) See R. Illsley and Barbara Thompson, "Women from Broken Homes",
Sociology Review, Vol.9, March 1961, pp.27-54; R. Illsley and D.
Gill, "Changing Trends in Illegitimacy", Social Science and Medicine,
(26) Sylvia Weir, "A Study of Unmarried Mothers and their Children in
Scotland", Scottish Health Services, No.13, 1970, published by
Scottish Home and Health Department.
(27) From Birth to Seven, R. Davie, Neville Butler, Harvey Goldstein,
London, Longmans (in association with N.C.B.) 1972; M.L. Kelimer
this piece of research is on the children. Information was gathered on virtually every baby born in England and Scotland and Wales during the week March 3 - 9, 1958, for a perinatal survey. The results highlighted the increased risk for some groups of illegitimate children in certain medical and social circumstances. (The representativeness (98%) and numbers of the sample of 17,000 virtually eliminated bias.)

In 1964 the National Child Development Study (1958 cohort) was initiated to follow up the progress of these same children, now aged seven. Subsequent studies were done of the same children at eleven years, and are now in the process of being done on the children at the age of fifteen.

What is of direct interest in this study (which compared the physical and mental development of groups of children with their peers) is that the sample included 600 ex-nuptial children who could be directly compared with the 16,000 other children born in the same week both in one parent and two parent families. (28)

The findings of these studies demonstrated the complexity of the factors influencing the ex-nuptial situation, and provided much detailed information in analysing the kind of pressures and


(28) Variables examined included the mothers' personal and social background, care during pregnancy, birth weight, gestation of the child, maternal age, birth order, social class, and the outcome for the children after seven years in terms of home environment, physical development, ability and attainment, and behaviour and adjustment.
the likely outcome of ex-nuptial birth from the child's point of view. Much subsequent use has been made of these findings which demonstrate conclusively that to be born illegitimate (at least in Great Britain over the period of the survey) is to be born dis-advantaged.

A useful study of a large sample of unmarried mothers, with the aim of investigating the lack of ante-natal care, was that of Bernstein and Sauber in New York in 1961. (29) This confirmed the finding of the N.C.B. study, viz. that unmarried mothers received later and less adequate ante-natal care than other mothers, and that the likelihood of their receiving helping services after the birth of their children was slight.

Two other very impressive cohort studies by Sauber and Rubinstein and Sauber and Corrigan concern themselves with the same group of 205 mothers and their children, first eighteen months after birth and then six years after birth. (30) It must be remembered that the New York population of mothers and children is much more heterogeneous racially and culturally than the British group analysed in the N.C.B. study, and further that the factors investigated were more limited. However, the New York research does provide confirmatory evidence of some aspects of the British study. (31)

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(31) See chapter 5.
Between 1961 and 1964 there were some limited demographic overviews made for social work purposes in the U.S.\(^{(32)}\) Now perhaps a little dated, these aimed to show the extent of the problem of "out-of-wedlock births" as far as the need for services was concerned.

The various reports from the U.S. Commission on Population Growth based upon the Current Population Survey are notable for their depth and complexity, but are not directly focused on needs and provision of services.\(^{(33)}\) Of these reports particularly valuable is the already mentioned Cutright study, "Illegitimacy in the U.S., 1920-1968". This exhaustively examines social work and sociological literature in the light of demographic trends and it has been extensively used in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

There have been two New Zealand studies of importance, a minor one dealing with the ex-nuptial situation in New Zealand before 1970, and a major one undertaken by the New Zealand Department of

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Social Welfare, to be published in 1975. (34)

A further important source of information has been the historical and legal studies which are used as a background for Chapter 6 of this thesis. In the U.S. there have been a number of studies of particular legal problems and legal structures insofar as they relate to ex-nuptial mothers and their children. In Great Britain Hair has described the historical development of current practices and the effects of a legal situation which is similar in many respects to that prevailing in Australia. (35) The National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child has also published a number of memoranda suggesting reforms in the registration of births, affiliation proceedings, the limits of maintenance payments in magistrate's courts, and the setting up of family courts. (36)

(34) The Unmarried Mother: Problems Involved in Keeping Her Child, 2nd ed. 1975, Society for Research on Women in New Zealand Inc. P.O.B. 13078, Johnsonville, N.Z. Publication No.3. Dr John Jensen, Chief Research Officer of the Department of Social Welfare, New Zealand, has kindly supplied information and tables in advance of publication. An abstract of these is given in Appendix E.


(36) See list of N.C.U.M.C. publications in bibliography.
Although this thesis is not concerned primarily with the particular problems of sub-groups of the ex-nuptial population, there are some particular issues that are of sufficiently general concern which have been studied in depth in the U.S. and which have a bearing upon the situation of ex-nuptial mothers in Australia. Thus, research has been done on the "status decision" to keep or not; Furie examines the use of birth-control methods by lower-class women; Griswold looks at the likelihood of second and more illegitimate births; and Pannor, Massaryk and Evans look at the involvement of ex-nuptial fathers in contact with social work agencies.

All the studies mentioned so far have examined the situation of ex-nuptial mothers and their children. But there is, of course, a considerable body of writing concerned with the various practical measures that have been used to meet the needs of these mothers and children. Several collections present overviews of work being done from this point of view. In particular, they report interdisciplinary approaches to the problems of ex-nuptial mothers. The most comprehensive study of the needs of ex-nuptial mothers, and the most relevant to Australian and Victorian conditions is, of course, the Finer Report


(41) For example, see the National Council of Illegitimacy
published in England in 1974. This report was the result of work by a commission set up to investigate the socio-legal implications of lone parenthood and to recommend policy changes. The Committee worked for four and a half years sifting and collating evidence of all kinds. It analysed the legal and moral obligations to maintain dependent one-parent families and how this might best be done. As Finer himself observed, this was a task which had not been undertaken since the time of the Elizabethan Poor Laws.

In a sense the Finer Report begins where the National Children's Bureau left off. Having established that one-parent

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(42) Department of Health and Social Security, Report of the Committee on One Parent Families, Chairman, The Hon. Sir Morris Finer, vols. I and II, London, H.M.S.O. July 1974. Among the organisations which submitted evidence to the Finer Committee eight were specifically concerned with ex-nuptial mothers, viz., The Birmingham Association for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child; Gingerbread Bradford; Gingerbread Headquarters; Hartlepool Lone Parents' Self-Help Association; Mothers in Action; The National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child; Single Parents' Association.

families are disadvantaged, it proceeds to elaborate a comprehensive social policy to meet present needs and to prevent future problems. The report shows how present policies affect different one-parent family groups and how the present "stigmatising" policies worsen the family insecurity they purport to alleviate. The report's principal recommendations are in the area of administrative changes in social security and legal structures and new forms of co-ordination. Some of Finer's recommendations would not fit the Australian situation, but the traditions and practices which have led to the public neglect of deprived families are common to England and Australia.\(^\text{(44)}\)

As we have said, none of the findings of the overseas studies we have been so far considering can be used directly in an examination of the ex-nuptial situation in Victoria, although the National Children's Bureau Study, the Finer Report, and the New Zealand Illegitimacy Study suggest the kind of information that is needed for such an examination. Unfortunately, there are no comprehensive Australian studies of the calibre of the above-mentioned research which could serve as a point of departure for an analysis of the needs of keeping single mothers in Victoria.

**Australian Research, 1965-1974**

Though Australian research on ex-nuptial mothers is limited both in amount and extent, a number of specialised studies have

\(^\text{(44)}\) See Finer Report, *op. cit.*, p. 9 para. 2.11.
appeared in social work and medical journals since the 1960's and this may indicate that there is an awakening of interest in the emerging problems mentioned in Chapter I of this thesis. \(^{(45)}\) Few of these studies, however, have been clearly focused and most have reflected the limitations already noticed in the early overseas studies, viz., lack of demographic context, restricted nature of samples, and reliance upon anecdotal accounts of experiences.

The first explicit attempt to look at the needs of unmarried mothers was that of Mary Lewis in 1965 in a paper modelled on the thesis of Leontine Young. \(^{(46)}\) Again in 1968, two demographers, Basavrajappa and Spencer, described contrasting trends in pre-marital pregnancies and ex-nuptial births and how these might be measured. \(^{(47)}\) However, there was no indication from the authors as to how ex-nuptial mothers might differ systematically from other mothers, or what might be the different types of outcome of the ex-nuptial situation. They contented themselves with pointing out (i) that in 1966 the population at risk for ex-nuptial births had been decreasing in age, and (ii) that the proportion of ex-nuptial conceptions which resulted in marriage had decreased in proportion to those which did not.


In the same year, 1968, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Adelaide published a symposium of views by professionals working with unmarried mothers. These were mainly generalisations from the experience of lawyers, obstetricians, psychiatrists, youth welfare workers and social workers, and made no reference to overseas research or to the general situation in Australia at the time.

A year later Pamela Roberts studied 349 unmarried mothers from three different hospitals in Sydney to ascertain the proportion of those adopting (60%). She noted that most of the keeping mothers returned to their own families. Her sample, however, excluded those women who were in de facto situations. Roberts' study included a plea for a continuing pension for unsupported mothers.

Between 1969 and 1971 some socio-medical studies were done at the Queen Victoria Hospital under Professor Carl Wood of the Department of Obstetrics. These studies were principally concerned to determine the reasons for the use or non-use of contraceptive methods and it was assumed that ex-nuptial births would be due in most cases to various obstacles to the use of contraceptives. It is not clear how representative the samples were.

(48) South Australian Clinics: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, 4, 3 Aug.1968.
In 1971, there was a brief study of a special ex-nuptial group, that of Greek migrants. Unfortunately, this interesting line of inquiry does not seem to have been followed up. There was also a comprehensive survey of the legal disabilities of ex-nuptial mothers as they existed in Australia in 1970. This survey by Sackville and Lanteri examines provisions in public and private law, and the writers conclude that many of the disabilities are unnecessary and unjustifiable anomalies. The structure and administration of social welfare programmes in Australia for "fatherless families" was further examined by Sackville in 1972.

A review of the literature on unwanted pregnancies from a psychiatric point of view was published in 1972 by Beverley Raphael. This study described the unconscious motivation of "unwanted pregnancies" in terms reminiscent of Leontine Young's thesis.

Since 1973 a number of well-designed studies in specialized areas of the ex-nuptial situation have been completed and they have provided essential reference points for the present thesis. Thus Joan Healey has studied "The Decision Making of Single Mothers", and

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(54) Beverley Raphael, "Psychosocial Effects of Induced Abortion", Medical Journal of Australia, July 1, 1972, pp.35-40; July 3, 1972, pp.98-101. See also the following work based on Raphael: The Role of the Social Worker in Assisting the Patient with an Unwanted Pregnancy, Medical Social Work Department, Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, 1973.
Nan Johns studied "The Health of Babies Kept by their Single Mothers" with reference to a Melbourne sample. Healey was concerned to examine the relevance of overseas studies for distinguishing the differences between keeping and adopting mothers among maternity home residents. She found little difference on sociological grounds in a first stage experimental study (68 subjects), and she then further investigated certain subjective psychological factors in a second stage study (57 subjects). She found that keeping was associated with a certain negative self-image. Meredith and Brotherton looked at a sample of 124 hospital patients who were also agency clients (and who were known not to be a representative sample of the whole ex-nuptial population). The writers contrasted certain measurable sociological factors (age, education level, occupational level of the father, residence in a maternity home) in the group who opted for adoption (58%) with those in the group who kept their children. Their findings confirmed indications of some overseas studies and also demonstrated the implications for the planning of future services. They associated the increased tendency for single, young, primaparae, women to keep their ex-nuptial children with the decreased use of maternity homes, and they noted the difficulty of ensuring continuing social work contact with these mothers.

Johns has done the only systematic cohort study yet carried out in Australia on the children of ex-nuptial mothers. Though her sample included only 135 ex-nuptial mothers and a control group of 45 married mothers, the study was followed out over three years. Johns's findings confirm some aspects of overseas research and provide the only clear and detailed evidence yet available about the lives of some ex-nuptial mothers and their children. It is this kind of information which is essential if any evaluation of the needs of keeping single mothers is not to be impressionistic and conjectural. The size of the sample investigated by Johns and the explicit exclusion of women in de facto relationships, together with the fact that the mothers studied were patients at one particular hospital only, means that Johns's study cannot claim to be representative of all ex-nuptial mothers. However, all age groups and birth orders were included in the random sample, and the married mothers were carefully matched in these regards. The study began with intake on January 1, 1968, and continued for one year. There were 90 mothers in the study sample and 45 married controls. A second control group consisted of 45 children who were surrendered for adoption, together with their adoptive mothers. These samples were followed over three years through monthly contacts, and the effect of their sociological, psychological and medical environment was measured in terms of their physical development. (56) Various detailed findings of this study are referred to in chapter 5 of this thesis.

(56) Details of the effects of the health of the mother, physical care of the child, day care, maternal attitude, changes in residence, marital status, means of support, further known pregnancies, and judgement of the keeping mothers on their original decision, on the growth of the child are given on pp.115 et seq.
The main general finding of Johns's study was that there was no significant difference between the children of keeping single mothers and the children of married women of the same age group (also patients at the same hospital), but that there was a significant difference between the children of keeping single mothers and children who had been adopted. Johns also found that the children of keeping single mothers who subsequently married had a more positive rating than the children of mothers in de facto situations, or of mothers who remained single and lived with their families, and that the children of single mothers who lived alone with their children had a uniformly negative rating. Though some keeping mothers managed well, the gravest disability such mothers face, according to Johns, is the lack of an established family structure. Johns's conclusions make it clear that the outcomes even for the specific group of keeping single mothers vary with the different circumstances of their lives.

There have been several other studies over the past three years providing some partial evidence about specific groups of ex-nuptial mothers which corroborates the findings of the Australian studies already mentioned. Kiely has written a short study on "Social Attitudes to Single Mothers" using seven illustrative cases, and is at present in the process of completing a larger and more systematic study. (57) Some of the provisional conclusions of this

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second study of a sample of 90 single mothers are used in chapter 5 of this thesis.

Again, Garton-Smith has examined a sample of 30 single mothers-to-be who were patients of an ante-natal clinic of a public hospital, with the aim of investigating the relevance of trends mentioned in overseas studies. Garton-Smith confirmed the existence of certain characteristics which tend to distinguish keeping from adopting mothers. (58)

Finally, Wilson and Smart have published a recent study entitled "They Kept Their Babies: A Follow-up Study of 38 Unmarried Mothers". (59) Although this was based upon a small sample, its conclusions tend to confirm some of Johns's findings mentioned earlier. It also has the advantage of being concerned with the period fifteen months after the birth of the child when the outcomes regarding ex-nuptial birth are much clearer than in the time immediately following birth.

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The different and contrasting approaches employed by the various writers that have been examined here show how misleading it is to attempt to investigate the problem of ex-nuptial mothers.


and their children in a unilateral way; they also point up the methodological sophistication necessary for an understanding of the needs of ex-nuptial mothers. Any study which attempts such an understanding faces two main difficulties: the choice of sources, and the utilisation of evidence. Regarding the question of sources, there is no shortage of written material, but there is no possible way of generalizing the findings that are contained in this material to the present situation in Victoria. It is therefore necessary to seek sources of information in addition to this material. (It would, no doubt, be theoretically possible to design a comprehensive research project along the lines of the Finer Commission, but the public interest in mounting such a project, and the resources necessary to mount it, simply do not exist in Australia at present.)

One of the obvious sources of information about keeping single mothers is the very vocal group of ex-nuptial mothers who form the Council for the Single Mother and Her Child. However, utilisation of this information involves going beyond mere reporting of what this group has said in its public statements and official documents. What we need to discover is how the ex-nuptial mothers in this group perceive their lives and how they visualise the social and other changes that would improve their present situation. The "case study" of the C.S.M.C. which follows is an attempt to do this.
Chapter 3

THE COUNCIL OF THE SINGLE MOTHER AND HER CHILD

For there is no friend like a sister
In calm or stormy weather;
To cheer one on the tedious way,
To fetch one if one goes astray,
To lift one if one totters down,
To strengthen whilst one stands.

Christina Rossetti

The Challenge of C.S.M.C.

The situation of ex-nuptial mothers and their children became a live social issue for the first time in Victoria in the late 1960's. Not only were the numbers of ex-nuptial births higher at that time than they had been for many years, but the old solutions based on individual family adaptation were either not occurring or not working. Again, the many agencies and institutions in the community which had coped with family casualties in the past were unable to meet the new needs and demands of ex-nuptial mothers and their children. Thus, maternity homes for unmarried mothers were

(1) i.e., either the ex-nuptial mother returning to her own parents with the child, or surrendering the child to adoptive parents.
full to overflowing; some adoption agencies were publicizing the joys of adoptive parenthood to encourage sufficient applicants for the new numbers of ex-nuptial children. Government offices were forced to adapt social security programmes not designed for the purpose, to allow temporary support for ex-nuptial mothers and their babies. (2)

From the time that legal adoption was introduced in Victoria in 1926, the adoption solution for ex-nuptial children had become the usual one. (3) But by 1967 there were signs of change. Certain professionals and voluntary workers, for example, made statements on the importance of the "blood tie" between the ex-nuptial mother and her child; an important research project was started in Melbourne by Johns (4) to evaluate how keeping single mothers compared to a matched group of married mothers, and V.C.O.S.S. formed an active committee (later named the Services for Unmarried Mothers' Committee) to enquire into services for lone parents. (5)

(2) See, for example, the comprehensive report by Rev. E.G. Perkins, Director of the Melbourne Catholic Family Welfare Bureau, The Tribune, February 8, 1968: "The present situation (1968) is a complete reversal of that 10 to 20 years ago when people seeking to adopt children outnumbered greatly the children available for adoption... During 1967, 309 couples were approved (by the Bureau) as adopting applicants compared with 340 in 1966. ... Meanwhile, voluntary adopting agencies, which arrange four-fifths of Victorian adoptions, have the growing worry of financing their services..."

(3) Thus, in 1967, 65% of all ex-nuptial births in Victoria were adopted. See Victorian Year Book, 1973, pp.816-7.

(4) N. Johns, The Health of Babies Kept By Their Mothers.

(5) The first meeting of this Committee was held on November 9, 1967.
However, the most significant and most highly publicized questioning of the status quo was done by a group of ex-nuptial mothers who vigorously challenged the assumption that adoption was the best solution of the ex-nuptial problem in general.

An inquiry into the genesis and evolution of this group of mothers is one way of approaching the question of how the needs of keeping single mothers have been met in Victoria, for the initiative of this group, with the support of a Melbourne social worker, led to the founding of the Council of the Single Mother and her Child.

A number of voluntary and government agencies, as well as certain ad hoc benevolent groups, had been involved in working with and for single mothers for many years. There were, for example, medical social work departments in the hospitals where the children were born, which arranged adoption or other services (e.g. "The Haven" Salvation Army Home for Unmarried Mothers, North Fitzroy, and St Joseph's Home, Carlton) where residential care could be arranged as well as general counselling; there were general agencies and institutions (e.g. Citizens' Welfare Service and the Catholic Family Welfare Bureau) which offered help to anyone under stress, as well as a few small non-professional groups (e.g. the Peace and Freedom Mission, Malvern) who offered services of one kind or another. For the most part, however, the policies and
practices of these groups were piecemeal. Further, the thought of single mothers helping single mothers in an organised way, or even having an agency for their own special needs, was quite new. It was for these reasons that this new group of single mothers attracted a great deal of attention.

The advantages of examining the C.S.M.C. are considerable. First, it began at a discernible point in time, and its history is largely self-contained and distinct. Second, it expressed the ideas of ex-nuptial mothers in the face of much opposition, so that these ideas came to be put in a very explicit form. Third, its policies and activities have had an undisputed influence on the substantial changes that have taken place in meeting the needs of ex-nuptial mothers and children in Victoria and even in Australia at large.

What is the C.S.M.C.?

Describing an organisation has all the difficulties of describing a person. A man can be described, as a passport does, by giving his age, his height, the colour of his eyes. But of course in such a description a real impression of the man as a person eludes us completely. Why does he act in the way he does? Why is he at home in one social grouping rather than another? Why does he change in some ways and not in others? The passport
description does not tell us. So also, with an organisation like the C.S.M.C. a purely formal description misses its peculiar style and "personality".

Again, in the case of an individual, family and life experiences can explain a certain amount, just as forerunners and antecedents can set the stage for a new organisation. But, as far as the C.S.M.C. is concerned, there simply were no direct links at all with any previous groups or organisations. The small group of single mothers who later formed the Council had a distinct identity from the beginning. They had clear aims and more or less agreed means of obtaining those aims. It also had a very clear and well-defined membership, for at no stage could anyone but an ex-nuptial mother or child be eligible for membership. As one of the group put it: "We were proud of having got through the experience (of single motherhood) and we felt we had a commitment to help others in the same position". (6)

Thus, while it is necessary to look at the objective and "behavioural" facts of the C.S.M.C., to give an account of the beginnings of the C.S.M.C. without looking at the meaning it had for this early group, would be to neglect the complexity of the circumstances which attended its birth and gave it its own particular style.

(6) Rosemary Kiely, personal communication to author.
What was the C.S.M.C. trying to achieve in the view of its members? One kind of strategy that would make it possible to comprehend what this group of mothers was trying to do, and what happened as a result, is described by Silverman as "action-oriented" (7). This approach or strategy is concerned with understanding action, rather than observing behaviour. Action, Silverman says, arises out of the meanings with which the actors define social reality. Shared orientations become institutionalized and are experienced by society as social facts. Change occurs when men modify and transform social meanings through their interactions. Any positivistic explanation, Silverman concludes, which asserts that social action is determined by external and social or non-social (psychological) forces, is inadmissible. This type of approach makes it possible to ask the question: "What is the social process, the meaning to the various actors which has allowed this organisation to develop legitimising significance for its members and those of the wider society who encourage and develop it?" (8).

It is this same approach which we need to use to understand and evaluate the involvement of those concerned in the C.S.M.C. and


(8) Ibid., p. 6. There is a considerable and developed literature on the use of this type of approach in the social sciences. Silverman merely sets out and codifies some of the basic ideas. Such diverse thinkers as G.A. Kelly in psychology, Ronald Laing in psychiatry, Schutz, Berger and Goffman in sociology, Evans-Pritchard and Levi-Strauss in anthropology, as well as many others, have used similar methods to escape stereotyped thinking in their own fields.
to see how far and in what ways the group has been responsible for changes in public policy for ex-nuptial mothers. Therefore, throughout this chapter, the available data will be examined with this "action-oriented" frame of reference in mind.

**History of the founding of the C.S.M.C.**

In 1967, several young Melbourne women who were part of the growing number of well-educated girls from middle class homes who had had ex-nuptial pregnancies, decided to question the prevailing opinion of professionals and others that adoption was the best means of solving the ex-nuptial problem. One girl, for example, pressed by her family first to have an abortion, then to have her baby adopted, asked a hospital social worker: "Is there any pension available for me to help me keep my child?". The reply was: "There is nothing for people like you". This rebuff raised questions in this girl's mind. For example, who were "people like she was"? To this girl, keeping her child was a perfectly natural thing to do, and the difficult consequences seemed merely a hazard to be taken into account. The opposing view that she had to face was that she was someone who was both "selfish" and "possessive", someone insisting on her own rights to her baby's cost. This opposition made her all the more determined to have her stand accepted and supported by others. (9)

(9) Personal communication by ex-nuptial mother to author. See also R. Kiely's article "The Unmarried Mothers", *The Bulletin*, Oct.14,1967. Kiely quotes various instances of opposition and lack of interest in the keeping mother, e.g. the stay-at-home attitude of the Australian housewife which engenders prejudice, the absence of any policy on the issue by the A.A.S.W., and the exclusion of single mothers from the Supporting Mothers' Association.
In 1968, several like-minded single mothers who had kept their children and who were convinced of the rightness of their decision, made contact with one another. Their idea, as one of them expressed it, was to form a union. Their mutual support and appreciation of one another, and their search for "value in their own right as mothers", was encouraged by a Melbourne social worker, Eric Benjamin. Later in 1968, Benjamin held a meeting to consider forming a Victorian branch of the Supporting Mothers' Association which was then functioning in South Australia. However, this association was not prepared to accept single mothers. Benjamin then suggested to some of the mothers who were dissatisfied with this exclusion that they work for the establishment of a local "Parents Without Partners" group. He also tried through the A.A.S.W. to establish a Council for Single Mothers, on the lines of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child which had been functioning in the United Kingdom since 1918. However Benjamin's advertisement in the A.A.S.W. Newsletter met with little response mainly because a group of professionals under V.C.O.S.S. was already working in this area. As this latter committee played an important part in the subsequent history of the C.S.M.C., it is worthwhile digressing briefly to describe it.

From 1967, there had been a Services for Lone Parents Committee under the auspices of V.C.O.S.S., which became the Services for Unmarried Mothers' Committee in 1968. This included many
professionals in the field but not, at that stage, any single mothers. This committee set out primarily to consider the emotional and other needs of all single mothers during pregnancy and immediately after birth. It met monthly and was active for a number of years. Later, some of its members became professional advisers to C.S.M.C., but its beginnings were quite distinct and separate.

Organisational Development

Benjamin's next initiative was to encourage one single mother, Rosemary Kiely, and some other single mothers, to work for the formation of Parents Without Partners. P.W.P. was an international group, not yet established in Melbourne, which had created some interest. Rosemary Kiely and her group were thus able to lend their weight to an already viable organisation. The group waited until it had organised considerable support for a public meeting which took place in St Kilda Town Hall in October 1967 and at which Mr. Jess M.P. and Mr. L. Phillips of the Victorian Marriage Guidance Council were the principal speakers. Some 460 adults and many children were present, and the proceedings were filmed by the A.B.C. Since that meeting P.W.P. has prospered, and it now has 48 branches in Australia. The single mothers retained their own identity, so vital to them, within P.W.P. by forming a sub-group within it.

(10) See Minutes of V.C.O.S.S. Committee on the Needs of Lone Parents, First meeting, Queen Victoria Hospital, 9th November, 1967.
Most of the early membership of this group was recruited by personal contact. Gradually, but not easily, since ex-nuptial mothers had never been an identifiable and cohesive group, the numbers increased. Isolated young women who had decided to keep their children, and who were convinced of the rightness of this decision, got in touch with one another. They felt the need to validate their decision and their own personal worth as mothers by mutual support.

In June 1969, Mrs. Kiely put a notice of a meeting in The Herald. Eleven mothers attended and an interim committee was formed. The importance to them of their identity came out in the discussion of the title of the new organisation. "Mothers in Action" (the name of a body in England) was rejected as being too militant and as not emphasizing the ex-nuptial status of the members. "Unmarried Mothers", on the other hand, had a negative and dependent connotation for them. Finally, at the suggestion of Eric Benjamin, they chose the name "Single Mothers", a name which they saw as being positive and truly descriptive, and which gave them the identity they sought. From this beginning, the term "single mother" has been used to describe ex-nuptial mothers on a wider and wider basis in Australia, so that now the terms "illegitimate" and "unmarried" are no longer official or received terms.

As mentioned earlier, the view taken by this group was a fairly radical one. Thus, it rejected the idea that the good of the child was a separate consideration from the good of the mother.
In other words, as single mothers, the members of the group claimed the rights which they said were taken for granted in the case of married women. A number of people at the time took this to mean that these single mothers were adamantly opposed to adoption. Professionals who were in contact with the group polarized into positive and negative camps in reaction to this stance. On the one hand there were those who took an increasing interest in the aspirations of the group, and on the other hand were those who thought the group was having a destructive influence.

About the same time, in June 1969, the Victorian Family Life Council organized a seminar at Kew to study the needs of unmarried mothers. No single mothers had been officially invited but several of the early P.W.P. single mothers' group attended and spoke very forcefully about their views. Subsequently some of this group were invited to join the V.C.O.S.S. committee mentioned earlier.

(11) More recently, claims that parents (whether married or not) have proprietary rights over their children have been challenged. It has been argued by Goldstein, Freud and Solnit, for example, that in custody cases "biological parents'" rights should be a secondary consideration when they run counter to the welfare of the child. See J. Goldstein, A. Freud and J. Solnit, Beyond the Best Interests of the Child, Free Press, New York, 1974.

(12) Among those people in contact with the early group whom I interviewed, for example, there were those who felt concerned at the too facile decisions to adopt that were being made, resulting in severe grief reactions on the part of the mother, and those who saw the group as "threatened and neurotic" and as wanting to pressurize all single mothers, capable or not, to keep their children.
The single mothers' group, however, continued to develop in its own right. Its members took any opportunity available to use media publicity. This enhanced both their positive and negative images, but it also certainly kept them in the public eye. (13) An article by Rosemary Kiely, (14) for example, aroused much interest, and a "talk back" programme in August 1969, in which Sandy Pitts took part, led to so many offers of help that a " Helpers Auxiliary" was set up. A meeting was held on October 29, 1969, to which members of the public and representatives of welfare agencies and public hospitals were invited. At the same time, the single mothers invited a number of professional social workers, many of whom had served on the V.C.O.S.S. Committee, to form an advisory panel.

By July 1970, the single mothers' group was running an accommodation service and producing information sheets, as well as vigorously campaigning for the removal of legal and social disabilities. Meanwhile the Helpers' Auxiliary was raising money, providing clothing and furniture and other facilities, as well as giving help with social service and legal problems. For a while these two groups continued working side by side, but inevitably the question of overlap and responsibility for decision-making came up.

(13) Some examples of articles are: "I'll Fight to Keep my Baby", Herald, Aug. 23, 1969; "I'm single and I'm a mother and I'm proud of it", and "I'm keeping the baby because it is mine", Bulletin, March 18, 1972. These statements received more publicity than the more cautious explanatory articles they headed - which tells us more perhaps of the attitudes of the sub-editors than those of the single mothers.

Both the single mothers' group and the auxiliary were discussing the possibility of using the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child in the United Kingdom as a model for future development. However, by late 1969 they took divergent views as to who would have the final executive responsibility. The first clash came when the auxiliary refused a request for regular joint meetings. The Helpers saw themselves as "knowledgeable friends and material helpers" and they objected to the publicity used by the single mothers. On the other hand the single mothers were not happy about the advice received from the Helpers. (15)

An incident brought the matter to a head. Some Helpers delivering furniture found a single mother whom they later reported as being incapable of caring for her child. This caused a clash between the groups and a joint meeting was held on the 9th of September 1970. Rosemary Kiely's talk on this occasion summed up the self-help aspirations of the single mothers. She said: "We want you to help us as equals and not from any sense of superiority... This will not be a patronizing charity committee". She also went on to say that the fifty single mothers who were active at that time were not a large proportion of keeping single mothers, and that if the group were to achieve its purpose it must be a single mothers' group. Rosemary Kiely concluded by saying that although the single mothers relied very much on the Helpers, they must keep their own identity. (16)

(15) The above details, and those following, are derived from the minutes of the Single Mothers' group of P.W.P., of the Helpers' Group, and of the Council of the Single Mother. Minutes available from the C.S.M.C.

(16) Copy of talk provided by R. Kiely.
There was considerable resistance from the Helpers to this idea. They had envisaged a more direct type of involvement with the initiative in their own hands. Their model, as mentioned earlier, was the N.C.U.M.C. founded by professional and concerned social reformers who wanted to work for legal and social reform, as well as providing varied and flexible services. The single mothers, however, were prepared only to concede the latter role for they connected status and identity with planning and decision-making. They needed help with accommodation, employment and money raising, but there the matter ended. From the single mothers' point of view, the Helpers had wanted to manage the public relations and to let the single mothers do the welfare tasks. The single mothers, instead, wanted to reverse these roles.

As a result of this division, the Helpers decided to disband and to form a Council for Single Mothers. This did not ever get off the ground. Meanwhile the single mothers consulted the Rev. Ray Jones, one of their professional advisers who had been at the crucial meeting, and they decided to form a Council themselves. A meeting was called on October 27, 1970. The Helpers were invited to join as associate members, and some of them did in fact join. The advance notice of this meeting ran as follows:

We hope to lay the foundations for a Council for the Single Mother and her Child, which will be run by single mothers. Single mothers feel that people who have a genuine concern for single mothers will be happy to work in an advisory or associate capacity, and not in a directing role. (17)

(17) Notice provided by R. Kiely.
Within a month of this meeting, in November 1970, the single mothers decided to break with P.W.P. and to form a fully independent group. They had always felt themselves to be a minority group within P.W.P., with a differing status, and they were never really at home under this umbrella. (18)

By the first half of 1971 this group of single mothers was functioning in its own right as the Council of the Single Mother and her Child. At this stage it had about 100 members and its "office" was the home of one of its founding members, Sandy Fitts. By July 1971, there was a membership of 400 with some 200 associate and corporate members. By July 1972, this number had increased to 1000 and 600 respectively. (19) During this year several important changes occurred. For instance, the Council mounted a campaign to have the Commonwealth pension scheme enlarged to cover all single mothers. It also set about forming area groups to decentralize and extend its membership, (20) and it moved to its own office in Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

At the beginning the Council hoped to provide merely a welfare referral service, with some personal support and encouragement

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(18) Reasons given for this breakaway vary. Some P.W.P. and C.S.M.C. members say it was too much engaged in supportive activities, while the C.S.M.C. saw their commitment to each other being based on a common cause. Others say that the P.W.P. members did not have this commitment because they did not have to justify their position in society; still others thought that C.S.M.C. members were younger than P.W.P. members on the whole and were therefore more actively militant and less settled in life, or still looking for life-partners, so that the interests of the two groups diverged too much for them to pull together.


(20) C.S.M.C. Newsletter, February 1972.
for single mothers. However, its telephone services and its baby
clothes and equipment service (run by an auxiliary member, Vanda
Nixon) grew more and more. Thus the Council's volume of work for
the year included answering 532 telephone enquiries, 700 letters and
numerous personal requests for information. At this stage the
Council was still struggling on a budget limited to membership fees.
A financial crisis precipitated a request to the Victorian Ministry
of Social Welfare and various trust funds. As a result, there was
a grant of $2500 from the State Government, and $2000 from the
Ross Trust. Up till then the bulk of the office work had been done
voluntarily by a small group of single mothers. But these grants
raised hope for increasing the scope of the work, employing paid
staff, and having a permanent headquarters and an emergency hostel.

Contacts were made with other single mothers in Queensland,
New South Wales, and South Australia. Two of the Victorian members
flew to Tasmania, prepared an information handbook and established a
Council there.\(^{(21)}\) The same year also saw the establishment of area
groups. Personal contact, which was regarded as essential to morale
building activities, was seen to be impossible if the central group
continued to be the only meeting ground for the majority of the
members.

At this point it had become evident to the executive that
there was a considerable group of single mothers who either did not
know about the Council, or, when they did know of its existence, did
not want to identify with it. These latter mothers were willing to
accept the Council's services only if they could remain on the outside.

\(^{(21)}\) See C.S.M.C. Annual Report, 1971-72, p. 5.
Again, through experience of many contacts with young mothers in need, the very active and concerned central group realized that a single self-help council could not possibly provide for all the needs of this group in the community, and so it became readier to make referrals. Its members also decided to look at adoption procedures which now began to be more positively considered as a solution for some mothers. (22)

During 1974, further grants were received. The Department of Social Security paid the salary of a welfare rights officer for the Council and a grant was received for a professional community worker, so that the services provided by the Council tended to become professional rather than voluntary. An emergency hostel had been set up by Methodist-Presbyterian Childcare services although C.S.M.C. still hoped to set up a hostel of its own. At this point membership seems to have ceased to increase, although lack of exact records makes it difficult to be certain about this. Certainly, active volunteers and local groups of the C.S.M.C. suffered a decline. By 1975, even the professional services were tending to emphasize their political rather than their welfare role. This development will be discussed in the next chapter dealing with evaluation.

(22) Some of the founding group dispute the fact that they were at any stage opposed to adoption; they claim that they put the opposite case to give to single mothers a balanced picture of the options open to them. (See Information Handbook, 1971, V.C.O.S.S., for both points of view.)
There was, then, enough continuing consensus among the members about the purposes of Council to establish it as a coherent body able to speak for a committed group of single mothers, and even possibly to represent a much larger, more vaguely defined, section of the population.

The above account of the founding of the C.S.M.C. gives some idea of how the perceptions of its members and of those outside shaped its development. It is worthwhile summarily describing these perceptions in order to understand why some of its formal goals, rather than others, have emerged as keys to its success, and how informal "hoped-for-satisfactions" goals have influenced its structure and mode of operation.

The Experience of the Council by Single Mothers

Members of the Council see themselves as "very ordinary people", that is as being in no way different from the rest of the population, but rather a true and typical cross section. From their point of view, this makes it all the more unfair that they should have to battle against extraordinary and untypical odds to secure basic needs for themselves and their children. (23)

(23) See on this Jo Murray's talk at Melbourne University 1973: "The Client Speaks", printed by C.S.M.C. This view has frequently been stated at meetings by members.
Many different attitudes can be discerned in C.S.M.C. members' letters and statements. There are, for instance, those who feel embittered by their own family and social experiences; those who defend the rights of single women to have children; those simply interested in welfare, or anxious to develop the skills and interests of single mothers in parenting. One common theme, however, is the sense of belonging made possible by C.S.M.C. Thus one active member writes as follows:

Since joining C.S.M.C my life has changed so much I hardly remember what I used to be like. I have found marvellous friends, learnt so many new things, and achieved almost perfect job satisfaction... (24)

By and large, most members appear to have been actively involved in the C.S.M.C. only for a year or two, although 1975 found four of the original members still very active in the movement. The main reasons why formerly active members move out seem to be marriage, or full-time study, apart from the usual geographical reasons. Those not actively involved may keep in contact through making enquiries or seeking services through local groups, or through attending functions advertised in the C.S.M.C. newsletter. This ad hoc and temporary involvement seems to imply that many members have a different perception of the C.S.M.C. from that of the central group, and this may be one of the difficulties attending the establishment of local groups.

(24) See C.S.M.C. Newsletter, vol. 4, No.1, p.2. See also the article, "Suzanne Wants to Help Other Unmarried Mothers", Camberwell Free Press, 7.2.73, p. 2: "She wanted single mothers to know about the organisation which had transformed her own life".
Single mothers who know about the Council but who are not members of it express varying opinions. Some describe themselves as "too busy"; others are not anxious to identify with a single interest group; still others say the Council is too political, too "cliquey", or that it fails to provide mixed-sex social activities. A number say they have found it a good source of information, but they do not want to be personally involved in its activities.

The Experience of the Council by Those Outside

Outsiders have described the Council members variously as a "group of gifted and valiant women" who simply want to be allowed the dignity of their motherhood; others, on the other hand, see it as a skilful and successful political pressure group, with members who are "selfish" and shortsighted with regard to their children's true interests. A further development of this critical view of the Council was the idea that the "self-help" attitude implies that single parenthood is something good in itself. Thus it has been said that film stars and other public figures have started a trend with the result that single mothers are now claiming all sorts of special rights. Several Day Care centre nurses have, for example, remarked: "We are inundated with the children of single mothers who think they should have priority over other deserving cases". Still others have said that it is not so much the rights that single mothers are claiming, as their aggressive and demanding manner of claiming
which invites criticism. These critics see the Council as encouraging an aggressive approach on the part of single mothers. Others have said that the C.S.M.C. is against maternity homes, because they wanted to protect their members against any pressure to have their children adopted. Others again have thought that the C.S.M.C. excluded many ex-nuptial mothers who were in de facto situations or who were highly mobile.

Social Workers in contact with the Council

Many social workers and others in contact with single mothers considered the Council to be a very real moral support for these mothers. Not only was it a source of information and contact, it also provided an opportunity for the mothers to participate actively in determining the sort of place they and their children would have in society in the future. Others have expressed reservations giving widely varying reasons. Some of this seems to be due to the change in the status of single mothers. Before, they were seen as an unfortunate dependent group needing help and advice; now they are

(25) There is some, but not a great deal of evidence for this in newspaper cuttings, e.g. "A new race of girls rebels", The Sun-Herald, 19 July 1970; "No one is going to stop me keeping my baby", Age, March 1, 1972; "I needed love - I got lousy food and hymns instead", The Digger, Feb. 4, 1972; "I'm single, I'm a mother and I'm proud of it". Not so long ago a statement of this sort would have rocked almost any strata of Australian society. But this is what single mothers are saying today through an organisation called the Council for the Single Mother and her Child." Bulletin, March 18, 1972, p.27. Goffman's explanation of the situation (in Asylums, Preface, Penguin) of this kind of apparent confrontation is a fairly simple and realistic one: "The world-view of a group functions to sustain its members and expectedly provides them with a self-justifying definition of their own situation and a prejudiced view of non-members." Nobody would deny that these single mothers were in an embattled position and any lack of coherence would have reduced them from people claiming their rights to their former passive and dependent role with regard to the helping professions.
seen emerging as "client power". (26) This is a difficult transition for established professions and institutions to make. However, this is not the whole story; indeed, it over-simplifies the position of many experienced people. In the past it was more usual for middle-class girls who became pregnant to have their babies adopted. The minority of those, whatever their background, who kept their children had accepting parents who acted as a support and buffer for the mothers and provided some sort of family background for the child. The need of these women for help was fairly transitory (or so it would appear, as no follow-up studies have been made). Other women who kept their babies and who lacked family support were really in trouble. In the first place, their financial predicament was acute. They had to work, and the sort of child-care arrangements they had to make left practically everything to be desired. Last, but not least, their position in society was really on the bottom rung of the status ladder. (27)

There was no doubt that many single mothers needed help, and there seemed good grounds for thinking that these mothers did not know what was good for themselves and their babies when they elected to keep them. In particular, some social workers considered that the C.S.M.C. did not take into account the fact that while some

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(26) Jo Murray, op. cit.

(27) In the C.S.M.C. Annual Report, 1972-73, p. 1, Jill Millthorpe quoted an Age report: "Derelict men used to share one bottom rung of the status ladder with aborigines, unmarried mothers and prostitutes; now they have it to themselves".
single mothers were extremely successful in bringing up their children, others lacked confidence and felt rejected by their child's father so that they lacked the security necessary for a stable mother/child relationship. Others considered that it was better for single mothers to identify with general local mothers' groups rather than to join an exclusive or narrowly defined group.

However, such social workers and other professionals as Margery Wilson, Nan Johns, Essie Phillips and Pat Brotherton, who worked with the Council mothers on the V.C.O.S.S. committee, saw the immense possibilities of single mothers helping single mothers through the Council. These professionals have been involved as professional advisers in many of the Council's activities from research to adoption reform. As a result, most Government and professional bodies would now regard the cooperation of the Council as essential in any project involving single mothers. (28)

How then has the meaning of the Council for those involved, and for those outside, to some extent shaped the real goals of the Council and its ways of achieving them? How does the official self-definition of the C.S.M.C. work out in practice? To get a perspective on these questions, comparison with other bodies concerned with similar client groups, such as Parents Without Partners and the British National

(28) For example the Social Security Department subsidises a Welfare Rights Officer appointed by C.S.M.C. to work on behalf of all single mothers and not just members of the Council.
Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child, would be useful. We cannot, however, pursue this comparison in depth here.  

C.S.M.C. Values and Objectives

The C.S.M.C. is a non-denominational, non-party agency, working on behalf of single mothers and their children. As we have seen, it was founded by, and is run by, single mothers themselves. Their president developed the reasons for this as being (i) that they are all mothers; (ii) that all ex-nuptial children incur disadvantages in a punitive society; (iii) that all have faced a decision; (iv) that practically all suffer from financial pressure; and (v) that most lack male support.

Two pivotal values are being asserted in this statement: first, the single mother and her child have a special importance and special needs which are not being recognized, and will not be recognized by society, unless they are forcefully pointed out. This was clearly the result of the frustration and bewilderment of the founders who had little experience of social discrimination until they found themselves victims of discrimination. And second, the idea that being single mothers did not make them inferior human beings was echoed in the insistence on the self-help concept.

(29) An article by the author is in preparation on this topic.
(30) Taken from "Valuable in their Own Right", a talk by Jill Wood to P.E.S. trainees, March 1971, and the C.S.M.C. Annual Reports 1971-72, 1972-73.
The objectives of the Council are listed in its Constitution as follows:

(a) to ensure that the child born out of wedlock has a fair start in life;

(b) to assist in and contribute to the elimination of poverty and the promotion of well-being among disadvantaged, vulnerable individuals and groups;

(c) to promote the understanding and acceptance of single mothers and their children in the community so that they will be free from economic, social, and legal discrimination and prejudice;

(d) to offer and provide practical assistance and emotional support to mothers during pregnancy and after, whether the child is kept by the mother or adopted;

(e) to press for and obtain better services for single mothers who keep their children and those whose children are adopted;

(f) to encourage the further education, practical competence and self-reliance of single mothers;

(g) to encourage the interest of the father in the welfare of the child;

(h) to conduct and participate in surveys and research projects on the position of the single mother and her child in Australia;

(i) to co-operate and/or affiliate with any organization which has objects similar to those of this organization;

(j) to encourage and support the formation and operation of associate councils in all states and the establishment of country groups both interstate and intrastate;

(k) to purchase or to lease property in the name of the Council;

(l) to accept or take any gifts of bequests of property of whatsoever nature and wheresoever situated and whether or not subject to any trust, or the repayment or performance of any debt, liability, contract, guarantee or other engagement incurred or to be entered into by the Council in any way, and to redeem or pay off such securities;

(m) to sell, impose, manage, develop, exchange, lease, dispose of, turn to account or otherwise deal with all or any part of the property and the rights of the Council; and,

(n) to do all such things as may from time to time be deemed incidental or necessary or conducive to the attainment of the foregoing objects or any of them.

(31) Constitution of the C.S.M.C.
Clearly these formal goals have been modified by what the executive of the C.S.M.C. consider to be central objectives (these are bound up with the values), and what have proved to be operative objectives. The first and third objectives concerning fair and equal treatment for ex-nuptial children and their mothers are right at the heart of the matter. They are explicit statements of the mother's right to keep her child without prejudice, and were the original perceived needs of the founding group. These objectives became operative in the campaign for equal legal status (e.g. banning of illegitimacy provisions) and for the granting of a pension equal to any other single mother, whether ex-nuptial or not, to enable the mother to keep and provide adequately for her child. They were also operative, to a lesser extent, in the effort to educate public opinion to full acceptance of ex-nuptial mothers and their children.

The next objectives, (d) and (e), (support and services), have also been important and continuing since the early days. However, when there was a danger of expanding these supportive activities by involving non-single mothers (the Helpers group) at the cost of losing autonomy, autonomy won the day.

Items (f), (g) and (h), further education, interest of the father, and research, are operative, but in a fairly low key. Articles on these topics appear from time to time in the Newsletter and there is occasional discussion of them at meetings.

(32) The second objective was added much later; to attract income-tax deductions. In any case it is too unspecific to have much meaning beyond expressing sentiments of good will.
Objective (i), affiliation with other organisations, comes and goes as a topic of C.S.M.C. discussions, but since it could be a threat to autonomy, which would be inimical to the identity value, it therefore does not have much force. The idea of federation is acceptable, but not amalgamation. Single mothers are to stay ex-nuptial mothers.

Objective (j), the encouragement of associate councils and groups, is perceived as a structural means to ensure survival, and so has become of very real importance. It is also consistent with the strength, involvement and autonomy of single mothers.

Structure

The C.S.M.C. (Victoria) now forms part of the National Council of the Single Mother and Her Child which has branches in Queensland, A.C.T., Tasmania and N.S.W. The South Australian group has non-single mother members, and is not affiliated with the other groups. The C.S.M.C. (Victoria) is the largest and most influential group and was instrumental in starting the Tasmanian, South Australian and Queensland groups. Its initiative also was responsible for the formation of the national body which exists to maintain contact between various State branches, and to work on policy questions. This national body is not directly concerned with welfare activities or local interests.

As we have seen, the unity of aims of the original group has had a profound effect on the development of real goals; it has
also influenced the developing structure of the Council.

Voluntary membership

C.S.M.C. was formed by volunteers, and therefore the source of its power derives from the mutual adherence of its members to its goals. It also suffers from the disabilities of voluntary membership when that membership loses interest and no longer identifies with the organisation. The only limitation on membership is the exclusion of non-ex-nuptial mothers. In this, the C.S.M.C. differs from the two other bodies mentioned above, P.W.P. and N.C.U.M.C. Unlike P.W.P., its members are not merely single parents in general, but specifically mothers of ex-nuptial children. And unlike N.C.U.M.C., which was founded and run for single mothers, it does not admit other than single mothers to full membership, or allow them to be elected to its committee.

The relationship between structure and goals here is obvious. As Rosemary Kiely wrote:

The self-help concept was always interpreted rather broadly in C.S.M.C. as meaning:

1. that assistance was being given to mothers by their sisters - by other mothers who were, or who had been, in the same position and could sympathise with people in the same position.

2. that mothers who were being helped need not regard it as a one-way relationship - that some day they could help others through C.S.M.C.

3. that mothers would be helped by the example, reinforcement and experience of each other, and,
4. Where C.S.M.C. could not solve the problems the mother would be referred to a professional agency. (33)

However, this lack of a clear boundary between members and non-members amongst ex-nuptial mothers has created many problems. In the first place, it is impossible to establish membership numbers. Mailing lists of the C.S.M.C. include all single mothers who have contacted the organisation, auxiliary members (non-ex-nuptial mothers), social workers at maternity hospitals, and nurses at infant welfare centres, as well as paid-up members. Membership in 1975 has been quoted variously as 2000 (the mailing list), and 300 (paid-up members). There were certainly fewer members at the 1973-74 annual general meetings than in 1972-73, but it is difficult to know what this signifies.

Rewards of membership

The Constitution lists four types of membership: ordinary, corporate, associate and honorary. However, it is only ordinary members who can be directly involved in the work of the Council. For most ordinary members, there is some primary significance in belonging to the Council and identifying with other single mothers. For this reason there has been a fairly strong resistance to hard-and-fast rules and to a clearly defined hierarchy of responsib-

(33) Private communication, June 1974.
ilities and tasks. However, the secondary role, shared by other categories of membership, is to get things done. The small inner group of members could not cope with the complexity of the demands made on the Council, and for some of them there was a natural shift in interests as their children grew older or as they married. The primary and obvious aims had been achieved and the more complex consolidation of gains and a wider endeavour led to the employment of members and others in professional roles. The Council has been sufficiently successful to attract grants from governments and other sources to support this.

Model of organisation

Sills\(^{(34)}\) distinguishes two types of voluntary organisation: the \textit{federation} type, which has semi-autonomous local units and which sets up a headquarters to service them; and the \textit{corporate} type where members have a common interest which has little to do with their location, although local units may be set up at the initiative of the central group. He says that the federation type of organisation finds it easier than the corporate type to co-operate with other organisations; it also has far greater possibility of democratic decision-making. According to Sills, the choice of structure usually depends on historical origins. Fairly clearly, the C.S.M.C. has a

corporate type structure. Its objective of formal local independent
groups was an afterthought, a move to involve more single mothers
in the work of the Council, early in 1972. As a C.S.M.C. Newsletter
put it: "Our membership is growing rapidly and we must decentralize some
of our activities to make them effective. One of the major steps is
the formation of area groups". (35) This has meant that initiative
in the C.S.M.C. has nearly always come from the top down (36) in spite
of the great efforts of the executive that this should not happen.
One of the most recent efforts of the C.S.M.C. is to form task-forces
to encourage the local groups which tend to fall off without frequent
visits from the active central groups. (37)

Decision-making

Management of the Council is vested formally in a Committee
of 12, elected by all members present at the Annual General meeting.
For the first few years, no election was necessary, as the membership
was small and the founders still very involved with and close to all
members. Their original aims were still to be fulfilled, and with good

(36) See Seymour M. Lipset: "The Political Process in Trade Unions:
A Theoretical Statement", in McRae Berger, Theodore Able and
Charles H. Page (eds.), Freedom and Control in Modern Society,
(37) A community worker was appointed in September 1974 to encourage
the neighbourhood group structure. Her report, published by
C.S.M.C. in May 1975, suggests the establishment of self-chosen
task forces to involve more members, but does not analyze the
structural difficulties of a voluntary organisation which is
corporate in origin.
cause their hopes of doing so were high. With their numbers growing, and achieving more support, the interpretation of the organisation's rules was not an issue and little energy was deflected into discussion of organisational issues.

The first elections took place at the 1973 Annual General Meeting and were welcomed by the President, Jill Millthorpe, in her address, as the beginning of a new era. The elections were more extensive by 1974, but the 1975 Annual General Meeting saw the first election which raised policy issues over which the members were divided.

**Mode of Operation (Relations with Environment)**

As we have seen, from the beginning, the Council has been a contact point in the community for ex-nuptial mothers who either had needs themselves or wished to help other ex-nuptial mothers. They provided speakers and actively campaigned for their various causes, working hard and acquiring considerable skill when they were given opportunity to do so. (38)

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(38) For instance, the V.C.O.S.S. Committee became the main contact point between the Council and social workers, as well as other professionals. Apart from its achievements as a committee it was the first opportunity for both sides to work together for a common cause, instead of one group being the client (or victim, depending on the viewpoint) of the other. The mutual interchange profoundly affected the views of both groups. Social workers saw single mothers as maturing, learning from experience, and as one single mother described it, the professionals seemed to change their attitude from that of treating minority client groups as deviants to be "fitted in" to society, to that of welcoming the single mother's initiatives for change.
The Council has also been used as a source of specialized information for Government and other bodies. Thus it provided a forty-page submission to the Henderson Poverty Inquiry in 1973, and in the same year a detailed submission to State and Commonwealth Governments regarding reform of the Single Mothers' Allowance Scheme. (39)

An Example of a Successful Operation: the Campaign to Secure the Supporting Mothers' Benefit

There was no doubt that the Council's influence on government policy, with regard to achieving full financial parity with the Australian Government's Widows' Pension and the passing of the Status of Children's Act removing illegitimacy discrimination, has gone a long way in fulfilling the original objectives of the C.S.M.C. It is, therefore, worthwhile looking at the C.S.M.C.'s campaign for pension rights in some detail for it probably represents the most direct attempt that could be cited to change policy to meet the most pressing immediate needs of keeping single mothers.

The history of the maintenance issue is discussed later in detail (Chapter 7). Briefly, keeping ex-nuptial mothers had no means of sustaining themselves and their children except by means of temporary or emergency benefits, family support, or working. Earlier considerations of the needs of ex-nuptial mothers had

concentrated on the problems of pregnancy without a partner, maternity home and adoption services, wardship and the financial needs of the under 16 year olds who were ineligible even for temporary benefits.

Background to Campaign

The question of the need for a continuing financial support for single mothers, as against emergency help, has been raised before the founding of the C.S.M.C. by the V.C.O.S.S. Committee in October 1968. (40) Again in 1969, Pamela Roberts referred to this need at an A.A.S.W. Conference. (41) About this time, the State governments, which had been anxious for the Commonwealth Government to assume responsibility, agreed to accept a subsidy so as to administer a State widows' pension scheme to include the hitherto excluded categories of deserted wives and unmarried mothers. (42)

Although glad of some respite, Council members began to campaign actively for reform of this scheme whose deficiencies of lower pension rates, a dollar-for-dollar means test, and uneven distribution through the States, were obvious. (43) During 1971,

(40) See minutes of V.C.O.S.S. Services to Unmarried Mother Committee, October 31, 1968.
Council members had worked unceasingly on the V.C.O.S.S. Committee which had taken up their cause and from November of that year, the C.S.M.C. had set up a professional advisors' panel. During 1972, the V.C.O.S.S. committee under Mrs. Marie Coleman worked to prepare a two day seminar, in which council members were involved as organisers and speakers.

Among the resolutions passed at this seminar, and much publicized in the media, was the following: "That this Seminar resolve that the Commonwealth Social Service Act of 1947 be amended to include all single supporting parents".

Within days of the A.L.P. electoral victory in November 1972, Mrs. Coleman was invited to head the Social Welfare Commission set up by the new government. Mr. Hayden, the new Australian Social Security Minister, announced that help would be forthcoming for all supporting mothers, and in the first session of the new Parliament, the Social Services Act was amended to include the Supporting Mothers Benefit (February 1973). The March issue of the C.S.M.C. Newsletter appeared as a "victory issue".

(44) Consisting of Dr. Trevaks, Superintendent of Royal Women's Hospital; Miss P. Brotherton, psychologist, Board of Presbyterian Social Services and involved in research on single mothers; Mrs. M. Wilson, Central Methodist Mission, later to become social worker for single mothers; Sister I. Westphal, in charge of Prahran Day Nursery; Dr. N. Johns, research fellow at Royal Children's Hospital working on a study of keeping single mothers; Mrs. P. Sebastian, kindergarten and day nursery proprietor; Rev. R. Jones, industrial chaplain, Mr. G. Berkovitch, solicitor; Dr. P. Joshua, general medical practitioner.

The C.S.M.C. Campaign

During 1971, the C.S.M.C. committee had been working on improving current financial provisions for single mothers, but they were a small group and not very confident of their progress. Their lack of confidence was well-founded for there was certainly some opposition to, and a good deal of apathy about, the move to secure pensions for single mothers. (46)

At all events, the C.S.M.C. Committee felt the need for experienced and direct help in their campaign and in December they approached a private Government consultant, Peter Cullen. Jo Murray, talking at an A.C.O.S.S. conference in Hobart, (47) described the situation thus:

(46) It is difficult to give hard evidence for this opposition, yet it certainly existed. The writer, while a social worker dealing with single mothers, frequently heard comments from health-centre sisters, workers in maternity homes, and certain social workers, to the effect that the availability of a pension would encourage young and immature single mothers to "try out" keeping their children before surrendering them for adoption. It was also claimed that, with the pension, a 15 year old mother would be better off financially retaining her child than she would by working. Disquiet about the implications of the pension was also expressed at the time by certain public figures. Dr. John Bowlby, for example, who was visiting Melbourne, expressed "unease" about the future of children kept by their single mothers: see the Age, 23.3.73, p. 18; Rev. Gordon Powell argued that "a pension would make single mothers think that promiscuity should be a paying proposition": see the Australian, 19.9.73; and Mrs. Rosemary Sinclair, wife of the deputy leader of the National Country Party, said that "society was encouraging single women to have children ... and they were better off financially than if they were in the work-force": see the Melbourne Herald, 6.8.75, p. 1. Jo Murray, "A Consumer Perspective" in

We seemed to be at a dead end. When the man at the top ignores you where do you go? We thought of a few far-out schemes - like writing to every member of parliament and putting our case. Jokingly we said that what we needed was one of those people who made their living by pressurizing politicians - you know, a lobbyist. Later I repeated that remark to my brother, who assured me that he knew - actually knew - such a person.

Discussion ensued. We were perhaps over-conscious of our self-help status, and some were inclined to decry bringing in an outsider: letters were written and in early 1972 we had our first meeting with Peter Cullen. (…) He gave us an overall strategy and maintained at all times a guiding hand, watchful eye and listening ear. He wrote letters, drafted submissions, spoke to politicians, both in Government and in opposition, was briefed by public servants (…) His strategy took into account two particular factors:

1. This was an election year and both parties were virtually campaigning at a very early stage.

2. The subject matter - allowances for single mothers - had an element of potential controversy, and even possible moral backlash.

The first step was to approach the leaders of all religious denominations, and to ask them to express their support for our case by writing to both the Prime Minister and the Minister for Social Services, and their Opposition counterparts. All the church leaders co-operated, as did the Australian and Victorian Council of Churches, so that the backlash issue was pretty well defused. We asked for, and received, similar support from many welfare agencies and professional bodies. They were prepared to support us, not just because our case was valid, but because our organization was obviously "reasonable" and "respectable" - again, we owe gratitude here to V.C.O.S.S., who first gave us the opportunity to prove this to other agencies.

Our sister organizations in other States joined in, and we approached the various State Ministers for Social Welfare hoping that they would be persuaded to bring their own kind of influence to bear on the Commonwealth Minister. We asked our own members to write to the Minister, or to their local M.P., and many of them did so - ordinary members who would never have dreamed of exercising even that tiny amount of political pressure. Peter Cullen worked on two principles: first, that it is necessary to be specific about what you want, which was no problem as far as C.S.M.C. was concerned, and that you must look at who makes the decision, which was more so. (48)

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In spite of intensive work (by interviews and letters) with politicians, the minutes of the C.S.M.C. meetings for 1972 show a good deal of positive and negative response from both sides. Party rivalries or inter-party rivalries were not the only issues. State versus Federal Government responsibility came into the question as well. For some time, the States had been anxious to give over the pension area to the Commonwealth, but this had been resisted.

Thus, it was not difficult for the Council to win the support of Mr. Ian Smith, the Victorian Minister for Social Welfare at the time, at the meeting of State Social Welfare Department ministers in Queensland in July 1972. At this meeting, there was a motion passed to standardize Family Assistance payments and to request the Commonwealth to refund full payments and to reduce the eligibility period for the pension.

Peter Cullen had seen both Mr. Hayden (then in opposition) and Mr. Wentworth (the Australian Minister for Social Security) to follow up interviews of Council members and had pressed them to discuss benefit payments with the State Ministers' Conference as well. Wentworth agreed in Parliament to Hayden's request to do so. (49) However, Wentworth, although he gave them interviews, would not directly agree to the Council members' requests, claiming

(49) Question 5712 on notice, June 1972.
that granting pension rights to single mothers would mean an enormous increase in Commonwealth spending since ex-nuptial births were increasing at the rate of 20% per year. Hayden then requested a detailed breakdown of statistics on ex-nuptial births, to which Wentworth replied in general terms. However, shortly before the Federal election Wentworth did offer direct help to Supporting Mothers in some form, if the Liberals were re-elected.

These political contacts were only one aspect of the C.S.M.C. campaign. Peter Cullen had hoped to secure support, and to avoid raising public opposition, by working with heads of religious denominations and other community leaders. The careful individual and appropriate approaches made, and the calm re-statement of the real justice issue in many contexts meant a steady build-up and widening community support. In the first few months, the C.S.M.C. executive sent and received replies from hundreds of individuals and bodies, in many cases following them up with personal interviews. They received considerable support from their professional advisers who made a separate application on their behalf. In March, Wentworth had claimed that granting of pensions would lead to an outcry of an attack on "family life"; but this did not ever eventuate. There were a few letters by widow recipients to the Department of Social Security protesting against

(50) In fact, they had increased in Victoria from 5% to 6% in 1971. (51) See Appendix D for text of question 5713, August 1972.
single mothers being included in the widows' category, and one or two letters in the daily press before and after the passing of the legislation. (52)

But somehow the opposition did not ever really get off the ground. This may have been due in part to the very unprovocative and thoughtful replies of C.S.M.C. members themselves. (53) However, the main reason would seem to be the widespread and intense groundwork which had gone into the campaign.

Peter Cullen was himself a volunteer in the cause, and worked with an intelligent small group who were already fairly experienced in the field. He encouraged them to concentrate on simple unanswerable arguments, to state their case clearly, and to document every claim. The net was spread very widely in searching for community support, and individual viewpoints carefully thought out. Letters and interviews were invariably followed up and a reasonable, uncoercive approach used. The approaches made were resourceful and courteous - even the leader of the Opposition, Mr. Snedden, was thanked after the bill passed! (54) This way of

(52) For example, Dr. Clair Isbister of Sydney wrote about the encouragement the benefit meant to single mothers who would now keep their babies instead of allowing them to be adopted: The Australian, 9.9.73.
(53) See Kate Behan's letter to The Australian, 19.9.73, in reply to Dr. Isbister, reproduced in Appendix C.
(54) The above account is derived from the "Peter Cullen file" in the records of the C.S.M.C. headquarters, Melbourne. The author is grateful to the Council for the opportunity to examine this file.
working made sense to the group of C.S.M.C. members who saw it as being a skilful application of their own principles, and completely consistent with the aims of the Council.

Summary

In this chapter the activities of the C.S.M.C. have been examined. They represent one important attempt to change social policy to meet the needs of keeping ex-nuptial mothers. The Council developed, as we have seen, from the initiative of a small group of ex-nuptial mothers who pioneered a new-kind of self-help organisation to work for equal status and financial treatment for married and unmarried mothers alike. Although they were demanding something for which there was little precedent, this group of mothers was able to secure considerable outside support and encouragement, and it was able to achieve its aims effectively and expeditiously.

One of the most surprising aspects of the Council's campaign for justice for single mothers was the apparent ease with which it succeeded. There was real opposition to the campaign, but it was sporadic and unorganised and it was no match for the Council's argument that the situation of single mothers and their children was wholly anomalous in that the children of unsupported mothers only received support if their mothers had been previously married. This argument was supported by the fact that the old inheritance laws which made legitimacy essential for the transmission of property
never had been a live issue in Australia.

The campaign for the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit undoubtedly developed and strengthened the Council, but its very success also led to problems about the future direction of the Council and its organisational structure. These problems will be discussed in the next chapter.
Chapter 4

EVALUATION OF THE C.S.M.C.

"It was then and still is my belief that any group of persons - prisoners, primitives, pilots or patients - develop a life of their own that becomes meaningful, reasonable, and normal once you get close to it, and that a good way to learn about any of these worlds is to submit oneself in the company of the members to the daily round of petty contingencies to which they are subject."

Erving Goffman, Preface to *Asylums*

How effective has the C.S.M.C. been, in the light of its own objectives, in expressing the needs of single mothers and in providing policies to meet those needs?

It is difficult to estimate precisely how much the Council has fulfilled the aspirations of its members for not all the listed objectives are "operational" ones (some, for example, simply call for a more general "change for the better"). Another difficulty is that some of the means proposed, for instance the self-help idea, have come in practice to be seen as ends-in-themselves. It is possible, however, to examine certain of the formal objectives of the Council which meet the needs of ex-nuptial mothers as they see them, to see to what extent those objectives have been successfully met, and what effect this success had on the structure of the Council. Thus, for example, the gaining of financial aid for ex-nuptial mothers through the Supporting Mothers Benefit meant that the C.S.M.C. lost a main rallying point.

The first objective, that of ensuring a fair start in
life for an out-of-wedlock child, is clearly not very specific, and neither is the second objective, the promotion of well-being among disadvantaged groups. The third objective, however, contains the more specific and operational aim of removing economic and legal discrimination and prejudice against single mothers and their children, and it has been with respect to this objective that the Council has had its main influence.

We have already seen the part that the Council played in helping to remove economic and legal discrimination against single mothers. With respect to its role in helping to remove social prejudice and "stigma" against ex-nuptial mothers the evidence is less conclusive. There is reason to believe that the C.S.M.C. made welfare administrators in government departments more sensitive to the needs of ex-nuptial mothers and their children. Thus, the then president of the C.S.M.C., Jill Wood, claimed in 1971 that "the attitude of contempt, outrage, and cruel disregard... had been slowly but surely changing ... and C.S.M.C. had done much to bring about this change in community attitudes". (1) However, some residual prejudice against ex-nuptial mothers seems to have persisted in

(1) Jill Wood, "Valuable in Their Own Right: a group of welfare trainees for the Alexandra Clinic, March 1971."
government departments at the lower administrative levels. (2)

The fourth objective, that of practical assistance to ex-nuptial mothers, is necessarily a continuing one, and the office visits, telephone answering service, accommodation and baby-clothing assistance, work consistently and well, although these services have not greatly expanded in the last two years. (3)

With regard to the fifth objective, services for keeping and adopting mothers, such as taxation deductions for child care

(2) Thus, in a day spent by the author in the public access office in the Family Assistance Section of the Department of Social Welfare it was obvious that the Director of Family Welfare and the Senior Social Worker were genuinely concerned with the situation of ex-nuptial mothers and their children and anxious that arbitrary prejudice should not affect the working of the Department. However, several desk clerks and field officers remarked to the author that receiving pensions made unmarried mothers "assertive". They also spoke sceptically about the ex-nuptial mothers' domestic situations. Similarly, in a private communication a clerk in the Australian Department of Social Security in 1972-3 observed as follows: "I could not help noting the antipathy of the counter clerks to the single mothers as a group - the smde sniggers and cruel remarks. It really seemed as if the decision to provide the Supporting Mothers' Benefit had been over the dead bodies of the lower rungs of the Social Security hierarchy". It was to remedy this situation that the Australian Department of Social Security made a direct grant to the C.S.M.C. for a welfare rights officer to investigate cases of unfair treatment of ex-nuptial mothers.

(3) For instance, in the Annual Report 1971-72 (no page numbers) the accommodation service was referred to by the President Jill Wood as the biggest section of C.S.M.C. activities. In the Annual Report 1972-73 (p.6) Jill Wood refers to 1000 calls in the office offering or requesting accommodation. In the A.R. 1973 (p.15) the accommodation officer said that the live-in job service was no longer needed, and reported 484 calls for or offering accommodation, about half that of the previous year. The A.R. of 1974-75 does not give the exact numbers of calls but says calls for emergency accommodation were more frequent, and many calls were received from other lone mothers. As far as baby clothing and equipment is concerned, no direct reference is made to it in an annual report after 1971-72, although it is occasionally mentioned in a Newsletter. None of the new task forces set up in 1975 include responsibility for this sort of activity.
expenses, and adoption reform, have also concerned the Council. However, it is mostly keeping mothers who are in contact with the Council and very little is known about the needs of adopting mothers as a group. The Council has investigated the question of access of adopted children to their birth certificates, but no policy has been formed. Few adopting mothers, except those who were also keeping mothers, have been concerned to press for their rights.

The accomplishment of the sixth objective, further education, practical competence and self-reliance of single mothers, has certainly been achieved in the central group of the Council which took the matter of further education more or less literally. Most of the original group had tertiary training in the first place, but, almost without exception, both they and many of the later committee members have resumed full or part-time study. Again, they have campaigned successfully to improve Government retraining schemes, and have encouraged their members to take advantage of what was offering in further education and retraining from professional courses to literacy classes. They have included articles on mothering and domestic skills in the Newsletter, but it is difficult to gauge the importance of these latter to the members in general.

The central group of the Council then has fulfilled the sixth objective in a clear and outstanding way. Its members' experience in social action, public relations, and in developing
self-help concepts, has led to a high degree of skill and an ability to present a moderate and reasoned case to people of opposing and divergent views.\(^{(4)}\) However, one inevitable, if in some ways unfortunate, consequence of this concern for self-education was that it brought about a growing distance between, on the one hand, the experienced campaigners and thinkers of the original group, and, on the other hand, the newer members who have had less experience in grasping wider issues and are mainly concerned with their own present difficulties. Since most of the skill and experience has been acquired by members of the original group, it has led to a form of élitism, as well as to a large difference in emotional commitment to the organisation.\(^{(5)}\)

\(^{(4)}\) The author witnessed an instance of this at a meeting (1.7.73). Sandy Pitts presented the case for the rights of children to access to their fathers to a hostile and bewildered group of single mothers who saw this as threatening their own relationship with their children. She was able to set out and explain the complexities of the legal issues involved, and introduce new ideas and have them accepted.

\(^{(5)}\) Two of the ex-nuptial mothers interviewed by the author expressed general approval of the C.S.M.C. but personal detachment from it. Other single mothers have said that C.S.M.C. is "cliquey" and "too intellectual". When the single mothers' group was starting, there was a considerable amount of publicity quite disproportionate to the small numbers of mothers actually involved. Examination of reports of radio and newspaper interviews show that the stories of four of the mothers were told and retold, in different papers. (The use of "given" names made this less obvious.) The fervour of fighting not only for a "fair go", but for some special recognition of their heroic and rather romantic position, belonged to those who saw it this way. This has meant, as in many movements, that the founders remain as "torch-bearers" and this in turn has tended to inhibit the newer, less experienced members.
As far as the seventh objective - to encourage the father's interest in the child's welfare - is concerned, it is more a gesture of good will, an encouragement to members to involve their children's father. Questions of children's needs in this respect have been discussed at many meetings but there seems to be no direct way of achieving this objective.

With respect to the eighth objective, the C.S.M.C. has always readily co-operated in research projects (some of the Council's submissions on legal and economic discrimination have already been mentioned) and it has been widely used as a reference point by government and other bodies (for example, by the Poverty Commission, and the Pregnancy Support Service).

The ninth objective, that of co-operation with other organisations, has become increasingly important for the Council. Earlier, the very fierceness of the battle made the single mothers close ranks, so that their interest in other disadvantaged groups tended to be partial. Now, however, they easily identify with any unsupported mothers, and furthermore they have developed a real concern for deserted fathers whose plight became obvious to them in the course of finding work and accommodation for single mothers. (6)

(6) In 1974-5 50% of all requests for help were from non ex-auptial mothers. See also address by Colin Benjamin to Annual General Meeting suggesting that the Council share its expertise with other disadvantaged groups e.g. deserted fathers.
However, they are still at pains to preserve their own identity, and the Council recently rejected a motion to include other supporting mothers as ordinary members. (7)

From 1972 onwards, Council members saw the need to form a national body with associate State councils, to ensure a unified voice on policy and more effective action. They achieved this in 1973, but the secretariat, consisting of Victorian members, remained in Melbourne.

Local groups, which started in 1972, have survived in several Melbourne suburbs, but not in the country. These suburban groups represent an attempt to involve more mothers in participation, as was mentioned earlier, but it is apparent that, as they maintain their impetus only when in fairly close contact with the central Melbourne group, other single mothers may perceive their needs differently.

The other official objectives of the C.S.M.C. are concerned with administrative matters, and do not bear directly on the needs of ex-nuptial mothers.

The 1975 Position of the Council

During 1974, the success of the Council in campaigning against the two major kinds of discrimination against ex-nuptial mothers, and their ready accessibility as a contact or helping agency for these mothers, led to their receiving two significant

(7) Extraordinary General Meeting 31.8.75; again rejected, meeting 20.11.75.
grants. One, from the Ross Foundation, was to employ a professional community worker. The effect of employing professionals has not yet been fully manifested in changes in the C.S.M.C.'s objectives, although its recent reports indicate some new ways of perceiving the needs of single mothers which seem to have been influenced by this development. (8)

Why did C.S.M.C. succeed in some of its aims but not in others?

The fact that the Council has a corporate rather than a federal structure has meant that the founding group has had a unity and a shared destiny which underlay its commitment and its efficacy in seeking pension rights and legal status for ex-nuptial mothers. (9) The other bodies which were set up to help single mothers included outsiders, and so were less effective. However, the attempt by the Council to perpetuate the self-help idea, as the

(8) For instance, Joanna Broady emphasizes the self development side of"self-help" rather than service provision, (see Annual Report of Community Worker, 23.9.74-30.5.75, Joanna Broady 1975, p.4) which contrasts with the 1971 statement of objectives which describes the C.S.M.C. as "an agency working on behalf of single mothers and their children". Joanna Broady also recommended including all lone mothers in the membership, against the earlier insistence of the founders that ordinary membership should only be open to those who have been ex-nuptial mothers. (See the Constitution of C.S.M.C. p.1.)

(9) It is worthwhile here to make a comparison with the national body although the latter is not the subject of this study. It is not directly participatory, and consists of delegates from the States. In contrast to C.S.M.C.(Vic.), it is a true federation. The branches exist in their own right and have set up the central body to deal with policy and unity issues. N.C.S.M.C. has been able to work effectively with other bodies (Annual Report 74-75). It is independent of membership and involvement problems as its members are the concerned and committed members of their State bodies. It labours under the difficulty of being started by the Victorian group, and of being mostly carried by the work of the Victorian delegates. Efforts to move the secretariat interstate have not worked. It has its own problems, for instance financing itself, although it is not directly involved in welfare activities; it also has problems of identification for some members as it is obliged to take a more cosmopolitan stance than a local body could do.
organisation grew, by changing to a federal structure with local units, has not been successful. Always the energy and initiative have come from the top down, and the central group has had to be content to serve other single mothers rather than to stir them into participation. Nevertheless, precisely because authority and function have not been successfully delegated, the main operational goals have been successfully fulfilled. Very few ordinary members indeed were directly involved in the lobbying for the Supporting Mothers' Benefit, although they were enthusiastic supporters. If the executive had waited for the consensus and participation of all of its members before acting, there would have been no strong organisational image in the first place, and certainly no effective campaign.

The persistence of this strong central body in the C.S.M.C. has thus meant stability for the organisation. The main names were well known both to the members of the group and to the community, and they were able to maintain the original vision of the Council and its raison d'être. Until very recently there were no other contenders for power and control. The intimacy and friendship, and the experience of the shared battles, among the members of the central group meant that their efforts were integrated and that conflict could mostly be resolved on a personal basis. The members of the group took neutral stands on controversial issues such as abortion or political allegiance, and those members who felt more strongly on these issues withdrew, so that their dissent never seriously disrupted the main energy of the Council.

One of the main obstacles to the full achievement of the
Council's objectives has been the \textit{voluntarism} of the organisation. Its commitment to the role of champion of single mothers' rights was very strong when these rights were being denied. However, residual discrimination, or even the inarticulate prejudice of sections of the public against single mothers is a much more difficult thing to tackle and makes a much weaker rallying point.

\textbf{Goal Succession}

The effort put into the achievement of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit and the Status of Children's Act, is an indication of the importance of these goals to the Council members. Even if the time was ripe for change, the C.S.M.C. was, by its activity, a main agency of reform.

The survival of the Council itself is also a very important goal or objective even if it is not listed among the formal objectives.\footnote{This may explain the reluctance of the C.S.M.C. to produce exact figures of membership.} When an organisation is fully engaged in advancing a cause, or alternatively when its numbers or activities are increasing, its continued existence is not in question. Some of the members of the Council saw the securing of equal pension rights as a culminating point of its activity and wondered if the Council's direction would thereafter change.\footnote{See \textit{Newsletter}, vol. 3, Issue 5, p. 6 & 7.} However, the Council's sense of corporate
identity had greatly increased during the campaign, and the welfare and social networks of the C.S.M.C. had become more established. Thus, when the President, Jill Millthorpe, proposed continuing the fight to eliminate residual inequalities in pension conditions, she was enthusiastically supported. (12) However, it is ironic that the very successes and achievements of the C.S.M.C. have tended to integrate its members more and more into the community at large, for they are now less disadvantaged and more acceptable and socially respected. In some ways, indeed, this has weakened their cohesion as a separate and distinct group of ex-nuptial mothers.

Two alternative future courses for the Council have emerged. One means, suggested by the Community worker, of increasing the interest and energy of members might be to involve them in the work and decision-making as a self-development exercise. (13) In line with this it was hoped to change the corporate structure of the Council to a federal structure by strengthening the local groups. The central committee realized that it was losing touch with these groups when they no longer shared the work involved in a major campaign. One of the problems here, however, is that, however needful it might be for ex-nuptial mothers, self-realization and development

(12) Annual Report 1972-73. There were still fringe benefits, such as travel concessions which were not granted to supporting mother beneficiaries. Single mothers share with deserted wives a six month qualifying period for the Benefit that widows do not.

is not something which invites enthusiastic commitment. As a result, some of these local groups lost their identity as ex-nuptial mother groups and joined with other single parents (for example, Parents Without Partners). Again, others having found friends no longer felt the need of any special moral support for their single-mother status, while others married and developed fresh interests.

The second alternative suggested for further action was to develop the welfare service role of the C.S.M.C. - in many ways the reverse of the emphasis on participation. Representatives of all members, it was suggested, would on their behalf design and deliver services seen by single mothers as appropriate for their needs. This would involve a sort of one-sided self-help. It would not exclude any one who wanted to be involved, but appropriate and efficient action rather than participation would be the main desideratum.

The 1974 grant from the Social Security Department enabled a pilot project, devised by the Welfare Rights Officer employed by the Council, to be set up. One of the early members, Jo Murray, who later shared her tasks with a team of four, was appointed. However, the exact scope of the duties of the Welfare Rights Officer has posed many problems and the relationship of the Officer to the Council's

aims and structures has not yet been worked out, although the first report of the Welfare Rights Officer comes down very squarely in favour of social action and self-help. "C.S.M.C. has never envisaged itself becoming a major welfare service agency. Its practical services are viewed largely as an entry point ... C.S.M.C. has found itself very 'at home' with the development of welfare rights as it complements the very basis upon which C.S.M.C. has tried to operate."(15) One of the difficulties has been that the Officer's position is dependent upon a grant which could be withdrawn at any time.

The original members of the Council favour the second alternative mentioned above in that, first, it does not deny the uniqueness of the ex-nuptial single mother's situation in the community, and, second, it could be adapted for either effective political action or certain welfare activities. Above all it would maintain the identity and nature of C.S.M.C. as it was originally conceived. The Annual General Meeting on 19.8.75 saw the election of Jo Murray who supports this second alternative. In her speech at the meeting, she said that the numerical size of the C.S.M.C. was not very important and that in fact a very big organisation could be an embarrassment.

Summary

The C.S.M.C. has clearly articulated certain needs of

(15) Ibid.
ex-nuptial mothers, and it has demanded, first, continuing financial support for ex-nuptial mothers of the kind received by other categories of lone mother families, and second, equal legal status for the children of ex-nuptial mothers with the children of married parents. Both these demands have now been met by legislative changes and the Council has turned its attention to other concerns. It is now examining the general difficulties that ex-nuptial families share with other single-parent families, such as, for example, liaison with government departments, provision of adequate child care, and housing arrangements. Further, it is now occupied with the more subtle personal problems experienced by keeping single mothers such as the lack of psychological support and the rather negative self-image that many ex-nuptial mothers have.

As we have already noted, when the major difficulties which existed for ex-nuptial mothers were successfully met, interest in the C.S.M.C. by those publicly concerned with welfare began to wane; again much of the ad hoc financial support given to the Council began to disappear at the same time. Similarly, as far as many single mothers themselves were concerned, since their general economic and legal position had improved and general discriminatory attitudes towards them had eased, a major task of the Council was concluded. Consequently, membership began to decline. These two factors have brought about a crisis of survival for the C.S.M.C. The present executive committee of the Council considers that much remains to be done for ex-nuptial mothers, but it is divided over the question of
priorities now that membership and resources are in short supply. One group in the committee, mainly founding members, prefers to stress the uniqueness of the ex-nuptial mothers' situation; the other group, mainly newer members, emphasizes the disabilities that ex-nuptial mothers share with many other women who are lone parents, and it would also prefer wider participation in the Council's activit and decision-making.

Despite the fact that the Council has been an important catalyst for community interest and action with regard to the needs of ex-nuptial mothers, its membership has always represented a very small proportion of the total population of ex-nuptial mothers in Victoria. This was so even in the heyday of the Council in 1972 and is all the more so later. Again, the fact that its membership is to some extent self-selecting makes it unlikely that it is representative enough to provide a complete picture of the needs, attitudes and interests of ex-nuptial mothers in general. It is for this reason that the next chapter attempts to examine certain crucial demographic facts about the whole population of ex-nuptial mothers in Victoria in an effort to achieve some perspective on the particular sub-group represented by the C.S.M.C. It is important to know just how many ex-nuptial mothers there are, the sociological structure of the group of ex-nuptial mothers, and the directions of recent changes in that structure.
Chapter 5

EX-NUPTIAL MOTHERS AND CHILDREN: VITAL STATISTICS

"The most needful piece of learning for the uses of life, is to unlearn what is not true."

Antisthenes - Francis Bacon

Many studies of ex-nuptial mothers and their children have investigated particular sub-groups of the total ex-nuptial population without first putting them into any general context. It would be to fall into the same error if it were assumed without further evidence that the members of the C.S.M.C. were truly representative of all ex-nuptial mothers and that the former's perception of the ex-nuptial situation in general were a true and accurate one. There is, in fact, no accurate information about the sociological structure of the group of ex-nuptial mothers represented by the C.S.M.C., and there are likewise no accurate demographic data on the whole ex-nuptial population from which one could determine how representative the C.S.M.C. group is. (1)

(1) A study of C.S.M.C. members in 1974, including sociological data, is being undertaken by R. Kiely as part of her M.A. thesis, "Keeping Single Mothers...", Political Science Department, University of Melbourne. Ms. Kiely has kindly made available some of her findings to the author.
This chapter attempts to collate the demographic information available so as to provide a framework for examining policy issues with respect to the needs of ex-nuptial mothers as specified by the C.S.M.C.

Use of Australian records

Australian birth records and census reports are not as detailed on the circumstances of ex-nuptial births as those of certain other countries and, as a result, the scope of the investigation here has been to some extent determined by the data that are available. For example, it is possible to discover from the records just how many people - parents and children - comprise the ex-nuptial population, and whether the numbers are decreasing or increasing. We can also find out the age structure of this population and how it is changing. However, it is much more difficult to discover from Australian records what kinds of social changes affect the number of births as well as the subsequent situations which arise for ex-nuptial mothers and their children. Nevertheless it is possible to look at parallel situations in other countries which are documented in order to throw light on what is happening in Australia.

This chapter presents a demographic description of ex-nuptial mothers and their children in the state of Victoria over the 7 years beginning in 1969. The five years between 1969 and 1973 have been chosen as the main focus.
Sources of data

There are two main sources of information which are useful for the purposes of this chapter: first, public records of births, marriages, adoptions and legitimations; and second, census and intercensal records.

In any population, the magnitude of levels and trends of ex-nuptiality can be measured by change in:
1. the number of ex-nuptial births registered annually in a given location (size of population);
2. the percentage of ex-nuptial births in total births registered annually in a given location (birth ratio);
3. the ex-nuptial age specific birthrate, the number of ex-nuptial births per 1000 unmarried, widowed or divorced women of child-bearing age (15-44) in a given population (birth rate).

All these figures have a general usefulness within specific contexts. For instance, the actual number of ex-nuptial births in one or several years delineates the size of the problem. It specifies how many mothers and children of certain ages could be involved when provision is being made for them. Again, changes in percentage of ex-nuptial to nuptial births give a very general indication of incidence of ex-nuptiality for comparative purposes, and this is of importance when the distribution of services is being considered. Finally, the age specific birthrate isolates the influence of the age factor of the population, and links the number
of births to the number of women of child-bearing age, or to any particular age bracket within it. This gives some indication of what kind of services will be needed.

It should be remarked in parentheses that birth registration does not necessarily provide an accurate record of ex-nuptial births in the community, so that accurate comparisons cannot be made between birth registrations at different times and places.

There are five typical difficulties about ex-nuptial birth records:

1. Birth and marriage recording methods differ as between both places and historical periods (even between States in different years);

2. Accuracy depends on the statement of the mother. Thus, according to Illsley and Gill (2)

... Informants may deliberately or inadvertently make false statements about the date of marriage, marital status or the paternity of the child, which result in the registration of a child as legitimate whose actual status is illegitimate. There is no reason to suppose that errors in registration procedure occur in the opposite direction (i.e. recording that legitimate births are illegitimate) and the official statistics are likely to be an under-statement rather than an over-statement about the incidence of illegitimacy.

(Cutright, (3) however, questions how far these factors make for falsification of records. In his detailed study on illegitimacy in the United States, he estimates that neither official nor parental misreporting could create error greater than 10 per cent.)


In Victoria, the Birth Registration clerk accepts what is stated by the parent and such details as marriage dates or previous issue are not cross checked. Discrepancies have been discovered both by the registering clerk at a maternity hospital and the registrar of births, deaths and marriages when reference has been made to these records at a later date,\( ^{(4)} \) indicating a degree of inaccuracy.

3. Ex-nuptial children born to married women are usually not recorded as such.\( ^{(5)} \)

4. Location can be inaccurate in that the place of residence given by the mother may be a temporary address just before the baby is born. For this reason, localities where there is a public maternity hospital within easy reach tend to have high ex-nuptial rates.

5. Legitimations due to the subsequent marriage of the parents frequently go unrecorded.

However, these difficulties arising from misreporting are comparatively unimportant compared with the structural short-

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\( ^{(4)} \) Miss M. Nelson of Royal Women's Hospital, Melbourne, in informal consultation with the author.

\( ^{(5)} \) Illsley and Gill, op. cit., p. 415. Inter-country comparisons can be distorted by differences in the conceptualization of illegitimacy. In the United States for example, illegitimate births are frequently regarded as occurring only to unmarried women, as distinct from married women not married to the putative father. In England, it is estimated that one third of all illegitimate births occur to married, widowed or divorced women.
comings of the recording system. The basic difficulty in investigating the situation of ex-nuptial mothers and their children is that there is no sure way of identifying sub-categories of persons or their situations, other than by age, because of the lack of precision in vital statistics. The most obvious example here is the lack of differentiation between children of stable common law marriages and those born to mothers who are literally single.

Allowing for these limitations upon the data, just what information is available on the ex-nuptial situation from official Australian records?

1. Measurement of increase in ex-nuptial births

It was mentioned in Chapter 1 that ex-nuptial births had been increasing during the 1960's and that certain objections to the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit were based upon the belief that this trend would continue. In Victoria, however, this has not been the case, as the following figures show. 1971 has been chosen as an example of the current situation, as it was a census year and thus the latest year for which the Age Specific Ex-nuptial Birth Rate (A.S.E.N.B.R.) figures are available. 1971 also reflects the situation which existed in the early years of the C.S.M.C.

(6) This is more marked in Australian figures than those in the U.S., Great Britain, or New Zealand for instance, as these latter give parity, and in the case of New Zealand, outcome after 12 months. (7) An accurate A.S.E.N.B.R. can only be determined when the exact number of unmarried women between the ages of 15 and 44 is known.
TABLE 1

Data on Ex-nuptial Births in Victoria 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of ex-nuptial births</td>
<td>5010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of ex-nuptial to total births</td>
<td>6.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-nuptial birthrate per 1000 single, widowed and divorced women aged between 15 and 44</td>
<td>27.91</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that numbers of ex-nuptial births increased until 1971 but that since then the actual number of ex-nuptial births has fallen. (Thus, in Victoria, the numbers are: 1972: 5001; 1973: 4611; 1974: 4394. This decline was not reflected in the ex-nuptial ratio until 1973 in Victoria because of the even greater decrease in nuptial births.)

To get some kind of perspective on the meaning of these figures it is worthwhile looking at the situation in other Australian states, as well as in other countries. Thus Table 2 shows that Victoria has, after the A.C.T., the lowest ratio of ex-nuptial to nuptial births, and also that the recent fall in the ratio of ex-nuptial births has occurred only in Victoria, N.S.W. and the A.C.T.

(8) All vital statistics from Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics (Victoria).
### TABLE 2

**Australia - Ex-nuptial Births: Percentage of Total Births (a)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N.S.W.</th>
<th>Vic.</th>
<th>Qld</th>
<th>S.A.</th>
<th>W.A.</th>
<th>Tas.</th>
<th>N.T.</th>
<th>A.C.T.</th>
<th>Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>8.11</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>10.67</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>10.31</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>14.97</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>7.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6622</td>
<td>4166</td>
<td>3756</td>
<td>1555</td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>19171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>7.97</td>
<td>5.77</td>
<td>10.49</td>
<td>6.86</td>
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<td>7.66</td>
<td>13.85</td>
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<td>315</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>19585</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>8.43</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>11.33</td>
<td>7.58</td>
<td>10.71</td>
<td>7.94</td>
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(a) N.T. figures are not considered accurate because definitions vary as to what constitutes a tribal marriage among aborigines.

(b) At the time of writing (July 1975) ex-nuptial statistics are not available for all states for 1974.
As far as other countries are concerned, there seem to be three main patterns in ex-nuptial ratios during this century. The first group of countries, which includes Israel, Ireland, Japan, Belgium, France, Yugoslavia, Norway, Finland and Holland, shows a reasonable stability of ratio. The second group includes Austria, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Hungary, East and West Germany, and Spain, all of which have had decreasing ratios.

The third group is of most interest to this study as it includes countries which could be considered as having a similar general outlook to Australia; it includes the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Denmark and Sweden, as well as Australia. This group had a rapidly escalating rate from the early 1950s to 1972. Since the beginning of the century there was a continuous decline up to the mid-1930s except for small upward swings after the depression and after the two World Wars.
Fig. 1: Comparison between expected birth ratios from three groups of countries.

- Group 1: Norway, Belgium, France
- Group 2: Australia, East and West Germany
- Group 3: United Kingdom, N. Ireland, Scotland

Detailed figures are given in Appendix A, Table 7.

Births as percentage of total births.
2. Age groups at risk of ex-nuptial pregnancy

Information about the age groups which are most at risk with respect to ex-nuptial pregnancies is of central importance if planning is to include preventive policies. Both Cutright (9) in the U.S., and Basavarajappa in Australia (10) point out the limitations in the use of ex-nuptial ratios for comparative purposes, as these figures do not take either the age structure or the marital structure of the female population into account. Thus, similar ratios in two different populations might conceal the fact that there is a higher rate of pregnancy among unmarried women in one population, or in one age group in a population, than in the other. (11)

For analytical purposes the Age Specific Ex-nuptial Birth-rate is preferred. Not only does it give a more reliable picture of the situation, it also directly indicates the groups most at risk and this latter is, as already noted, an important consideration where preventive measures are in view. This rate is obtained by taking the number of ex-nuptial births in age groups and dividing them by the estimates of unmarried women in the same group. The rate is expressed

(10) K.G. Basavarajappa, op. cit., p. 135.
(11) For instance, it was pointed out by Rev. Eric Perkins in 1966 that imbalances in age structure of the female population was a factor that influenced the number of ex-nuptial births. He showed that when a disproportionate number of women were at an age he considered at risk for ex-nuptial births (there were 57% more females aged 19 than were aged 29 in 1966) the ex-nuptial ratio would be high. See E.G. Perkins, cited in The Tribune, Feb. 8, 1968. Similarly, Geraldine Spencer, writing in 1969 on marriage trends in Australia: "For females there has been a return to the younger and more universal marriage of the very masculine mid-nineteenth century in Australia". Geraldine Spencer, "Marriage Trends in Australia", The Economic Record, 45, June 1969, p. 211.
as the number of births per 1000 single women i.e. unmarried, widowed or divorced.\(^{(12)}\)

The following graph illustrates the relationship of the ex-nuptial birth proportion to total births and the ASB rate and illustrates how much more significantly trends can be shown by using ASB rates.\(^{(13)}\)

\[\text{Ex-nuptial Ratio and Ex-nuptial ASB Rate}^{(b)}\]

(a) Adapted from Basavarajappa (1968) p.

(b) Indices of ex-nuptial birth proportion (A), ex-nuptial births per 1000 unmarried females aged 15-49 years (B).

Australia 1911-1971

(Semilogarithmic scale)

\(^{(12)}\) This denominator may limit accuracy as it does not take into account the number of permanently separated women who are also at risk for ex-nuptial births. See Appendix B.

\(^{(13)}\) Full details of A.S.E.N.B.R. in age groups 1911 to 1971 in Appendix B, Table 5.
In Australia, the A.S.E.N.B.R. has varied widely the last sixty years as the following peaks and low point show:

In 1911 the rate was 12.34
In 1933 6.83
In 1971 27.91.

These figures give a more accurate account of what was happening in each of these years, as distorting differences in the population age structure are ruled out.

When the detailed breakdown of the A.S.E.N.B.R. (14) is examined, the following trends can be observed:

a) While all groups show an increase over the 1961-1971 decade, the greatest percentage increase (over 100%) is in the 15-19 year old group. There is an increase of 33% in the 20-24 year old group, and an increase of 20% in the 25-29 year old group, over the same period.

b) The 20-29 age period is the highest risk period among unmarried women, although the proportion of unmarried women in the total population is much lower than in the younger groups.

c) Between 1911 and 1971, there have been changes in the relative number of children born to mothers in different age groups. From 1911 through to 1961, the 20 to 24 year olds had a larger number of ex-nuptial children than other groups taken separately. Between 1961 and 1971, this changed and the under-twenty group took the lead.

(14) See Appendix A.
The following graph illustrates not only the general trends in ex-nuptial births but also these differential rates of increase between the age groups.

![Graph showing Age-Specific Ex-nuptial Birth Rates 1911-71](image)

**FIGURE 3(a)**

*Age-Specific Ex-nuptial Birth Rates 1911-71*(b)

(a) Adapted from Basavarajappa, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

(b) See Appendix B, Table 5, for details of actual numbers and percentages of Australian ex-nuptial births to unmarried females of specified ages between 1911 and 1971.
It is worth noting that the use of the A.S.E.N.B.R. also picks up differences between countries which are not apparent in ex-nuptial birth ratios. For instance, Australia, the United States and New Zealand all show similar birth ratio trends between 1961 and 1971; they also all show a higher percentage increase in the under 20 group. However, the United States shows stability in other age groups. New Zealand shows a much higher rate of increase in all age groups than either Australia or the United States.

3. Age structure of the ex-nuptial mother population

In planning to meet the needs of any group it is essential to know the stage in life reached by those for whom the services are designed. Table 3, below, provides information that is relevant to these matters.

Taking the details of Victorian nuptial and ex-nuptial births in age groups for the years 1972 and 1973, it is possible to see how the predominant child-bearing ages vary between these

(15) These are illustrated in Table 2 in Appendix B, taking available data for 1961-71 in the U.S., N.Z. and Australia.

(16) See Table 3, Appendix B.

(17) In the U.S., for example, the problem of illegitimacy began to be redefined in terms of adolescent pregnancy, with the emphasis on "adolescent". See B. Plionis, "Adolescent pregnancy: review of the literature", Social Work, 20, 4, July 1975, p. 302. And because mothers of pregnant unmarried girls play an influential role in their lives, it has been considered necessary to plan counselling services for these mothers as well. See Alma T. Young, Barbara Berkman and Helen Rehr, "Parental Influence On Pregnant Adolescent: Social Work, 20, 6, September 1975.
categories. Using three sets of percentages - the percentage of nuptial and ex-nuptial births to mothers in each age group, the percentage of ex-nuptial births in total ex-nuptial births, and nuptial births in total nuptial births - some added perspective to the general picture of the ex-nuptial population can be gained. Thus, from this data it appears that:

a) A large and increasing proportion of ex-nuptial births occurs in the under 20 group. One in every three births to mothers under 20 is ex-nuptial, whereas in the 20 to 24 year old group, only one birth in 14 is ex-nuptial, and between 25 and 29 years only one birth in 30. After this, the proportion, quite unexpectedly, rises so that in the over 45 year group one birth in 10 is ex-nuptial. (18)

(18) Both ex-nuptial births by age-group as a percentage of total births, fall with age, but the latter faster, making the ex-nuptial in the total, increase rather than decrease. This slight but noticeable tendency for women in their late 40's (see chapter 6 p.154) to increase their ratio of ex-nuptial to nuptial births, shown in Table 3, may be due to several factors. For instance, women entering a de facto situation after a marriage failure may want to stabilize this by starting a family. Married women who are still responsible for children born earlier, or who have no need of new births to stabilize their marriage, would be less likely to become pregnant. Dr. Alan Gerbie (Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Northwestern University, U.S.) has said that purposeful unmarried pregnancies occurred not only among younger emancipated women but also among older women who wished to experience motherhood while still fertile. The Herald, 4.8.73.
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<th>Ex-nup. percent. of total ex-nuptial</th>
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b) Among ex-nuptial children, 40 per cent are born to mothers under 20, while only 7 per cent of nuptial children, including pre-nuptial conceptions, are born to mothers in this age group. 70 per cent of nuptial children are born to mothers between 20 and 29, whereas only 12% of ex-nuptial children are born to this age group. It is obvious, then, that ex-nuptial children will be more likely to be an additional burden to young immature mothers than will nuptial children.

c) It seems likely that the larger number of single mothers in the younger groups contain several different streams. There are the mothers who marry and move out of the "at risk" group; those who do not marry and do not have any more children; those who enter into de facto situations but continue to have children and thus remain in the ex-nuptial categories at older ages; and those who continue to have ex-nuptial children in a single situation.
4. Increases in ex-nuptial births and "forced" marriages

It is not possible to get a true picture of ex-nuptial mothers and children in a population in isolation from the other large group of ex-nuptially conceived births (those whose parents marry before their actual birth). These latter are usually referred to as premarital pregnancies. Basavarajappa expresses a commonly held view on the interconnectedness of these two outcomes of ex-nuptial conception: "increased sophistication which discourages rushing into marriage just because of pregnancy, may also have contributed its share in the increase in ex-nuptial births". (19) However, as this is a very difficult connection to establish, it is worthwhile examining other ways in which rates have varied in relation to one another in recent years. Both are the result of pre-marital conception and their combined total, relative to a population, is referred to as the out-of-wedlock conceived birth-rate of that population (O.W.C.B.R.).

In the past, rises and falls in pre-marital conceptions have been associated with rises and falls in ex-nuptial births, and countries with high pre-marital pregnancy rates have also had high ex-nuptial birthrates. However, there is another clear relationship: in countries where both rates are high, the illegitimate

rate is proportionately greater than the legitimated rate where the parents marry before birth. Cutright (20) says: "Illegitimacy will be relatively high and legitimation will be relatively low when a large proportion of women in a population become pregnant prior to a commitment to marry".

Cutright illustrates this correlation for selected western countries in the graph below (Figure 4). He points out that "if a line is fitted to the nine populations with OWCBR's of 60 or less ... a projection of that line would provide an estimate of the expected probability of legitimation in any population whose OWCBR was higher than those used to construct the regression line. In this graph we extended the regression line and found that observed levels of OWCBR for non-whites yielded an expected level of legitimation about equal to that actually observed in Detroit in the 1964-66 National Natality Survey". (21)

(21) Ibid., p. 405.
FIGURE 4\(^{(22)}\)

Relationship between the Out of Wedlock Conceived Birth Rate per 1000 Unmarried Women 15-44 and the Percent of Out of Wedlock Conceived Births Legitimated Before Birth by Marriage: Eleven Populations.

This connection is further developed by Cutright\(^{(23)}\) who quotes from the O.W.C.B.R. which has been compiled for the whole

\(^{(22)}\) Ibid., p. 392.
\(^{(23)}\) Ibid., p. 406.
United States population from 1964 to 1966, and the trend towards non-marriage is quite clear. He considers that the tendency towards marriage is directly related to the O.W.C.B.R. and therefore cannot be used as an index of level of stigma.

Again, commenting on the U.S. National Centre for Health Statistics figures, he writes:(24)

Commitment to marriage among the sexually active unmarried is not greatly influenced by the marital status of the alleged father or by social stigma. When then the level of non-marital sexual activity among couples not committed to marriage is high, and the control over conception and gestation is low, the O.W.C.B.R. will be high. In such a population the legitimation rate will be high but the legitimacy rate will also be high. The high illegitimacy rate is not caused by social or other factors that depress legitimation.

Other factors mentioned by Cutright as influencing the propensity to legitimize an ex-nuptial pregnancy are the age of the mother - the younger the mother, the more likely she will marry before confinement - and the birth order. A first pregnancy is much more likely to be legitimated than a second or subsequent pregnancy. However, it should be mentioned in context that a second or third ex-nuptial pregnancy occurring in an older woman often indicates that she is in a stable consensual union.

Illsley and Gill,(25) using English and Scottish figures, also show that where illegitimate births are frequent occurrences

(24) Ibid., p. 407.
pre-nuptial conceptions are also high. This is consistent with findings in New Zealand which show an even more marked trend towards ex-nuptial birth rather than marriage following ex-nuptial conception than does the United States or the United Kingdom. (26)

In Australia the changes in the O.W.C.B.R. (i.e. ex-nuptial births and nuptial first births under 8 months) signified general decline between 1910 and 1940. During this period, it decreased by 30%, rising in the early fifties and sixties by 69%. However, Basavarajappa (27) points out that the pattern of increase between these two outcomes of premarital conception has changed. Both rates declined until 1940; since then there has been a steady increase but the legitimated rate has never reached the level of 1911 when 28% of all brides of all ages were pregnant when they were married. In 1971 21% of these brides were pregnant, i.e. 22.1% less. By contrast, A.S.E.N.B.R. continued to rise so that it was 12.34 in 1911 and 27.91 in 1971 i.e. an increase of 125%.

A more direct comparison is made by comparing both types of O.W.C.B.R. in terms of their proportion of total births, as Figure 5 shows. When the percentages of nuptial and ex-nuptial births as outcomes of ex-nuptial conceptions are seen in relation to the O.W.C.B.R. in different years, the connection described by Cutright becomes clear. The tendency to marry before confinement appears to be directly related to the O.W.C.B.R. When this is high,

(27) Basavarajappa, op. cit., p. 135.
in any one year more ex-nuptial conceptions result in ex-nuptial births; when it is low, the tendency to marry is high.

There is no evidence that social pressure to marry has also fluctuated in the same direction as the marrying rate in any one year, so that it was higher in 1933 than in 1911 or 1921. It is necessary to go a step further back and postulate that the little understood factors which have led to increases and decreases in the total O.W.C. births also affect marrying rate. In other words, the social stigma is not likely to "force" marriages and thus reduce the ex-nuptial birthrate.

Fig. 5: Relationship between the OWCBR per 1000 unmarried women (15-44 yrs of age) and the percentage of OWCB legitimated before birth: Australian census years
Note on pre-marital pregnancies

Up to now we have assumed that the ex-nuptial pregnancy occurs and that the couple either decide to marry or not to marry. However, to better understand the relationship between these two outcomes of ex-nuptial pregnancy it is necessary to make a further distinction. It is probable that ex-nuptial pregnancies legitimated by marriage before confinement compound two different types of situation. The first is where the parents are intending to marry and the conception is in anticipation of that marriage, and the second is where the marriage is the result of the pregnancy. It is only the latter which could be conceived as "forced marriage".

Some writers, such as Basavarajappa (28) and members of the Society for Research on Women in N.Z. (29) consider that, although this division exists, any calculation of proportionality must remain a matter of speculation. However, Spencer (30) sees the timing of marriage after conception as indicative of original commitment to marriage. If marriage occurs in early pregnancy, it is more likely that marriage was anticipated; if late, that marriage was in order to legitimate the birth. Both Victorian and Australian figures show a heavy concentration of births in the fifth and sixth month of

(28) Ibid., p. 132.
marriage, which precludes a classification on these grounds.

It is clear that changes in the number of pre-marital pregnancies could be due to decreases of forced marriages without affecting anticipated marriages. This would reflect a very different situation from the reverse position, and would be more closely connected with the numbers of ex-nuptial births in any one period. (31)

5. Ex-nuptial and nuptial birthrates

It is important to know whether movements in ex-nuptial and nuptial rates are connected when the question of special provisions for ex-nuptial mothers is concerned. In other words, are there fashions in childbearing whether in or out of marriage?

(31) C. Presevelou and P. de Bie, in their survey of the literature on pre-marital sexual relations in Europe and the U.S. between 1948 and 1971, comment that while previously out-of-wedlock sexual relations were regarded as socially deviant, the predominant pattern which now prevails in sexual relationships between the unmarried, is that between couples who are already committed to each other, and who do not change sexual partners. They conclude that, from a sociological point of view, these relationships are an integral part of the family cycle. They are an initial phase of marriage, a sort of compromise between the aspirations of single people for freedom and lack of responsibility, with the need of society to have ordered family relationships and ensure a stable upbringing for its future members. See "Les Relations pré-conjugales du point de vue sociologique", Clio Presevelou & Pierre de Bie, "Communication présentée au XIVème Colloque International de Sexologie", Louvain, 26-28 mai 1972. However, it is worth noting that this construction does not throw any light whatever on increasing ex-nuptial birthrates, unless we can show that these are due to increasing incidence of stable and permanent consensual unions.
There does seem to have been some parallel trends for nuptial and ex-nuptial birthrates in the past. Secular trends for both show considerable similarity, (32) or did so until after the second world war. For example, both were low during the two world wars and during the depression (see Figure 1). However, since the late forties the similarity disappeared for many years, and only very recently has there been a downward turn again in the ex-nuptial rates in keeping with the downward turn of nuptial births in the early sixties. In Australia this has only affected Victoria, N.S.W. and the A.C.T. up to the time of writing (see Table 1). Age specific rates are not available for the years after 1971, but will undoubtedly reflect the reduction in numbers of ex-nuptial births since 1972. The following table shows how these rates varied in relation to each other once the last sixty years. The proportionally large increase in ex-nuptial birthrate was the backdrop to the beginnings of C.S.M.C. in 1969.

| TABLE 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nuptial | 100 | 83.5 | 55.5 | 67.8 | 63.2 | 65.3 | 56 | 56.8 |
| Ex-nuptial | 100 | 84.5 | 55.4 | 92.5 | 115.4 | 147.0 | 167.8 | 226.2 |

6. Ex-nuptial births and birth order of children

Data from the U.S. and Great Britain show that ex-nuptial mothers tend to have fewer children than married women. If the situation were similar in Australia this would be of some significance for a consideration of the needs of keeping single mothers for they would be dependent on public provision for a shorter time, and again, the kind of accommodation and other services needed might differ in some respects from those needed by lone mothers with larger families.

However, there is, apropos the parity factor, another more general consideration connected with the interpretation of increases in ex-nuptial births. The structural feature of low parity in the ex-nuptial mother population can itself be a contributory cause of a rise in the ex-nuptial ratio. Thus Ferris\(^{(33)}\) analyses all birthrates in the U.S. from 1940 to 1970 and shows clearly how the falling birthrates have a differential effect on births of differing order. According to Ferris the general picture is one of decline in all but the rate for first-order births. Second-order births have declined only slightly, but third and subsequent births show a marked downward trend. If ex-nuptial births have a high proportion of first-order births compared to nuptial births, they will be less affected by downward trends in all births and therefore will appear as an increasing proportion of all births when these latter are

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declining. (However, this would occur only when the downward trend is due to smaller numbers of children in existing families rather than to a higher number of couples having no children at all.)

In Australia we are hampered by the fact that birth order is not recorded in the case of ex-nuptial births; however, it is possible, in the light of the situation in other countries, to take a sounding of a group of Australian ex-nuptial mothers. Thus, in the U.S. and the U.K. it has been found that approximately two-thirds of ex-nuptial births and one-third of nuptial births are first births. (34) Similarly, in Australia, the proportion of first births in total births is fairly close to that in the U.K. Thus, figures on nuptial births between 1961-65 show that the percentage was 32% in Australia as compared with 33% in the U.K. In Australia the proportion of first births to other births was increasing from 32% to 38% in the decade between 1960 and 1971. (35)

To check the parity of a group of Australian ex-nuptial mothers an examination was made of medical birth records at the Royal Women's Hospital in Melbourne in 1973-74. These records

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(34) Ferris, op. cit., p. 74, claims that in the U.S. in 1964 66% of ex-nuptial births were first births. See also Cutright, op. cit., p. 419, who claims that 63% of all illegitimate births in the U.S. in 1968 (73% white, 54% non-white) were first-order births. In the U.K. the N.C.B. study of 1958 showed that the figures were 63% for illegitimate and 36% for legitimate births (cited in Born Illegitimate, Crellin, Kelmer Pringle and West, p. 14). Weir, op. cit., p. 29, found that in 1965 61% of ex-nuptial and 33% of legitimate births were first-order births.

(35) See Appendix A Table 10 for details.
showed a much higher rate of first-order births among ex-nuptial births than among nuptial births. (36) This suggests that the Australian trends with regard to rates for different birth orders may be similar to trends in overseas figures, so that with a declining birthrate first-order births have remained more stable than subsequent order births. Therefore, it does not seem unreasonable to suppose that one of the factors which has kept the ex-nuptial birthrate more constant than the nuptial birthrate is that it represents a considerably higher proportion of first births.

Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to examine the demographic context within which the C.S.M.C. operates and to point out certain aspects of the structure of the ex-nuptial population in Victoria which need to be more fully investigated. The demographic data referred to are concerned exclusively with birth records and birth rates, and the various social and economic changes which may have influenced these rates have received very little attention. (37) The data show that, although ex-nuptial births were increasing at the time that the C.S.M.C. was founded, they have not continued to increase after 1971, although the ex-nuptial birth ratio showed an

(36) In May 1975, with the kind permission of Dr. Trevaks, Medical Superintendent of the Royal Women's Hospital, 1263 medical records in number sequence between March 1973 and December 1974 were examined. 37% of nuptial births and 87% of ex-nuptial births were found to be prima parae.

(37) They are set out separately in Appendix D.
increase until 1973 because of the sharp fall in total births and the birth order structure of the ex-nuptial population. The data also show that when membership of the C.S.M.C. was at its highest in 1972 it represented only 1000 of the 17000 Victorian ex-nuptial mothers who had children under 5 (and therefore a very much smaller proportion of the total number with children under 16).

It is also apparent from comparisons with other countries that Australia shows similar all-over trends in ex-nuptial ratios to the U.S., the U.K. and New Zealand. This gives the information drawn from studies of ex-nuptial births from these countries a certain validity for comparative purposes. Use of age specific birthrates focusses on the age groups at risk with regard to ex-nuptial pregnancy, and analysis of the age structure of the ex-nuptial population in comparison with the age structure of the married mother population shows that overall planning for fatherless families must take account of the special needs of the very young ex-nuptial mothers who form the predominant group.

The next issue considered was the relationship between ex-nuptial pregnancy and the other main outcome of extra-marital conception, "forced" marriages. While this is less directly related to the planning of services, it highlights the context in which decisions must be made by the individual ex-nuptial mother-to-be, and it suggests that when the ex-nuptial ratio is high, fewer ex-nuptially pregnant women will opt for marriage before their confinement.
A further consideration of more general interest is the connection between ex-nuptial and nuptial births. However this connection also has implications for the needs of ex-nuptial mothers as it points up the relatively temporary nature of ex-nuptial mothers' dependence on public provision.

A final observation on the trends disclosed is that the data available for 1974 show an even more drastic fall in nuptial birthrate and a distinct but not-so-great fall in ex-nuptial numbers. As these changes could play havoc with earlier population projections it seems that, once again, new and little known factors are affecting the propensity of people to have children whether in or out of marriage. As the English demographer, Geoffrey Hawthorn, writes: "The investigation of human fertility, in general, is probably one of the most extensive sociological industries; judged by its conclusions it is perhaps one of the least successful. But the very extensiveness of the effort does mean that there is no shortage of suggestions". (38)

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Chapter 6

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF EX-NUPTIAL MOTHERHOOD

"Abiunt ad plures"
("They have joined the majority")
Petronius, 60 A.D.

The previous chapter was primarily concerned with the recorded facts of ex-nuptial births and no consideration was given to the consequences of ex-nuptial births for those most involved, the mother and her child. Some have suggested that ex-nuptial mothers do not form a special and well-defined class and that the sole characteristic they have in common is the fact that they have given birth to children while not married to the father of the child. (1) On the other hand, there are the various stereotypes of the ex-nuptial mother. Jean Pochin, for example, after claiming

(1) See Ruth Chaskel, "The Unmarried Mother: Is She Different?", Child Welfare, 46, 2, Feb.1967, p.65: "The thesis of this paper is that the unmarried mother constitutes a cross-section of the female population. See also Arthur T. Collis, foreword to Unsupported Mothers by Robert Holman, London, 1972, p.2: "Public and official attitudes to the unmarried mother remain a curious mixture. Judgmental, punitive, supportive and sentimental: these elements can all be traced reflecting past and present reaction to a common enough situation".
that the older view of unmarried pregnancy saw it as a "deadly sin", herself describes it as a "grave symptom". (2) Jo Murray, president of the C.S.M.C., has nicely summed up the usual stereotypes of single mothers in the following comment: in the past, she says, "all single mothers were depicted as being (a) Bad (the moralistic judgment of Puritan and Victorian times); (b) Mad (the psychologically-based judgment of workers such as Leontine Young in the period up to the sixties); (c) Stupid (the social judgment of the past decade when contraceptives are supposed to be easily available)." (3)

What these various stereotypes (whether favourable or unfavourable) have in common is that the typical keeping ex-nuptial mother is seen as a young and relatively immature girl, rather than a woman, living alone, rather than with others, and struggling to bring up her child on her own. (4) Other possibilities such as the ex-nuptial mother setting up a two-parent partnership, or living in a household of people, are simply not envisaged.

In actual fact very little is known of the subsequent histories of the majority of ex-nuptial mothers and their children


(4) In a number of interviews conducted by the author for the purposes of this study, these assumptions emerge very clearly. Thus for example, it was said by a charity worker that "single mothers are selfish and do not think of the good of their children"; again, a social worker commented that "keeping can be an extremely growth-enhancing process if the girl is fully conscious of what is involved"; another social worker remarked that "most single mothers keep their child basically to satisfy their own needs".
in Australia. *(5)* There are records of those ex-nuptial mothers who seek financial help from Australian and State governments, and there are records of those who come into contact with agencies and hospitals, as well as those ex-nuptial mothers — a very small number indeed — who have been part of a sample for some piece of research. However, all these mothers taken together represent only a small fraction of those who have had ex-nuptial births. (Again, as far as the children are concerned attention has been concentrated on the very early period of the child’s life, for the most part covering the pre-school years.) Of all the other ex-nuptial mothers, such as those who have been self-sufficient and self-supporting, those who have later married, and those who have been in stable *de facto* situations for many years, very little is known.

Because of this lack of knowledge, planning for single mothers as a group is mostly seen in terms of the dependent mother with a young vulnerable child. But obviously, it makes a great deal of difference to social planning whether ex-nuptial motherhood is viewed as a temporary or a permanent state, and whether provision has to be made for the whole population of ex-nuptial mothers and children, or for a relatively small group of them.

*(5)* A study has been undertaken in New Zealand by the Chief Research Officer in the Department of Social Welfare, Dr. J. Jensen, which illustrates how information on the subsequent histories of ex-nuptial mothers and their children can be usefully classified. This study is to be published in 1975. Certain tables obtained from a study of the 1970 births have been included in Appendix C as they provide a useful comparison with the much more limited information available from Australian sources.
It is therefore important to consider any information which would allow better knowledge of the outcomes of ex-nuptial births for both mothers and children. It is this which the present chapter attempts to do by examining first, demographic data contained in adoption and legitimation records; second, data derived from government pension records; and third, fragmentary evidence from various research studies augmented by agency records. This information is considered with a view to developing a typology of four main categories of outcome for ex-nuptial mothers.

The period in Victoria between 1969 and 1974 has been the central focus for this study both because it was during that time that the C.S.M.C. was founded and developed and also because it was then that many changes affecting the circumstances of ex-nuptial mothers occurred. The most significant of these changes was that a government pension (Family Assistance from the Victorian Social Welfare Department and later the Australian Social Security Department's Supporting Mothers' Benefit) became available. This provided those ex-nuptial mothers who wished to retain the care of their children with some kind of assured income for the first time. Previously they had had the right to keep their children, but they did not always have the means to do so.

It is necessary to keep this change of circumstances in mind when looking at the different outcomes of ex-nuptial birth and how these outcomes have altered during the period 1969-74 and the years immediately preceding that period. Distinct tendencies are
observable when the three rolling five-year periods 1967-71, 1968-72, 1969-73, are examined. (See Table 5 below.) Thus, adoptions have decreased, (6) while on the other hand the number of children legitimated by their parents has remained stable. (7) Exact figures for those who retain care of their children living in a two-parent partnership or on their own are not available, but it is estimated that the numbers have increased. However, information about children who have not been adopted but who have been separated from their mother's care, is too imprecise to enable trends to be estimated. Again, in Victoria the evidence suggests that during the period 1969-74, ex-nuptial motherhood, and the maintenance of the ex-nuptial child, has been commonly a temporary stage. This is illustrated by the figures in Table 5 below which show that, for the years 1969-73, 43% of mothers surrendered their children for adoption soon after birth, and that 12% legitimated their child after birth by marrying the child's father, leaving only 45% of ex-nuptial mothers alone with their children. It is certain that some of this 45% would have been cohabiting before the child's birth and that a further proportion would have formed two-parent partnerships later. This means that the majority of ex-nuptial children born between 1969-73 in Victoria would have been with their mothers in two parent households by the time they reached five years of age. In other words, it seems likely that, even with the decrease


(7) "Legitimated" i.e. registered under the provision of the Commonwealth Marriage Act 1961-66, which came into operation on September 1, 1963. See Table 5 below.
in the proportion of adoptions, two thirds of all ex-nuptial children (those adopted, legitimated, and otherwise living with their mother and a male parent) will be living in a typical two-parent family, rather than in an atypical family, by the time the child is going to school.\(^{(8)}\)

These various pieces of evidence have suggested the four main categories of outcome which have been developed for this study and which have been used to classify the available information about the lives of ex-nuptial mothers and their children. These categories provide a possible way of ordering the large amount of data about the ex-nuptial situation, ranging from well-founded impressions to "hard" facts, and enable us to build up tentative profiles of the varieties of ex-nuptial motherhood. It may be useful first to characterise these four categories in general terms before examining them singly in detail.

\(^{(8)}\) It is interesting to note the similar situation in certain European countries. See Report of the Committee of One-Parent Families (Finer Report), vol.2, p.19. "Although often acute, many of the single parents' circumstances are also transitory. In Germany, for example, 70% of divorced women but only 4% of widows remarry; Swedish studies have shown 70% of unmarried mothers married within six years of childbirth, and Danish estimates are that 85% of unmarried mothers and two thirds of divorced and younger widowed mothers eventually (re)married. Extensive research in Norway has suggested that within ten years after bearing children (1953-63) only 9% of unmarried Oslo mothers were still unmarried and living with their children (53% had married, a third had their child adopted). To a large extent, the transitional nature of such families is a function of the younger ages of unmarried vis-à-vis other parents".
Categories of outcome for ex-nuptial mothers and their children

Category A mothers are those mothers who surrender their children for adoption under the Victorian Adoption of Children Act, 1964. A small proportion of such children are legally adopted by their own natural mothers and their husbands when they subsequently marry. Category B mothers are those mothers who have entered into a continuing two-parent partnership, either through legal marriage or a de facto arrangement. This category comprises a number of different situations and it will be necessary later to distinguish certain subcategories. Thus, there are those mothers who marry the father of the child after the child's birth and so remove themselves and their children from the ex-nuptial population. There are those who, while technically remaining part of the ex-nuptial population, have been in a stable de facto relationship or common law marriage since before the birth of the child and remain so placed (Category B1), and those who enter in a de facto relationship after the birth of the child (Category B2). Finally, there are those in either of the above situations who subsequently separate from their partners (Category B3). The exact numbers of legitimations are registered

(9) These categories roughly correspond to the four classifications proposed in the above-mentioned study of illegitimate births in New Zealand in 1970. Births were divided into four groups as follows: those placed for adoption (the adoption group); those kept by their mother in a non-cohabiting situation (the single group); those kept by the mother who was living in a cohabiting situation (the cohabiting group); those living in other situations (e.g. foster homes, relatives, institutions, and unknown) (the miscellaneous group). Communication to the author by Director of Department of Social Welfare, New Zealand, May 29, 1975. An abstract of this study is given in Appendix C.
and are available. But the numbers of mothers and children in Category B who are probably in two-parent households cannot be ascertained with any certainty. A calculation based on Australian and overseas studies has been made of the proportion of ex-nuptial mothers who marry, or who form stable de facto unions, in the early years after the birth of the child, but who do not register their children as legitimate. According to this estimate, the proportion is 40% of the ex-nuptial children who have neither been adopted nor known to be legitimated.\(^{(10)}\)

The third group, Category C mothers, consists of those ex-nuptial mothers and their children who are not in two-parent households. This category includes those mothers who live alone with their children, or with others but not with a male partner. The number of such mothers cannot be exactly calculated, but it would consist of the balance left from the total ex-nuptial births when adoptions, legitimations, and those probably in two-parent households are deducted from that total.

The fourth group, Category D mothers, is the most difficult of the four to characterise. It consists of ex-nuptial mothers and children where the mother originally decided to keep her child and not to surrender it for adoption, but where the child has not remained in her direct care and has become, for example, a ward of State, or has been left in the care of relatives or friends. Except for those who become wards of State, there are no accurate records available of these ex-nuptial children.

\(^{(10)}\) See Appendix D.
The evidence given so far about these four categories of ex-nuptial mothers is summarised in the following table (Table 5).

**TABLE 5(a)**

Estimated outcome of the ex-nuptial birth situation at the end of three rolling five-year periods in Victoria. (Beginning of new period, 1974, shown for comparison.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1967-71 percent (n)</th>
<th>1968-72 percent (n)</th>
<th>1969-73 percent (n)</th>
<th>(1974) percent (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child adopted</td>
<td>48 (10256)</td>
<td>49 (11066)</td>
<td>43 (10000)</td>
<td>34 (1490)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Category A)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legitimatised or</td>
<td>12 (2662)</td>
<td>12 (2725)</td>
<td>12 (2788)</td>
<td>12.5 (551)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otherwise in 2-parent households (b)</td>
<td>16 (3390)</td>
<td>16 (3562)</td>
<td>18 (3141)</td>
<td>22 (941)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Category B)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in 2-parent households (c)</td>
<td>23 (5085)</td>
<td>23 (5342)</td>
<td>27 (6211)</td>
<td>32 (1412)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Category C)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not with mother</td>
<td>Numbers unknown, probably less than 1%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Category D)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ex-nuptial</td>
<td>21393</td>
<td>22695</td>
<td>23140</td>
<td>4394</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>births</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) See Demography (Statistics of Victoria), Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics, Victorian Office, 1972, 1973. See also Appendix A.

(b) Estimated as 40% of non-adopted ex-nuptial births, five years after confinement. See Appendix D.

(c) See Appendix D.
We now examine in detail the four categories delineated above, drawing in particular upon government departmental records, hospital and agency records, and various research findings.

1. Category A Mothers (Adopting) (11)

Records in Victoria show a considerable drop in the percentage of children adopted over the last few years. In 1966-67, 42% of ex-nuptial children were placed for adoption; in 1972-73, the proportion had dropped to 26%, and in 1973-74, it had dropped to 19%. (12)

Figures available from maternity hospitals for 1974 indicated that the percentage was still dropping. (13) There was a similar marked trend in the United States, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand. In the 1973-74 period 89% of the children placed for adoption in Victoria were under the age of six months (15) which suggests that the mother usually makes an early decision about surrendering her child. Some of the reasons for later adoption are the child's medical condition at birth, the need to obtain a dispensation of parental consent, change of mind on the part of the mother.

(11) "Adopting" i.e. surrendering their children for adoption.
(12) These figures were taken from Social Welfare Department figures on non-relative adoptions, and therefore will show a smaller percentage than those in Table 5 which are based on all adoptions in the State of Victoria. Social Welfare Department (Victoria) Annual Report, 1974, pp.72-75.
(13) For Victorian hospital figures see Appendix F.
(14) Graeme Gregory, The Bernadette Devlin Syndrome, 1972, Unpublished M.S.W. Thesis, Univ. of Michigan, U.S.A., p.6; Registrar General's Statistical Review of New England & Wales 1973, Part II, Table T5; New Zealand Official Year Book 1973-74. It is an interesting fact that the adoption rate in the U.S. and in the U.K. has always been considerably lower than in Australia and N.Z.
As delay only occurs after six months in eleven percent of cases, it does not seem likely that many mothers make late decisions about releasing their children for adoption. (16)

Some overseas studies have looked closely at the characteristics which distinguish adopting from keeping single mothers. Thus, as far as adopting mothers are concerned, earlier evidence in the U.S. suggested that they were better educated, from upper socio-economic groups, and more emotionally stable than keeping mothers. (17) Again, Weir, (18) writing of Scottish single mothers, describes the typical single mother who consents to adoption as young, nulliparous, having intercourse with one single young man, dependent on her parents, from an intact home, having better than average schooling, older in her family, more frequently a church attender, and of greater social maturity than the keeping mother. However, Costigan suggests in her study in the U.S. in 1964 that there was some differentiation of placement decisions according to the age at which the decision was made. (19) For instance, she found that the under-16 year olds were more influenced by the good or bad relationship they may have had with their parents; that between 18 and 19 years of age the educational level was more important; and that the young women over 20 years of

(16) This is substantiated by the findings of Nan Johns, _The Health of Children Kept by their Single Mothers_, p. 127.


age in her sample of 100 were more representative of the sample as a whole. The New Zealand study, (20) already referred to, confirms the educational and occupational findings, the greater youth, and the likelihood of an adopting mother to live at home before conception. In Victoria, Brotherton and Meredith (21) found that the adopting mother was younger and more likely to be from a white collar background and Johns confirmed these findings. (22) These two studies also showed that the situation is similar as far as educational level is concerned. Thus the percentage of mothers educated to fifth form or above is given as follows. (23)

Percentage of Ex-nuptial Mothers Educated to Fifth Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No in Sample</th>
<th>Keeping Mothers</th>
<th>Adopting Mothers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johns</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meredith &amp; Brotherton</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Johns also noted that fewer adopting mothers had lost their fathers by death, separation or divorce, and that more had had skilled and stable employment. (24) This study and that of Healy (25) suggest that, regardless of home background, the lack of parental support and approval of the decision make adoption more likely. Both Healy and

(20) See Appendix C.
Garton Smith (26) remark that greater inter-personal competence and adaptability was found among adopting mothers than among keeping mothers. However, no Australian study gives any details of the lives of the adopting mothers once they have surrendered their babies, though Cutright’s work (27) work in the United States suggests that when mothers who have their children adopted later marry and have children, they tend to have the same number of legitimate children as other women in their age group. In other words, having had an ex-nuptial child before marriage makes no difference to their subsequent childbearing; they do not in their subsequent marriage have one less legitimate child than they might have been expected to have. Again, follow-up studies of the children surrendered for adoption, such as the National Children's Bureau study in the United Kingdom, and Johns' study in Victoria have indicated that in most respects these children are as a group similar to children who have been brought up by their natural married parents. Indeed, in certain respects their ability and capacity for adjustment seems to be superior to the latter. (28)

2. Category B Mothers (Cohabiting)

It has been estimated that in Victoria between the years 1969-73, 6,929 ex-nuptial mothers and their children, or 30% of the total of all ex-nuptial mothers and children, were probably in two-parent partnerships. These mothers comprise our Category B.

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This category is more difficult to describe than Category A, not only because of the difficulty of establishing the exact numbers of cohabiting mothers, but also because the group includes those ex-nuptial mothers who subsequently marry the putative father of the child and so legitimate the child (whether or not this legitimation is formally registered). Technically speaking, once legitimation occurs, the mother and her child are no longer "ex-nuptial", and this means that if the partnership later breaks up these mothers will be classified as deserted or deserting wives, and so not be included in government pension records as ex-nuptial mothers. For the purposes of this study, however, all ex-nuptial mothers who have entered into a two-parent partnership will be considered to be in Category B unless otherwise indicated.

Category B mothers fall into three sub-groups: (i) those who have entered into a common law marriage before the birth of the child (Category B1); (ii) those who have formed a continuing de facto union after the birth of the child (Category B2); (iii) those who have entered into a continuing union either before or after the birth of the child but who have subsequently separated (Category B3).

As noted earlier, little is known of ex-nuptial mothers in stable de facto unions. (29) There is, however, some information about certain of the ex-nuptial mothers in Category B3, that is, mothers whose de facto union has not lasted and who have sought a pension to enable them to survive financially. This information is given in Australian and Victorian government pension records, and as the same records also provide important data about Category C mothers (single),

(29) See reference to Appendix C, p.151 below.
it may be useful to describe these sources in a little detail.

Since 1968, various groups of ex-nuptial mothers and children have been eligible for a government subsidy if their income is inadequate enough for them to qualify. These have been mothers keeping their children while not living with a male partner. (In this one group are the keeping single mothers and the deserted de facto wives.) The government departments involved were the Victorian Social Welfare Department and the Australian Department of Social Security. Over the past five years the relationship between these departments and the extent and conditions of benefit payment for ex-nuptial mothers have altered considerably.\(^{(30)}\) The records available from the Victorian Social Welfare Department\(^{(31)}\) cover the 1972-74 period when the Department paid a Class A widow's pension to single mothers with dependent children through its Family Assistance programme. This pension was at the rate of $27.50 per week, with a severe means test,\(^{(32)}\) and was the only subsidy available for single mothers or separated de facto wives until June 1973.

\(^{(30)}\) As mentioned earlier, the Commonwealth Government began in 1969 to subsidize payments through State Welfare Departments to certain categories of unsupported mothers. See Chapter 7 on legal provisions.

\(^{(31)}\) Government of Victoria, Social Welfare Department, Assistance Payments, Statistical Tables, 30.6.71-30.6.72, 1.7.73-30.6.74. These records were kindly made available by Mr. F. Graham, Officer in Charge, Family Assistance Section, Social Welfare Department. An abstract of the details is contained in Appendix E.

\(^{(32)}\) Any additional income reduced the pension $1 for $1. Capital allowance was only $500 for the parent and $100 for each child. It should be noted that the amount of the pension has, since December 1974, been increased to parity with the Supporting Mothers' Benefit; the means test however has not been changed.
The Australian Social Security Department commenced direct payment of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit in July 1973 to all unsupported mothers previously excluded from receiving the Commonwealth Widows' Pension. These mothers comprised deserting and deserted wives, unmarried mothers, and de facto wives of prisoners, all of whom had previously been solely dependent upon Family Assistance. Payment of the Benefit however only commenced six months after the event that made the mother eligible, for example, the birth of an ex-nuptial child or the act of desertion. This delay meant that Family Assistance payments made through the Victorian Social Welfare Department had to continue through this initial six month eligibility period. However, the Supporting Mothers' Benefit was paid at a much higher rate than Family Assistance: at first on a par with the Commonwealth Widows' Pension, by June 1975 the total pension, plus allowance for a mother with one child under the age of six years, was $51.50 per week with a generous means test. Thus most women choose to transfer to the Supporting Mothers' Benefit from Family Assistance as soon as they are eligible. (Another effect of the Benefit is that a much higher number of ex-nuptial mothers have applied for assistance since it has been available. (33) In other words, since 1973 the option available to ex-nuptial mothers to keep their children has been greatly enlarged.

Both the Victorian and Australian government departments specify two categories of ex-nuptial mother recipients: deserted de

(33) The Community Liaison Officer of the Australian Social Security Department kindly arranged for the author a tabulation of the records on the Pensions Masterfile - Special Research Report, 16.4.74, 13.9.74, 11.4.75. (By January 1976 the amount was $57.25 per week.)
facto wives, and unmarried mothers. (34) For the purposes of this study information has been taken from the Victorian Social Welfare Department Family Assistance statistics for June 1973, just prior to the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit, and again for June 1974, a year after the Benefit had been in operation. Information has also been taken from the records of the Australian Social Security Department for April 1974 and September 1974, when the Supporting Mothers' Benefit had been in operation for nine months and fourteen months respectively.

In the Victorian Social Welfare Department records details are given of reasons for cessation of Family Assistance payments. The reasons given for cancelling Family Assistance payments to both Category B and Category C mothers throw some light on how this pension was perceived and used by ex-nuptial mothers both before and after the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit. Thus, for example, Family Assistance is withdrawn because of the mothers' subsequent marriage, return to work, moving residence outside Victoria, gaining increased maintenance from the father of the child, refusal to seek maintenance, adoption of the child, having the child made a ward of State, lack of co-operation with the Department.

Many of the changes in the numbers of ex-nuptial mothers receiving Family Assistance between 1971-2 and 1973-4 were undoubtedly connected with the introduction of the more lucrative Supporting Mothers' Benefit. Thus in 1971-72 the number of unmarried mothers cancelling

(34) A summary of these statistics is given in Appendix E.
their pension because they had become eligible for the Supporting Mothers' Benefit was less than two percent, while between 1973-74 this rose to 69 percent. However there were other factors operating as well: thus the number ceasing to receive the Family Assistance because of marriage dropped from 27 percent to 4.2 percent between these two periods, while the number ceasing to receive the pension because they began work fell from 21 percent to 5 percent, and the number moving out of Victoria from 10 percent to 1 percent. From these figures, it seems likely that the pressure to change status or locale may be less when a more stable and sufficient pension can be anticipated. (35)

These governmental records connected with Family Assistance payments and the Supporting Mothers' Benefit enable us then to glean some information about Category B mothers and we now return to a more detailed description of this group of ex-nuptial mothers.

Both Victorian and Australian departmental records show a much smaller number of de facto wives in receipt of pensions than unmarried mothers (i.e. single or Category C mothers). (36) However, as the number of de facto wives who have separated from their partners cannot be estimated, there is no way of knowing how representative the de facto mothers receiving the pension are of the whole population

(35) See Appendix E, Table 25.

(36) It would be of interest to this study to know what proportion of separated de facto wives with children become dependent on government assistance; however this is impossible on the basis of available information. As there is no way of knowing how many de facto wives separate from their male partners, knowing the actual numbers receiving the pension at any one time gives no indication of what proportion of Category B3 mothers they represent.
of ex-nuptial mothers or even of those mothers in Category B. Nevertheless as a group they can be contrasted with those ex-nuptial mothers receiving benefits as "unmarried mothers" (Category C mothers) who presumably have not formed continuing two-parent partnerships (at least as far as the Social Welfare Department Family Assistance is concerned). There were 448 deserted de facto wives in Victoria receiving Family Assistance payments in June 1973. On the whole they were older than the ex-nuptial mothers receiving the pension as "unmarried mothers" (Category C). Thus 20 percent of Category B mothers were under 22 years of age compared with 64 percent of the Category C mothers. Again, fewer of these mothers (47 percent as compared with 64 percent of the Category C mothers) received the full allowance, implying that they had some other source of income; and they tended to have more children (57 percent had one child only as compared with 95 percent of the Category C mothers). (37)

The figures from the Australian Social Security Department records reinforce the general impression of deserted de facto wives (Category B mothers) as being older, more likely to receive maintenance, and having more children than Category C ex-nuptial mothers (termed "single mothers" in the Australian Social Security Department records). Only 9 percent of Category B mothers are under 22 years of age compared with 44 percent of Category C mothers; 40 percent of Category B mothers receive maintenance from their children's father as compared with 20 percent of C mothers; 60 percent of Category B mothers have more than one child compared with the 14 percent of Category C mothers.

(37) For details see Appendix D.
Further details are available concerning recipients of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit which suggest that Category B mothers are less vulnerable to living problems than Category C mothers. This may well be due to the fact that the former tend to be older, or to the fact that they have spent a period of their ex-nuptial motherhood in a two-parent family. However, as far as accommodation is concerned, Category B mothers seem to be better situated since 7 percent of them are home-owners compared with only one percent of Category C mothers, and only 22 percent describe their accommodation as "board and lodging" compared with 55 percent of Category C mothers who describe their accommodation in this way. Again, 63 percent of Category B mothers rent their accommodation (compared with 35 percent of Category C mothers) which suggests that they have a greater tendency to local stability.

Concerning the Category B sub-groups, evidence about Category B1 mothers (those cohabiting since before the birth of the child) is very scarce. The New Zealand study shows that over 75 percent of the couples who were cohabiting three months after the birth of the child were also cohabiting beforehand. (38) The study also shows that this group of mothers had had fewer moves than other ex-nuptial mothers, and that nearly 66 percent of them had been previously married and separated with children of the previous marriage. More than 50 percent of these mothers were over 25 years of age, and more of them had left school earlier than other New Zealand ex-nuptial mothers. However, there is no direct information about this sub-group of Category B ex-nuptial mothers in Victoria.

(38) See Appendix C, Table 18.
There is, however, a little more evidence about the Category B2 mothers. The number of these mothers who begin as keeping single mothers (Category C) after the birth of their child, but who have begun cohabiting by the time the child begins school, is calculated elsewhere in this study (39) as being approximately 40 percent of all ex-nuptial mothers. This outcome might be anticipated in that most women in this age-group marry; but it is also clear that the fact that a woman is keeping an ex-nuptial child does not severely inhibit her chances of getting married. (40) It is not known whether ex-nuptial mothers are more or less likely to enter into de facto relationships than other young women in their age-group. (41)

Sauber (42) noted that in the U.S. there was a comparatively high rate of marriage among Category B2 mothers and also a comparatively high risk of instability in these marriages (so that they become Category B3 mothers). The marriage rate was proportionately higher in the under-twenties than in other age-groups, but only 50 percent of such marriages remained intact by the time the child is six years of age. With mothers under 17 years of age the rate of marriage breakdown was very high indeed. Between 20 and 24 years of age fewer married, and those who did tended to make stable marriages. Marriages at ages older than 24 were rare but, once again, more stable when they did occur.

(39) See Appendix D.
(40) In Victoria in 1972 the median marrying age for spinsters was 21.2 years i.e. half the women in Victoria were married by this age. See Victorian Year Book, 1974, p. 147.
(41) P. Ctright, Op. cit., p.404, suggests that in the U.S. mothers more likely to cohabit than others are younger and have had fewer previous births.
In the available Australian studies marital stability has not been directly related to age at marriage. However, Johns' sample was a distinctly younger group than that of the ex-nuptial population as a whole and the marriage or de facto marriage rate of the group was very high at 81 percent.\(^{43}\) Johns also shows that 53 percent of the original sample were with their partners at the end of three years.\(^{44}\) Wilson and Smith\(^{45}\) found that 37 percent of their sample of keeping mothers were, or had been, in a married or de facto situation by the time the child was 15 months old. At this stage 66 percent of these mothers described their relationship as "unhappy".\(^ {46}\)

The fragmentary information which can be assembled concerning Category B ex-nuptial mothers suggests then a wide range of possible situations. Even within the one category of ex-nuptial mothers there is a great deal of variety.\(^ {47}\)


\(^{46}\) *Ibid.*, p. 18. It is impossible to compare these figures with those relating to mothers having their children in wedlock. The only statistics regarding relative stability of marriages refer to divorces and not to separations. However, Johns remarks that there was no record of separation among the 45 married women in her control group who had been matched for age with her sample group of ex-nuptial mothers. At the same time, during the three year period of her study, 30 percent of the married mothers moved without leaving an address, and this might possibly imply that at least some of these women had experienced marriage difficulties.

\(^{47}\) It should be noted that most of the above information concerns those of the Category B mothers who had difficulties of one kind or another rather than those mothers who managed successfully. The total number of ex-nuptial mothers with children under five in Category B was in 1973 estimated as being 4141 (see Table 5).
3. Category C Mothers (Single keeping mothers)

This group of ex-nuptial mothers is the best documented, particularly with respect to the period covering the yearly years of the ex-nuptial's child's life. There is a good deal of information about these mothers in government pension records and in agency records, and a number of research projects have been devoted to an investigation of their circumstances. In many ways the Category C mother is the nearest approximation to the traditional stereotype of the "unmarried mother", viz. a single mother living alone with her child. As we shall see, however, this situation is often a merely transitory stage in the life of the ex-nuptial mother and her child. This group of mothers forms a discrete category among ex-nuptial mothers and children (and also among all other one-parent families) insofar as their situation is not the result of a breakdown of a two-parent situation or of an established household. However, even within this group, there is not a great deal of homogeneity.

There is, for example, the question of age. Age at confinement is registered with all ex-nuptial births. As a group, 30 percent of Category C mothers are under 20 years old, compared with 7 percent of married mothers. We have also seen that the de facto group represents an older stratum of ex-nuptial mothers, so that the single mothers will be even younger, and of these, the adopting mothers youngest of all. Thus, there seem to be three age groups: the oldest, who are mostly de facto (Category B); the middle group, who are

\(48\) Chapter 5, Table 3, p.116.
keepers (Category C); and the youngest, who are adopters (Category A). But the evidence also shows that within the keepers' group (Category C), there are younger women who later cohabit, and older women who do not.\(^{(49)}\)

Several studies have described outcomes for these two sub-groups.\(^{(50)}\)

It has already been remarked that a considerable amount of information about this group of ex-nuptial mothers is available in government pension records. When the Victorian Social Welfare Department Family Assistance became payable to ex-nuptial mothers in 1969 this was in fact the first regular financial aid these mothers had received. In spite of this, Family Assistance was not used to any great extent by those who theoretically were eligible, that is to say those mothers in Category C who had children of five years and under. Details of pension recipients show that while there would have been some 6200 mothers and children eligible in June 1973, only 986 (or 16 percent) were actually receiving Family Assistance.\(^{(51)}\)

However, the high turnover of cases between June 1973 and June 1974 - 1792 cases in all - implies that many more mothers had received the


\(^{(51)}\) Details of all government pension recipients are set out in Appendix E. The ages of children are not given in the Department of Social Welfare figures, but it is assumed that few mothers of school age children would remain on Family Assistance. The Australian Social Security Department, which provides this information, includes approximately 80 percent of their mothers in this category, and in this case the pressure on the mothers to enter employment as soon as possible would be less. See also Johns, *Op. cit.*, p. 143, for an idea of the extent to which ex-nuptial mothers availed themselves of Social Welfare Family Assistance in 1973. Of her sample of 90 keeping single mothers only seven (approximately 8 percent) were receiving Family Assistance.
pension for less than 12 months, and that 30 percent of Category C mothers may have been recipients at one time or another. However, when the Supporting Mothers' Benefit had been in operation for 12 months, this group was reduced to those mothers waiting for the six months qualifying period to be eligible for the Benefit.

The reasons for the cessation of Family Assistance payments between June 1973 and June 1974 have already been discussed in connection with the Category B mothers. However, they show clearly that after the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit fewer mothers ceased receiving their Family Assistance payments because they married. In fact, the proportions fell from 27 percent to 4.2 percent, suggesting that, in some cases at least, an adequate pension enlarged the options available to this group of mothers.

In July 1973 the Supporting Mothers' Benefit became payable to ex-nuptial mothers from six months after the birth of their child. By April 1974, nine months after the Benefit had been introduced, there were 3047 mothers in the "unmarried mothers" category. These mothers would nearly all be drawn from the 6200 ex-nuptial mothers in Category C (see Table 5) as 80 percent of them had children under six years.

As was mentioned in the previous section, ex-nuptial mothers in this group receiving either Family Assistance or the Supporting Mothers' Benefit were more likely to be fully dependent on these pensions (that is, not receiving maintenance from their child's father). Again, most of these mothers have only one child; and their
accommodation seems less permanent than that of the deserted de facto wives of Category B.

Examination of pension records is a useful way of ascertaining how many Category B and C ex-nuptial mothers theoretically eligible are actually in receipt of pensions. Taking the Category C mothers separately: in June 1974, as we have seen, there would have been some 4,700 ex-nuptial mothers in this category receiving either Family Assistance or the Supporting Mothers' Benefit, 3760 (or 80 percent) of whom would have had children under six years of age. This would represent 16 percent of all ex-nuptial children (23,140) born in the previous five years, 1969-73. However, as shown in Table 5, only certain categories of mothers can be considered to be eligible, namely, the mothers who keep their children and remain single, i.e. Category C mothers (as well as an unknown number of de facto wives who separate from their male partners). These were estimated to number approximately 6211. Thus, it can be calculated that some 60 percent of these mothers (3760 out of 6211) would have received help during the first five years of their child's life.

These figures cannot provide a picture of how the use of the pension varies with the age of the ex-nuptial child. However, it might reasonably be expected that the first months of the child's life would be the most vulnerable and demanding time. A rough and ready test of this would be to compare the number of ex-nuptial mothers applying for the Social Welfare Department Family Assistance
when their child is under six months of age, and the number of ex-nuptial children born as near as possible to the same period in this same category. The number of Category C mothers receiving Family Assistance payments during the 12 month period, 1973-4, was 2159. The total number of ex-nuptial mothers who were probably in this category would have been similar to the number of births in 1973 (4611) minus the proportion of known non-relative adoptions (20 percent), and minus a certain proportion (say, 10 percent) for stable de facto marriages. In other words, the number would be approximately 70 percent of all ex-nuptial births (4611), that is, 3228 ex-nuptial mothers. If 2159 mothers out of a possible 3228 apply for financial help, it could then be said that approximately 70 percent of Category C mothers needed financial help in the earliest period of their child's life.

This situation can be contrasted with that which obtains when the children are older. We have information from the Australian Social Security Department records about mothers of children between the age of 6 and 10 years. There were 650 single mothers in this group in June 1974. They would have been drawn from the group of mothers of ex-nuptial children between 1964 and 1968, a total of 18090. However, adoption averaged 50% in those years, and if 10% is also deducted for stable de facto marriages, the keeping single mothers would have been not more than 40% or 7236 mothers. If 60% of these became two-parent partnerships in the first five years of the child's life (see Appendix F) there would be 4342 remaining single mothers of whom only 15% are receiving
the Single Mothers' Benefit. This suggests a probability that 70% of single mothers are financially dependent immediately after the birth of a child, and that about 60% are dependent up to school age; then there is a drastic fall to 15% when the child enters school. (52)

These estimates can of course only be very rough and ready. The number of younger Category C mothers who marry or enter de facto relationships is conjectural, as is the number who take up the pension later as deserted de facto mothers. However, an attempt has been made below (see Figure 6) to present a picture of some aspects of the outcomes for ex-nuptial mothers based upon an examination of demographic and pension records. Put summarily: (i) the proportion of ex-nuptial mothers in the Category B sub-groups and in Category C changes during the years following the birth of the ex-nuptial child; (ii) the proportion of mothers using government pensions as a means of support decreases as their children reach school age.

(52) It must be noted that when the present 6 - 10 year old children were very young, no benefits were available so that the mother had to make other arrangements to support herself and the child. It is possible that more of the present mothers of very young children may elect to stay on the Single Mothers' benefit after the child reaches school age, but it is by no means certain.
Outcome of Ex-nuptial Motherhood: Changes in the Maternal Categories B and C, and in the Proportion of Women Dependent upon Government Pension within those Categories, at 2 Different Stages after the Child's Birth.
Data from research studies and agency records can add a good deal of detail to the general picture so far drawn of the Category C mothers. There has never been a comprehensive cohort study in Australia comparable to those undertaken recently in the United Kingdom or in New Zealand. The only Australian longitudinal study is that of Johns which concerns 135 ex-nuptial children from the time of their birth, in 1968, to 1971, when they were three years old. Extensive reference will be made to Johns' study in this section.

In addition, a search has been made among the Australian research studies that exist, and some data have been taken from agency records. The yield of information from these sources is fragmentary and not amenable to direct comparison, so reference has also been made to more comprehensive overseas studies in order to provide some background. Nevertheless, these sources can provide information that goes beyond the bare bones of demographic data or pension records.


(55) See Appendix F for a descriptive table of these sources.
Some researchers have described certain characteristics of the group of Category C mothers as the counterpart of those previously used of Category B mothers. Thus, Category C mothers tend to be less well-educated than Category B mothers, more often from blue collar homes, more often from unhappy homes, less often living at home at the time of their child's conception (although they may have support from their parents in their keeping decision); they are more often involved with a married man, and more frequently have had previous children. There is also some evidence that Category C mothers have less flexible and adaptive personality traits, and some interpersonal difficulties. (56)

The question of a psychological stereotype of the Category C mother has been widely discussed. The work of Leontine Young, for example, has had considerable influence on thinking about ex-nuptial mothers for two decades. (57) She maintained that the typical single mother had difficulties in her relationship with her own parents, particularly with her own father, which she tried to resolve by giving birth to an ex-nuptial child. According to Young, the ex-nuptial mother, for instance, was very little concerned about the putative father of her child, and much more involved with the effect on her own parent or parents. (Other writers (58) have disputed Young's ideas and claimed that pregnancy itself is the cause of the observed stress in these mothers, and

not vice versa.) Another suggestion emerging from a number of studies concerning psychological motivation in illegitimate pregnancy is that it is frequently preceded by a loss or separation from a loved person. (59) Again, some writers consider the existence of personality problems to be more confined to older keeping ex-nuptial mothers, (60) who appear also to be the group most likely to remain alone with their children. (61)

Australian studies which investigate Category C keeping mothers confirm some of these findings. Thus Johns found that the older group (25-29 year olds) contained a higher proportion of women with psychological "problems" than did other groups; she also found that families of Category C mothers had significantly more health problems than Category B adopting mothers or the married controls. (62) Garton Smith found that 77% of the Category C keeping mothers in her sample considered their fathers ineffectual. (63) Smith and Wilson found that 42 percent of their sample had little or no contact with their parents. (64) Wood and Shanmugam found that 90%

(59) N.H. Greenburg et al., "Life Situations Associated With the Onset of Pregnancy", Psychosomatic Medicine, 21, 1959, p. 296.
(63) C. Garton Smith, Op. cit., p. 44.
of their mothers did not feel close to either parent.\textsuperscript{(65)} In a Western Australian study, the five unmarried mothers included all had family and/or serious health problems.\textsuperscript{(66)} Kiely notes a greater proportion of broken homes among the single mothers in her sample than among their married controls.\textsuperscript{(67)} It would seem then that there is a connexion between the incidence of mothers keeping their ex-nuptial children and these mothers having a background of broken or unhappy homes. However, clearly more detailed work needs to be done in this area.

It has already been mentioned that many of the mothers who start out in Category C form partnerships which may or may not be continuing by the time the children are of school age. Certain Australian studies give details about the living arrangements of ex-nuptial mothers who begin by keeping their child; some record what the mother plans to do on leaving hospital after the birth of the ex-nuptial child;\textsuperscript{(68)} others deal with later stages.\textsuperscript{(69)} From these various studies it would appear that, about the time of confinement, some 50 percent of ex-nuptial mothers plan to live with their own parents, while the others are uncertain or do not specify. Johns' study is particularly valuable here as it reflects the early plans of the ex-nuptial mothers and the actual outcomes at the end of three years. Combining this study with the findings of Wilson and

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(65)] C. Wood and N. Shanmugan, "Unwed Mothers: A Study of 100 Girls in Melbourne, Victoria", in \textit{Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology}, 6, 1, April 1970, p. 54.
\item[(66)] Western Australian Council of Social Services: 1972 Report on \textit{Deserted Wives}: Monetary Assistance Project of the W.A. Child Welfare Department, p. 11.
\item[(67)] Rosemary Kiely in correspondence with the author concerning preliminary findings of her study of 93 C.S.M.C. members.
\end{enumerate}
Smith it is possible to form some kind of longitudinal picture of the living arrangements of Category C mothers as follows.

**TABLE 6**

Living Arrangements of Category C Mothers (keeping single mothers) After Confinement (after Johns, and Wilson and Smith)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period after birth</th>
<th>With parents</th>
<th>Cohabiting (Husband or de facto)</th>
<th>Friends or relatives</th>
<th>Live in job</th>
<th>Alone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 months (Johns)</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 months (Wilson &amp; Smith)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years (Johns)</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although these figures are not wholly conclusive, it would seem from this that living with parents does not provide a long-term solution to the accommodation problems of Category C ex-nuptial mothers in many cases, and that living with friends of relatives is even less satisfactory. (70) The tendency seems to be that those

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(70) N. Johns, *Op. cit.*, pp.121, 150, says that grandmothers tend to assume parental rights over the child and that this creates tension. Jo Murray, sometime accommodation officer for the C.S.M.C., in a private communication to the author, remarks that living with the mother's parents is not successful in the majority of cases.
who did not originally plan to live with a partner increasingly do so as time goes on.

There is a good deal of further evidence about Category C mothers and their children and it may be helpful if it is related to the following questions: How does keeping affect the socio-economic status of the ex-nuptial mother and her child? How do single keeping mothers fare with accommodation? Do single keeping mothers tend to have more ex-nuptial children? What happens to the child that is brought up by its single mother?

How does keeping affect socio-economic status?

Two signs of change in the way ex-nuptial mothers live are (i) the types of work they do before and after the child's birth; and (ii) how they use their educational qualifications with respect to their work.

Johns(71) has observed that Category C keeping mothers in her sample usually looked for low-status work in their own neighbourhood. The Eden Court Report(72) remarks that those of their residents who had tertiary qualifications were not using them in their actual employment. However, Kiely(73) has observed that when mothers had the opportunity to stay home (after the introduction of the Supporting

(72) Eden Court Report, December 1974: Methodist-Presbyterian Child Care Services, Melbourne.
Mothers Benefit), those with professional training were more likely to resume work than those who did not.

Insofar as socio-economic status is related to residential stability and mobility (since it is difficult to maintain employment if one's residence frequently changes), Johns, (74) whose cohort study allows some indication of residential mobility, has confirmed that it is considerably higher among single mothers than among married controls. Within the Category C single keeping mothers group, those who lived alone with their children moved more frequently than those who lived with a partner, or with their own family of origin.

How do single mothers fare with accommodation?

The Housing of Category C ex-nuptial mothers who are receiving the Supporting Mothers' Benefit has already been mentioned. Generally they are not as well housed as Category B mothers. Most studies list housing as one of the principal problems of single keeping mothers. In the United Kingdom, the National Children's Bureau study found that both overcrowding and moving house were more common with the illegitimately born than with legitimate children, and that this was so even when social class was held constant. Many single mother organizations both in Australia and

It is evident from the Australian Social Security Department figures that far fewer unmarried mothers (1%) than deserted de facto supporting mothers (7%) were home owners, although both groups fare much worse than other female heads of households in the same age group.

Eden Court, which provides emergency accommodation for keeping single mothers, had 107 enquiries in its first six months of existence in 1974, but could admit only 34 mothers for an average stay of 4½ weeks. The need was apparently greatest where the children were younger (73% of the children were under two). The mothers themselves were more in the over 20 than the under 20 age group, which tends to strengthen the impression that the older Category C mothers are a distinct group from the younger mothers in the same category. These latter tend to have more stable accommodation arrangements (either with partners or their own parents) than the older Category C mothers who tend to live on their own.

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(75) The high mobility of keeping ex-nuptial mothers as a group has meant a considerable loss from study samples where a follow-up contact was planned. Johns, comparing keeping single mothers with their married controls, found that they had had many more moves. Op. cit., p.49.

(76) See Appendix E.

(77) In the Melbourne Statistical Division, the 1971 Census showed that of the under 44 female heads of households in private dwellings, 34% were home owners. See 1971 Census of Population and Housing, Bureau of Census and Statistics, Melbourne.

Do single keeping mothers have more ex-nuptial children?

The lower parity of ex-nuptial births has already been discussed. (79) Most higher parity ex-nuptial births are to older women. (80) In the United States, Sauber (81) found that of her sample of mothers of first born ex-nuptial children, 30% had no more children in the subsequent six years, and among those who never married 42% had no more children. As may be expected, the number of later births was closely related to the marital status and age of women at their first confinement. There is more likelihood of further births if the woman concerned has a stable partnership.

There is no accurate record of second or subsequent births to ex-nuptial mothers in Australia; however, Johns' study tends to confirm the findings of Sauber. She found that the mothers who married were more likely to have children later than those who did not. More than 80% of the 135 mothers in her sample were having their first child, and among those who married, 59% had other children within the three year period; among those who entered into

(79) See Chapter 5, p.127.
(80) In the U.S., comparative studies of birth data also show that, among white ex-nuptial mothers who later marry, there is a higher completed fertility than among women whose first child was not ex-nuptial. Among never-married white mothers the mean number ever born was 2.83, and for the never married white mothers it was 1.63. If the ex-nuptial mother has released her first child for adoption, she is likely to have more nuptial children later than a mother who has kept her child. The older woman is less likely to marry and therefore has the possibility of further ex-nuptial births, which further reduce the probability of marriage (see Cutfright, Op. cit., p. 387). Because of the high marrying rate of younger women, subsequent births tend to be nuptial, i.e. the likelihood of further ex-nuptial births depends on the timing of the marriage. In addition, the fewer ex-nuptial children a woman has had, the more likely she is to marry, so that the combined effect is a low ex-nuptial parity where the mother has an early marriage.

a *de facto* relationship, 45% had more children; and of those who remained single, 16% only had subsequent ex-nuptial children. All of the small number of single mothers who had given birth to two or more children had them by different fathers.\(^{(82)}\)

Kiely's sample of C.S.M.C. mothers yields very little information about the total fertility picture. However, at the time of interview in 1974, when 67% of the mothers had been confined within the past three years and had not married subsequently, three-quarters of them had not had a further confinement.\(^{(83)}\) This tends to strengthen the picture of the single mother who does not marry or enter into a *de facto* relationship, as being less likely to have more children.

In general, it seems that the majority of single mothers have only one child unless they are living permanently with a male partner. The more "promiscuous" single mother who has several children by different fathers seems to be comparatively rare.

What happens to the child that is brought up by its single mother?

No simple answer emerges from the various studies which have set out to answer the question of what happens to the ex-nuptial

\(^{(83)}\) R. Kiely has kindly communicated to the author these preliminary findings for her study of a sample of C.S.M.C. mothers.
child brought up by its single mother.

In the United Kingdom, Crellin, Kellmer Pringle and West have stated that to be born illegitimate is to be born disadvantaged. (84) This disadvantage did not derive from the mother's background, as there was no difference between married and unmarried women as far as social class was concerned. Rather, it took its source from the period of gestation and confinement. Since those in the unmarried group were younger and more likely to be bearing their first child, this led to lower birth weight and higher peri-natal mortality, exacerbated by late or inadequate ante-natal care. If an illegitimate child were to be on an equal footing with other children by the time it got to school, it would need particularly favourable conditions. For the majority of illegitimate children this has not happened, and later disadvantages have had a cumulative effect which has heightened the differences between legitimate and illegitimate children by the time they reach seven years of age.

(84) E. Crellin, M.L. Kellmer Pringle and P. West, Op. cit., pp.96 et seq. See also J. Seglow, M.L. Kellmer Pringle and P. Wedge, Growing Up Adopted, N.F.E.R., London, 1972, p. 63: "A comparison between those illegitimately born who were adopted and those children who remained with their natural mothers presents a starkly contrasting picture. Only some 10 percent of the latter were rated above average while 45 percent were judged to be below average... The generally unfavourable background of the illegitimate sample appeared to have a detrimental effect even on children living in middle class homes; thus only 24 percent illegitimate children from such homes were rated as above average in general knowledge, compared with some 41 percent among the cohort group from similar homes. On the other hand, there was not such a marked difference among those growing up in a manual social class home...".
Again, more of these children were in atypical family situations than others, putting them at greater risk of suffering from behaviour and learning difficulties. These factors may also be related to the socio-economic situation which had deteriorated from the time of their birth for most of these children and their mothers. The more unsettled life of many, poorer and more crowded accommodation, the more frequent moves, and the frequent changes in the person taking care of them, also were evident.

In spite of the effect of these adverse factors, the physical development of the two groups of children did not differ very much, although consistent differences were found in ability and attainment, as well as in behaviour and adjustment at school. (85)

In the United States, Sauber's study looked at unmarried mothers six years after the birth of their first child. The study emphasizes the variety of possible outcomes for Category C keeping mothers: there are those who marry, have an above average income, and have more nuptial children; there are those who remain single, but manage reasonably well on their own earnings and public assistance; and there are those who marry and separate and who seem to be the most disadvantaged. Corrigan found that 85% of the children were still with their mothers, and receiving warm and adequate care compared with other sample populations, and she emphasized that

poverty had more effect on the mother's mental health and the relationship with her child than any other factor. (87)

In Australia, Johns' study looked at both the physical development and the quality of parenting over a period of three years. Unlike the National Children's Bureau study which found few physical differences between children, Johns found that more ex-nuptial children kept by their mothers failed to reach average developmental standards, (88) although the babies had not been disadvantaged with regard to ante-natal care and birthweight. She also found that there were more changes of accommodation, and more changes in those who had care of the children, among keeping mothers than among their married controls. Like Sauber and Corrigan, she found a variety of living circumstances within the group, which she correlated with the quality of child care. Many of the keeping mothers had been highly successful, and compared well with the married controls. However, the most successful were mothers who had married or formed a permanent de facto liaison. The situation where both mother and child had the greatest difficulties was where

See also Eileen M. Corrigan, Child Rearing Practices of Unwed Mothers, D.S.W. Thesis, University of Columbia, 1970, which gives more detailed findings, including the lack of a warm father figure in many of the study sample households (pp. 117 et seq.).

the child lived alone with its mother. (89)

Johns lists a number of possible dangers to the child kept by its single mother. (90) These can be summarised as follows:

1. The mothering tasks are more likely to be shared with several people, for instance, grandparents, neighbours and friends. This means that the child in its early life could receive inconsistent treatment and participate in unstable relationships. It may even mean that for the child the mother becomes a relatively minor figure or drops out of the picture altogether.

2. When marriage takes place for the ex-nuptial mother it may not be to the father of the child. This can create problems, especially where there are other children of the subsequent marriage.

3. The excessively close relationship between mother and child which develops during their period of one-to-one existence creates tensions when parenthood is later shared. A young child may welcome a new father at first, but may later tend to see him (and

It is interesting to compare these findings with those of a study in New York, in 1922, by Guibord and Parker. See Albert S.B. Guibord and Ida R. Parker: "What Becomes of the Unmarried Mother?", Research Bureau of Social Case Work, Boston, 1922, p. 76, quoted by Jane S. Hosmer, "Traits Predictive of the Successful Outcome of Unmarried Mothers' Plans to Keep Their Children", Smith College Studies in Social Work, Vol. XII, Sept. 1941, where it was found that the most successful outcome in the view of the visiting social worker was:
1. where the girl was accepted by her family
2. where she married
3. where she had steady employment and income
4. where she did not conceal the status of her child.

(90) Ibid., pp. 145-65.
subsequent children) as rivals for the mother's affection. (91)

4. On the other hand, where there is no father figure at all, there can be a felt need for a father on the part of the child and a certain amount of confusion. For instance, several mothers told Johns of their children approaching and clinging to strange men in shops or to male visitors to the house. (92)

5. Finally, Johns refers to the mother's unease about her child's future if anything untoward should happen to her. In some cases there is a strong family network, but this is less likely where there are no marriage ties.

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(91) K. Soddy, "The Role of Society", in The Human Rights of Those Born Out of Wedlock, Proceedings of the Golden Jubilee Conference of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, November 1968. Soddy, p. 68, confirms the observation of Johns: "In the normal or typical English family the relationships are triangular - mother, father and young child... The mother encourages the child to relate to the father and in so doing herself withdraws a little distance from the child. This enables the child to get a little distance from the mother, and leaves him free to pick up personality contributions from both sides. Both parents contribute to the development of his character. In this way the child can achieve a sense of identity which is not the same as that of either his father or his mother... Where mother and child are living alone together, such distancing may be very difficult if not impossible for both parties... This very tight bond sets the child a problem of how to form a picture of himself... if he cannot get any distance from his mother".

Neither studies nor agency records give any more than
glimpses of the lives of some ex-nuptial mothers. Kiely, whose
group of ex-nuptial mothers with young children were mostly single,
found that half of them preferred to stay at home.\(^{(93)}\) This study
took place after the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit
which enabled ex-nuptial mothers to choose this alternative.
It would be interesting to know if the outcome for single mothers
alone with their children improved with regard to mobility, and
change of person in charge of the children, as a result of this
benefit.

There is some evidence that in Victoria day care is used
more by single mothers than other groups in the community in proportion
to their numbers,\(^{(94)}\) and that other community resources offering
care or accommodation to broken families, or families under stress,
are over weighted by ex-nuptial parents. Our investigation of
Category C mothers has indicated that there is a wide range of
possible outcomes for the single mother who keeps her child. Some
of these single mothers are successful and establish a stable home
for their child, but there is considerably more likelihood of a
future fraught with difficulties for the child of the keeping
ex-nuptial mother who does not form a two-parent partnership, than
for most other children.

\(^{(93)}\) Personal communication to the author.

\(^{(94)}\) Mrs. Todd of the Victorian Association of Day Nurseries has said
(personal communication, March 1973) that numbers of single mothers
applying for day-care had greatly increased. She quoted the
Richmond Day Nursery figures for 1973 where 23 out of 85 mothers
applying were single.
4. Category D Mothers

This category comprises mothers in the most diverse circumstances, ranging from the mother who leaves her child in the care of her own parents or relatives, or in the temporary or permanent care of friends or strangers, while she works and lives elsewhere, (95) to mothers whose children have been made wards of the Social Welfare Department or who have been admitted to temporary or permanent care in approved children's homes. Where the period of separation is long enough, the mother's consent to adoption is sometimes waived, but this is rare. It is impossible to provide accurate figures on the number of Category D mothers. (96)

All that is known about this group is that the numbers in institutional care have decreased, as have the numbers of all children in care. Ex-nuptial children remain approximately between 20% and 30% of all children in care, this being higher than their proportion in the total population of children (about 6% in Victoria) (97)

Clearly, the need to discover more information about Category D mothers and their children is important and urgent.

(95) Johns, Op. cit., pp.121, 149, found that 6 out of 90 children in her sample were separated from their ex-nuptial mothers after three years. Three of the children were in institutions and three with grandparents.

(96) A rough calculation of numbers is given in Appendix D.

(97) According to figures supplied to the author by Allambie Children's Reception Centre, Melbourne, with the kind permission of Miss Enid Bennett, Director of Family Welfare Division of the Victorian Social Welfare Department, 28 percent, or 165 out of 586, were ex-nuptial children in 1972.
Summary

There is evidence of four main types of outcomes for the ex-nuptial mother and her child. First, the child may be adopted, in which case little more is known about the mother. Second, the mother may continue a _de facto_ situation, commence a new one or marry. Third, she may continue to care for the child herself, living alone or with others. Lastly, the mother may not continue to care for the child herself, but not surrender it for adoption.

Most studies have been concerned only with the third category, that of the single mother keeping her child, and a composite picture has emerged of the typical ex-nuptial mother in this group. She is either a younger than average mother of a first child, possibly with health or emotional problems in her family background, untrained for a career, and prone to enter into an early marriage with a high risk of breakdown, or, on the other hand, an older woman who has remained single, lives on her own, may have more than one child, and fairly frequently changes her work and accommodation arrangements.

Many features of the current scene suggest that this pattern may be changing. In 1974, the actual number of ex-nuptial births continued to fall. This trend may affect the relative numbers of mothers and children in each category, so that certain situations may become more common, others less so. The proportion of Category A
adopting mothers, for example, appears to be dropping drastically. This may mean either that the type of woman who formerly allowed her child to be adopted may not now be having children at all, or it may indicate that she has joined the ranks of the Category C ex-nuptial mothers who keep their children.

As far as the period after confinement is concerned, the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit, as well as various retraining schemes, must ease the economic and social burden on dependent single ex-nuptial mothers; and it is also likely that some mothers, who previously could have coped independently, would now choose not to work during their child's early years.

Although the social pressure exerted by single mothers is not likely to increase because of the growing numbers of unsupported mothers (as was the case in Victoria before the founding of the C.S.M.C.), the question of whether the existing facilities respond to the real needs of the whole group of keeping ex-nuptial mothers remains unanswered because the situation of the whole population of ex-nuptial mothers is inadequately understood.

This chapter has attempted to piece together some kind of overall picture of the natural history of ex-nuptial motherhood in various circumstances. Although the evidence is fragmentary and partial it does suggest that (a) the popular stereotype of the mother living alone with her fatherless child is true of less than
half the number of cases of ex-nuptial births, and that even in these cases the numbers will shrink considerably by the time the child reaches school age; and (b) that in the cases where the child remains in the sole care of his or her mother, he or she may be disadvantaged. What is not known is whether, vis-à-vis the general population of parents and children, the difficulties they face arise from the ex-nuptial situation itself, or whether they are common to all married and separated women living alone with their children.

The difference of course between the ex-nuptial mother living alone with her child and the once-married and now separated woman similarly living alone with her child, lies in their contrasting legal status. The following chapter considers this legal difference - how it developed historically, how it is expressed in public and private legal provisions, and how it has recently changed in Victoria.
Chapter 7

THE LEGAL AND SOCIAL POSITION OF EX-NUPTIAL MOTHERS
AND CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
COUNCIL OF THE SINGLE MOTHER AND HER CHILD

"Laws are like cobwebs, which may catch small flies but let the wasps and hornets through."


People's beliefs about the causes of ex-nuptial births, and their assumptions about the social consequences of these births are reflected in the prevailing policy at any one time. To understand the piecemeal and paradoxical service provisions obtaining in Victoria until 1968-69 when the C.S.M.C. came into being, it is necessary then to look at the beliefs and assumptions on which the various Victoria governmental policies regarding ex-nuptial mothers have been based. For example, until 1968, government aid to ex-nuptial mothers was based on the principle of meeting an emergency, not a continuing need. This policy led to the full support of ex-nuptial children, at considerable cost, in institutions - a kind of "indoor relief" idea - while at the same time denying help to ex-nuptial mothers who were keeping their children themselves. That is,
government aid was provided in order to encourage "self-reliance", which meant that it was available only to mothers who gave up their children, and not for mothers caring for their own children. It seems then that behind this inconsistent governmental policy there lies some kind of punitive community attitude towards ex-nuptial mothers.

These community attitudes have a complex history and it is difficult to weigh their relative importance. However, they can be classified in a rough and ready way according to three main types.

First, there is the "puritan" position with its ethic of personal responsibility and personal culpability; second, the "paranoid" position with its simple conspiracy explanations of complex events, and the habit of blame; and third, there is the "therapeutic" stance which seeks to free people from the repressions of morality charged beliefs so that they can achieve some sort of generalized well-being. (1)

As far as ex-nuptial mothers are concerned, the "puritan" attitude is expressed by those who think that the mother should take full responsibility (and culpability) for her ex-nuptial pregnancy, even requiring that she should give up the child for its

(1) See J. Carroll, Puritanism, Paranoia and the Therapeutic, LaTrobe Sociology Papers, 4, January 1974, for an analysis of these three "ideal types" in connection with attitudes to individual authority.
own sake. This attitude is also implicit in the position of those who think a mother of one ex-nuptial child should receive sympathy and help, but that the mother of two should not. The "paranoid" attitude, on the other hand, implies that other people's "puritan" attitudes are responsible for all the discomforts and difficulties of single motherhood; and the "therapeutic" attitude emphasizes the "naturalness" of single motherhood and rejects old solutions, such as establishing a nuclear family situation, in favour of newer ones such as the personal self-realization of the mother and the financial support and legal recognition of the child.

However, the concept of illegitimacy is basically a legal one, as is evident in the long-lasting and widespread use of the term "illegitimate" to describe the status of ex-nuptial mothers and children. We therefore need to go back to the concept of legal illegitimacy and to examine the legal provisions made for ex-nuptial mothers. This examination has certain advantages since the legal provisions are well documented; they have an obvious effect on the lives of those concerned; and they embody the most dominant and enduring of social attitudes towards ex-nuptial mothers and their children.

The view that the legal concept of ex-nuptiality is fundamental was explicitly developed by Malinowski. (2) Malinowski

begins by describing the procreative unit of all societies as a basic triad of male and female and their child. He calls this the initial situation of kinship. All the moral and legal rules which are developed invariably have the motive of the welfare of future offspring and stipulate that no child should be without a "sociological father", that is, a guardian and protector, or a male link between the child and the rest of the community. Malinowski sees social disapproval or tolerance of sexual intercourse outside marriage as a peripheral issue. Marriage, he says, is not the licensing of sexual intercourse but the licensing of parenthood. (3) Many writers have demonstrated that where pregnancy happens in anticipation of marriage, it has never incurred the same sort of censure as extramarital birth. (4)

Similarly, where the child forms part of an existing family, that is when the mother is already married, there has always been a prima facie assumption of legitimacy, undisputed unless

(3) Ibid., p. 37.

(4) Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, Methuen, London, 2nd ed., 1971, pp.135 et seq., refers to the history of bastardy in England and notes the occasional punishment meted out to ex-nuptial fathers and mothers. Laslett points out (p.137) that committing a sexual act outside marriage was viewed as a minor misdemeanour punishable by the ecclesiastical courts, but that begetting a child outside marriage was viewed more seriously and could be punished by the lay courts. Laslett goes on to show (p.142) that the rate of illegitimacy was, from the 17th to the 19th centuries, much higher in England than it was in France. In England the rate of illegitimacy was at its highest during the reign of Queen Victoria (p.138); "The peasants and the craftsmen of Tudor and Stuart times seem on the whole to have been cautious about the procreation of children and the formation of families" (p.186). On the other hand, as far as pre-marital pregnancy was concerned, this was so common in England "that it hardly seems possible that an affianced couple was everywhere expected to maintain chastity until after the church celebration was over" (p.149). Laslett refers a work in preparation
the father takes action to deny it. (5)

It could well be objected that if the aim of the law has been to protect future members of society, it has been singularly unsuccessful since it has neither deterred nor prevented illegitimate births. However, we are concerned here with the intent of the law rather than its efficiency. In fact, it is probably the manifest failure of legal provisions to protect the most vulnerable children which has led to the modification and development of the law in this regard in recent years.

Development of Legal Ideas on Legitimacy and Illegitimacy

Common Law in Britain in the Middle Ages held that a child who was conceived and born outside marriage was illegitimate. However, legitimation could be effected by the subsequent marriage

(4) (contd.)


of the parents. At the Council of Merton in 1234(6) it was decided that subsequent marriage would not legitimate a child. The child would retain the status of filius nullius, a concept which had originated centuries before under Roman Law.

This idea of being "nobody's child" was a fairly accurate description as, until the introduction of the Elizabethan Poor Law in 1576, not even parents were liable for maintaining such children. (7) With the dissolution of the monasteries, those children who were not cared for by relatives became a charge on the parish where they had been born. Under the Poor Law, either father or mother could be obliged to indemnify the parish for the maintenance of the child, but neither had any custody rights as such.

In 1834, the situation was changed by the repeal of the legislation which punished or charged the father. The bastard was henceforth to be "what providence appears to have ordained that it would be, a burthen on its mother, and, where she cannot maintain, on her parents. The shame of the offence will not be destroyed by it being the means of income and marriage ... (this implies) that all punishment of the supposed father is useless". (8)

There was much protest at this injustice to women (and the ratepayers) and also at the obvious implied class interest. Middle class families, with their new industrial wealth, had to divide their possessions, after death, among all apparent heirs, and illegitimacy thus was a real threat to them. They were outraged and indignant at the thought of a fraudulent claim. This middle class morality was then transferred to the poor and dependent classes. Needless to say, the aristocracy and territorial upper classes were much less concerned, as their estates were protected by primogeniture and entail, and their illegitimate children could be far more easily tolerated, and supported openly by their fathers.

By 1844, the general protest began to take effect, and the mother who could afford it was empowered to take civil action against the father for maintenance of the child. By 1868, the Poor Law Amendment Act restored the parish's right to make a claim on the putative father if the mother could prove affiliation. The legal requirement of affiliation has not basically changed since this time, either in British or Australian law. Australia took over the law that illegitimate children had no rights of inheritance or succession. Fortunately, the stricture that unsupported children should be left by their able-bodied mothers in the work house as soon as they were weaned was gradually ameliorated, so that by the late nineteenth century cottage homes and the boarding out of children were allowed as alternatives. By the turn of the century, new attitudes to social obligations and to childhood meant slow development of the rights of the mother to care for the child
herself. However, the father's responsibilities were to remain limited to maintenance for another seventy years. (9)

Two principles seem to have governed legal provisions for illegitimate children up to the period of the 1914-18 War. The first was that they should be treated quite differently from other children who by misadventure have only one parent, and the second was that any improvement in their position could in some way be construed as a threat to the intact family, and an encouragement to immorality. However, in spite of the slow response of the law, attitudes were changing. The twentieth century has been described by Philippe Ariès as the century which discovered childhood, (10) and in practice things began to improve.

In Great Britain the Registrar General's report in 1916

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(9) Finer Report, Op. cit., pp. 120, 127. Fathers' rights as distinct from responsibilities did not exist until the legitimacy laws were passed. See p.197 below. See also H. Finlay and A. Bisæt-Johnson, Op. cit., pp. 264-5, for exceptions to this rule in Victoria.

(10) See Philippe Ariès, Centuries of Childhood, Penguin Education, 1973, p.390: "Between the end of the Middle ages and the Seventeenth Century, the child had won a place beside his parents to which he could not lay claim at a time when it was customary to entrust him to strangers. This return of the child to the home was a great event... He was not yet the pivot of the whole system, but he had become a much more important character... The modern family... cuts itself off from the world and opposes to society the isolated group of parents and children. All the energy of the group is expended on helping the children rise in the world, individually and without collective ambition: the children rather than the family."
highlighted the appalling death rate of ex-nuptial children.\(^{11}\) The whole question of separating mothers and children had to be re-examined, and in pursuance of this end an active group of people founded the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child. Other voluntary bodies, both in Britain and in Australia, had been concerned with the care and protection of children and also of mothers during pregnancy. N.C.U.M.C. went further than this, and pressed for legal reforms to improve the situation and for direct provision of facilities to keep mothers and children together. Its explicit aim was to ensure that the illegitimate child has equal treatment to any other child.\(^{12}\)

It was this new policy that led to the greatest difficulties N.C.U.M.C. had to face, because it generated enormous public hostility when the Council moved beyond the area of providing help in cases of individual need and campaigned for unmarried mothers as a group. By the twenties, much more was being done to help unmarried mothers by welfare agencies in general both in England and the United States. Some social workers were concerned to keep the mothers and children together wherever possible. By 1928, some writers were even urging social workers to be more selective in their encouragement.\(^{13}\)


\(^{12}\) N.C.U.M.C. was aware, even at this early stage, of the necessity to be concerned with all children of one-parent families, but because the priority was need, this wider goal had to be postponed for nearly fifty years. In 1973, N.C.U.M.C. changed its name to the National Council for One Parent Families. See National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child: *Annual Report, April 1972-March 1973: One Parent Families*.

\(^{13}\) See for example A. Madorah Donahue, *Children of Illegitimate Birth Whose Mothers have Kept their Custody*, Government Printing
However, the law in England was taking its own course, and post-war legislation gave husbands and wives equal rights in divorce and guardianship of children, so that some of the anomalies of reciprocal property and custody rights, where the child was not the natural legitimate child of a marriage, were ironed out. The Adoption and Legitimacy Acts of 1926 went far beyond the intention of clarifying disposition of property, in their effect on the position of ex-nuptial children. Both Acts gave the formerly illegitimate child two legal parents, and by the thirties and forties the alternatives of, on the one hand, marriage of the parents, or, on the other hand, adoption of the child by another married couple, were seen by many in the welfare field as an alternative solution to the retention of the child by the single mother. (14)

In some ways Victorian Law had long anticipated the English Law. By 1909, all Australian States had legislated to

(13) (contd.)
Office, Washington, 1926, quoted in Jane S. Hosmer, "Traits Predictive of the Successful Outcome of Unmarried Mothers' Plans to Keep Their Children", Smith College Studies of Social Work, Vol. XII, June 1942, p. 265. In contrast, by 1965, adoption was favoured by social workers in agencies in the United States. As Barbara H. Costigan, quoted in the Social Service Review, 39, 3, 1965, p.347, has said: "Good service was associated with relinquishing, and poor service with keeping, regardless of personality adjustment, ethnicity or student status."

(14) Adoption was not specifically concerned with the ex-nuptial child, as the adoption of children of relatives for the purpose of inheritance was not uncommon.
establish the legitimacy of a child by the subsequent marriage of his parents. (Legitimation per subsequens matrimonium.) In Victoria, this was possible even when there had been a legal impediment to the marriage at the time of the child's birth, a provision which did not apply in Great Britain until 1959. Adoption as a legal process was also introduced into Australia much earlier than in Great Britain and has been used much more extensively. (15) Australia, and in particular Victoria, has always had a very high adoption rate compared with either England or the United States, and adoption procedures have been refined and developed in the interests of the child. (16) The Victorian Adoption Act of 1964 disallowed private adoptions altogether, because of their sometimes disastrous consequences. Adoption procedures now must be supervised by a specially accredited social worker (i.e. the principal adoption officer of an agency). (17)


(16) Taking the year 1969 for purposes of comparison, the following figures are available: in England and Wales, the number of adoptions are 27% of all ex-nuptial births: Source: Registrar General's Statistical Review of England and Wales: Part II, Table C and Table T5. In the United States, the figure was also 27%. See Alfred Kadushin, Child Welfare Services, 2nd ed., New York, 1974, p.500. In New Zealand, adoptions were 35% of all ex-nuptial births: Source: New Zealand Statistical Abstract, 1971. In Victoria, in the same year, adoptions were 52% of ex-nuptial births: Source: Victorian Year Book, 1974, pp. 816-7.

(17) All Australian jurisdictions except Western Australia preface their adoption procedures with: "The welfare and interests of the child concerned shall be regarded as the paramount consideration". See H. Finlay and A. Bissett-Johnson, Op. cit., p.213.
The gradual introduction in Great Britain of financial assistance to enable ex-nuptial mothers to keep their children has taken place in various ways which need not be developed here. In Australia, community provision for ex-nuptial mothers and children, as a class, had not existed before 1968. In common with all mothers, ex-nuptial mothers had received maternity allowances from 1912, and child endowment from 1941; but their main entitlement to help came from their membership of the deprived segment of the community, which meant that they could receive a Commonwealth benefit for twelve weeks before and six weeks after confinement. (18)

Special provision for ex-nuptial mothers and their children involved the broader issues of support for what was considered to be an undesirable situation (single mothers keeping their children), or sanctioning the extra-marital family group. The main solution to financial problems on the part of most keeping mothers had for a long time been to remain at home with their own parents, to seek a "live-in" job, or to allow the child to be fostered while they worked separately to maintain themselves and their child.

In the debate on the introduction of the Widows' Pension Act in 1942-43, (19) the definition of a widow was widened to include a deserted wife and a de facto widow. Justification of the de jure

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widow needed no argument: "Care of the widows must be a first charge in any organised society". Nor did the debate contain much opposition to the inclusion of de facto widows as dependent females. The deserted wife as a "courtesy widow" presented more difficulty, but it was conceded that when she could prove that her husband was shirking the payment of maintenance the state should take on this responsibility. The proof of a woman's bona fides was to be evidenced by a maintenance order against her husband and such order was to be obtained in court. The emphasis was still on the deservedness of the woman concerned. Even Mr. Arthur Calwell, who attempted to have the wives of prisoners included for the sake of their children, did so on the emotional grounds that they were Australians and had more right to support than New Australian widows whose husbands might even have been wartime enemies.\(^{(20)}\) Once again, the prejudice that ex-nuptial parents were different from other unsupported mothers and children caused them to be excluded from permanent benefits. In their case there was no dead or missing husband whose obligations the Government felt bound to assume.

In Australia, provision of social security benefits has been shared between the Commonwealth and State Governments. The 1901 Constitution has built into it considerable obstacles to Commonwealth spending on welfare. In the past this aspect of welfare was regarded as a State affair and a local, rather than a national, concern. Despite this the Commonwealth slowly has assumed

\(^{(20)}\) Ibid.
direct responsibility for major ongoing welfare payments, and services provided by the States have tended to be of a residual and emergency kind made to various categories of ex-nuptial mothers. (21)

The first direct Commonwealth aid was through the Commonwealth State Grants (Deserted Wives) Act, 1968, which Victoria, lagging behind the other States, accepted in April 1970. Following acceptance, the Commonwealth subsidised the Victorian Social Welfare Department in paying certain categories of supporting mothers otherwise excluded from the Widows Pension. In Victoria, the rate payable was that payable to a class A widow at that time, but the means test was so stringent that the scheme could only be regarded as an emergency measure. (22)

The first comprehensive provision for ex-nuptial mothers and their children was the implementation of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit in July 1973, (23) which passed through Parliament with no opposition whatever.

In the late sixties then, the law which dealt with parenthood outside marriage had remained substantially the same for a long time. Although the law in Victoria had anticipated some of the developments in British legislation, it had retained its common law

(22) See Chapter 6, p. 146.
(23) Enabling legislation was contained in the Social Services Act No.3, 1973.
flavour. In the five years between 1968 and 1973 there were substantial changes in the public law, and 1975 seems likely to see even greater changes in private law. (24) However, at the moment, these two systems of legal provision are based on different assumptions. Whilst public provision is made for unsupported mothers and children regardless of the marital status of the parents, still in private law the parents' marital state is quite crucial. (25)

Present Situation in Victoria:

Private Law:

Legitimation

For many years Victoria has enjoyed statutes legitimating ex-nuptial children, but all State legislation now bows to the Commonwealth Marriage Act of 1961, Section 89 of which declares that any child whose parents marry subsequent to its birth is legitimated, whether or not there was an existing impediment at the time of birth. In these circumstances this would seem to remove all disabilities from ante-nuptial children, but the Act is not retrospective beyond September 1963, and so would exclude a child born earlier. The actual numbers of legitimations for the years between 1969 and 1973

(24) See p.197 below.

(25) There still are some differences in fringe benefits between Widows' Pension recipients and those on the Supporting Mothers' Benefit.
were 2,786 out of a total of 23,140 ex-nuptial births, i.e. approximately 15% of all ex-nuptial births during those years. To achieve legal recognition of the fact of legitimation the parents must register the fact of an ex-nuptial birth when they marry. As this is not always done, the exact number of ex-nuptial children whose parents subsequently marry is not known.

Up to the present then, legitimation is linked to the validity of the parents' marriage. This sort of legitimation is not available to the majority of ex-nuptial children, whose parents cannot marry, and perhaps ought not to do so. An alternative base for legitimacy and reciprocal rights of parents and children would lie in the fact of parenthood itself, so that in effect ex-nuptiality would become irrelevant. The United Nations recommended such an approach in 1967 by proposing that "every person, once his filiation has been established, shall have the same legal status as a person born in wedlock". (26) This would mean removing illegitimacy not by removing ex-nuptiality, but by removing the effects of ex-nuptiality. (27)

This sort of provision exists already in some countries, for example New Zealand, (28) but it leaves the key problem of


(27) Since the date of this declaration the United Nations population figures have not included separate categories of legitimate and illegitimate births for the birth data from any country.

filiation unsolved. Equal legal status in principle cannot establish the status of the father where this is ambiguous. Legitimation can remedy inequalities of rights between the legitimate and illegitimate children of a mother, but not necessarily those of a father. In the first place, the father's identity cannot be presumed in the same way as it can when the mother is married on the birth of a child, and absence of proof of fatherhood would leave rights of support or succession just where they are now. Second, even when paternity is known, there is no actual or proposed legislation in any country giving the father equal custody, rights of visitation, or guardianship (consent to adoption) rights, with the mother. This means that, from the father's point of view, his ex-nuptial children will never have equal rights to his nuptial ones, except of course with regard to his obligation to support them.

Although it does not come to grips with this central and possibly insoluble problem, the **Victorian Status of Children Act, 1975**, introduces a number of radical changes to improve the legal standing of ex-nuptial children. (29) It establishes the principle that "for the purposes of the law of Victoria the relationship between every person and his father and mother shall be determined irrespective of whether the father or mother are of have been married to each other, and all other relationships shall be determined

(29) Although this legislation and the submission of the National body of C.S.M.C. on it are, strictly speaking, outside the time period of this study, their contents bear directly on the questions discussed, and so full reference to them will be made.
accordingly". (30) It also establishes certain *prima facie* evidence of paternity, such as signing the birth register, voluntary enrolment, the fact of cohabitation, and the issue of a maintenance order. It assumes equal succession rights for all children of known parents, for both testate and intestate succession, except in dispositions before the proposed act. It also amends other legislation which refers to illegitimate children as a special class, such as the maintenance, adoption and marriage Acts.

The submission by the National Council for the Single Mother and Her Child on this Bill (31) considered that the Bill had not gone far enough, and urged the inclusion of penalties for non-legal discrimination, retrospective application of the law relating to inheritance, and more searching measures, such as blood tests, used to determine paternity. The submission also suggested some tackling of equal rights of ex-nuptial children in matters relating to children's rights, even over those of the mothers. They suggested that the child should be separately represented even against its mother's wishes, which is of course normally the case in many aspects of legislation. (32)

(30) Legislative Assembly of Victoria, 2-(245)-159/24.9 1974-995, A Bill to Remove Legal Disabilities of Children Born out of Wedlock.


(32) For example, Part IV, Administration and Probate Act (Testator's Family Maintenance).
However, there are three foreseeable obstacles. First, with regard to the putative father's rights, no allowance is made for the protection of a nominated father against his wrongful inclusion as a legal parent. Second, with regard to the mother's rights, some mothers have expressed dismay at open access for their child to its father: they fear that this leaves it as open to custodial disputes as access to the child of separated or divorced parents is at the moment. (33) Third, with regard to the child's rights, it could very well not be in the best interests of the child to establish the full facts of his conception, for example when it was the result of rape, incest, or where the mother was promiscuous and the specific paternity uncertain.

However, what is evident about the provision for legitimation in Victoria at the moment is that it is in process of profound change. Up to now it has been based on the fact of the parents' "marriage"; in the future, it will be based solely on the fact of parentage.

Affiliation

One of the greatest difficulties in implementing legitimating provisions for ex-nuptial children is establishing paternity where this is not voluntarily acknowledged. As one lawyer has put it:

(33) At the quarterly meeting of the C.S.M.C., 25th September 1973, some of the mothers claimed that they would prefer to retain the right of decision in this matter. This would protect their child from a hostile or indifferent father, and perhaps the father from the harmful knowledge of his own paternity in particular cases. They stressed that the mother could best judge whether the father
"Maternity is a matter of fact, paternity is a matter of opinion". And this often can be the case. Affiliation proceedings will therefore not be altered by the Status of Children Act. They are usually heard in camera in magistrates' courts, and both circumstantial evidence and blood tests can be used as proof. The proceedings often are not pleasant for either party and are becoming much less frequent. Their main purpose as the basis of maintenance actions is less urgent where there are community sources of help available. It is also doubtful (where the unwillingness or the uncertainty of the putative father is great enough to need court proceedings) that establishing the father's identity will achieve much for the child in question. Whether proceedings should be compulsory is a moot point. (34)

Custody

From the early Poor Law days custody, guardianship and domicile have been allowed to the ex-nuptial mother. In this respect, the ex-nuptial mother has far greater rights over her child than the married or divorced woman who shares these rights with the child's father. Occasional judgements have allowed custody to an ex-nuptial

(33) (contd.)

would have a negative or positive effect on the child's life (a difficult submission to justify). Other mothers fully supported the N.C.S.M.C.'s stance and stressed the right of the child to know who his father was, regardless of his mother's opinion on the matter.

(34) Proof that the mother was promiscuous or even that she "erred" more than once within the period when conception could have occurred is fatal to the mother's application, once paternity is denied.
father in preference to another person, but seldom if ever in preference to the child's mother. Since the introduction of New Zealand's legitimating legislation, the child's custody has not been challenged by a father; however, the possibility of challenge remains.

**Maintenance**

In private law, at least in Victoria, the onus is on the mother to take action whether or not she is married. But because the ex-nuptial mother has first to establish paternity, should this be denied, she is in a less advantageous position than the married woman. In addition, she can only claim very limited maintenance on her own behalf. (35)

**Public Benefits Available**

As we have seen, the Victorian Social Welfare Department since 1970 has been paying an allowance to ex-nuptial mothers supporting children. This remained unchanged until December 1974. It was at a fixed amount of $27.75 per week and no other income at all was allowed without a dollar for dollar reduction. The mother

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(35) The ex-nuptial mother, or someone acting on her behalf, is entitled to claim:
(i) confinement expenses and her own maintenance for two months before, and three months after, confinement;
(ii) maintenance for the child;
(iii) funeral expenses in some circumstances.
was obliged to take maintenance proceedings if possible. Few mothers stayed on this benefit for a long period of time. (36) However, after July 1973 the Supporting Mothers' Benefit was available from the Australian Department of Social Security to the mothers whose children were more than six months old. This benefit was equal to a Widow's Pension, and at the time of writing (July 1975) the full rate, including allowances, for a woman with one child under six, was $54 per week. This is the same amount as the Widow's Pension, but does not include the full range of fringe benefits of this latter. There is a generous means test. Since December 1974, a similar amount has been paid by the Social Welfare Department to those women who are waiting for the six months qualifying period, but the means test is unaltered.

**Maintenance under Public Law**

As far as the Department of Social Security is concerned, mothers must seek maintenance from the fathers of their children, if they are eligible to do so. The Department does not insist on this in difficult circumstances, and so far no benefit has been refused on these grounds. However, the fact that some income is allowed under the means test, so that payment of maintenance would usually increase a woman's total income, tends to encourage co-operation where it is

(36) See Chapter 6, p. 146-7.
feasible. No action is taken on the woman's behalf by the Department itself in this respect. (37)

Dilemmas of Legal Reform

Many difficulties in legal provisions for ex-nuptial children have been solved in recent years. This has been done, in the first place, by basing the claim for public assistance for dependent mothers and children on the fact of their lack of means, rather than on the failure of the male parent to support them; and in the second place, by basing the personal rights and status of the children on the fact of having a parent, rather than on the fact of their parents' marriage. However, some problems remain—particularly where there has never been a stable de facto union.

(37) In South Australia, the Department of Community Welfare actively assists mothers, and in Scandinavian countries governmental agencies can recoup pensions paid to mothers by taking full responsibility for locating the fathers and proceeding against them. See Margaret Wynn, Lone Mothers in Denmark and Norway, N.C.U.M.C. 1963, p. 5; see also Finer Report, vol. II, p.49. In Victoria there are available on application by a deserted mother a legal aid scheme run by the Legal Aid Committee to provide legal representation freely or on modest terms for a maintenance application. The exact number of women so assisted is not listed separately in the Annual Reports of the Legal Aid Committee, 1973, 74 or 75. The new Australian Legal Aid Office does not assist in maintenance cases which are still at the time of writing (December 1975) under State jurisdiction.
1. It is axiomatic that where paternity cannot be established, there is no legal means of providing a child with an identifiable and responsible father. This means that the child will not fit into an established two-parent family structure, nor can he benefit from the reformed lineage or inheritance procedures mentioned in the Legitimacy Bill. A much stricter registration of the father's name at birth requirement may to some extent overcome this.

2. Because the improved affiliatory proceedings mentioned in the Bill cannot be made mandatory without serious threat to individual rights, the child whose parents are not married cannot have the same rights with regard to his father as children of separated or divorced parents have.

3. Shared custody rights for ex-nuptial children whose parents have never lived together could prove to be a doubtful gain to the child, sowing seeds of instability and insecurity.

4. Legitimation cannot ensure entire removal of the social stigma attaching to ex-nuptial mothers and children. The N.C.S.M.C. would like to see discrimination, on the grounds of birth, made an offence, but it is difficult to see how this provision would not continue to make the ex-nuptial child a special case, unless this protection were seen in the context of general anti-discrimination laws.

5. Presuming that there should be equality in public provision for mothers who have once been married and those who have not, should the male parent's obligation to maintain the wife and child be
the same in both cases? Where there has never been cohabitation, or promise of cohabitation, can the male parent's obligation to maintain the woman as well as the child be justified or validly enforced? At the moment there is a real difference at the social administrative level, and a maintenance order is more strictly required in one case than the other. However, there has been no attempt to come to grips with the difference in scope of maintenance between the two cases, i.e. maintenance of the child only.

6. An alternative way of approaching the question of maintenance without differentiating between the married and unmarried partners would be to insist on the equal rights and obligations of both parents in maintaining the child. But in practice this would often mean that the State would have to take action to enforce the father's obligation. The machinery for implementing this does not exist in Australia, as it does for instance in Sweden and Denmark, nor does it appear likely to be introduced. One way to solve the ambiguity of the maintenance requirement would be to drop it altogether. But if it is dropped, or becomes a formality, this might emphasise a matriarchal concept of the family and deprive the father of his parental status.

(38) It would be necessary to have identity cards and registration of all employment for all garnishee orders to be implemented in a comprehensive way. The Finer Report, Vol. II, p.50, notes that "it would be a serious mistake to imagine that these systems of public maintenance payment exist in isolation or are easily exportable... More than most income support programmes affecting single parent families, the Scandinavian benefits ... depend heavily on the particular administrative context of each nation".
Summary

It was mentioned earlier that the intention of legal provisions regarding ex-nuptiality was to protect the future members of society. In the past this has been achieved by protecting only the stable and socially acknowledged family groups. Changes have now been introduced to extend the recognition and protection to the many a-typical family situations in which contemporary children find themselves. However, no legal solution either to what is essentially a social problem posed by the reciprocal rights of ex-nuptial children and their fathers, or to the like problem of the relationship between private and public maintenance, has yet been found.
Chapter 8

A CRITIQUE OF THE C.S.M.C. AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY CHANGE

"Inability of those in power to still the voices of their consciences is the great force leading to desired change."
President Kaunda of Zambia

This study has covered a good deal of ground in its search for an effective policy for single mothers. The background knowledge necessary for framing such a policy was so fragmentary that questions of the adequacy and appropriateness of suggested policies could not be answered with any accuracy. Again, the vague generalizations that had been taken for granted in the past provided no real starting point for a focussed enquiry.

In general, two main lines of investigation have been followed here: the first, to see how single mothers themselves interpreted their needs, taking the group of mothers associated with C.S.M.C. as the main instance since it illustrates a way of changing policy by a "consumer group"; the second, to search for
what hard data were available, in order to build up a picture of
the lives of ex-nuptial mothers and their children so as to have
some kind of framework for evaluating the C.S.M.C.'s intervention.

The justification for examining the needs of keeping
ex-nuptial mothers as a distinct group was based on the assumption
of their inequality with other mothers. In other words, they did
not have the same economic or social status as married mothers.
However, the exact nature of the disadvantages, and how typical
they were of the whole group has been little understood by policy
makers, researchers, or even indeed by many of the single mothers
of the C.S.M.C.

The C.S.M.C. took its first inspiration from a sense of
the unfairness of the single mother's position. The founders knew
from their own experience that they were not entitled to certain
of the rights taken for granted by married mothers, particularly
the right to governmental financial assistance, in supporting
themselves and their children. (1) However, it was the sense of
being devalued as people, and being described as "irresponsible" or
"unrespectable", that really hurt them. Social prejudice against
them was expressed in the widely held assumption that they should
give their children up for adoption. There was, for instance,
pressure from parents and friends to put the whole incident of the

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(1) One of the results of the introduction of the Supporting Mothers'
Benefit has been to put ex-nuptial mothers on a par with widows
and other female supported families. Australia and New Zealand
are unique in this respect according to the Finer Report which
examines income maintenance schemes in six European countries.
ex-nuptial "affair" behind them, and to resume life where they had left off; and there was also pressure from social work professionals generally on the ex-nuptial mothers to think of the "good of their child" by allowing him or her to be brought up in an established two-parent family. These single mothers saw themselves as having much in common with other stigmatized groups, but the similarities and differences caused some confusion. Thus, their perception of themselves as a minority in a minority group (i.e. of one-parent families) was correct, and their efforts to achieve parity were extremely effective in easing their position. However, they were less perceptive when they saw themselves as representative of all ex-nuptial mothers, or even as being fully aware of the situation of all keeping single mothers. In other words, they did not realize that they were a minority even in these latter respects.

It is possible to look at the achievements of the group of ex-nuptial mothers in the C.S.M.C. from three points of view: from their perception of themselves as (1) single-parent families; (ii) as ex-nuptial parents; and (iii) as single keeping mothers.

**Ex-nuptial Mothers and Single Parent Families**

How were these ex-nuptial mothers and their children different from other one-parent families? First, they were younger. (2)

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(2) See Chapter 5, p. 114–17.
This means that their "life stage" was different from the majority of married and separated men and women. There are no data on the age of separated (as distinct from divorced) mothers, but the age of once married separated women receiving government pensions is distinctly higher than that of never married mothers. (3) This means that they probably will have had less vocational training and fewer financial resources. Their immediate employment prospects will be affected and their later training more difficult.

Second, since they have never been in/two-parent situation, they will be, in many respects, less prepared for motherhood. Fewer of them have had the emotional support of a male partner or the experience of shared parenthood. Whatever effect this has on their attitude to their future, it will be a different starting point from that of a mother who once has been married and who is now separated. Another consequence of the absence of legal marriage is the lack of clear or supporting family networks. If such networks do exist they will probably be on the mother's side only. Ex-nuptial mothers, in one sense, remain part of their own family of origin, whereas, if a marriage has taken place, a formal break with the family of origin has been made and the parent/child unit has some identity of its own - signified by a name change. Where single mothers have returned home to their parents, our findings show that the situation is not usually a stable one, and the confused status just referred to could be a contributing factor. (4)

(3) See Chapter 6, p. 150.
(4) See Chapter 6, p. 165.
The third difference between ex-nuptial mothers and children and other single parent families follows from this. Ex-nuptial motherhood, outside a de facto relationship context, is a transitional stage in that the typical "girl on her own with child" phase normally lasts only for a few years. This study estimates that at least sixty percent of Category C keeping ex-nuptial mothers (excluding those whose child is born after de facto relationship has already been set up) are in a two-parent family by the time the child reaches school age. Such a period of single parenthood can be acutely difficult for both ex-nuptial mother and child, but it often is not a long-term chronic difficulty. Where it is of longer duration, single mothers are more likely than others to have only one child, so that their period spent with a dependent child is less, in terms of years, than where there are several children. (5)

The fourth difference lies in the legal status of ex-nuptial parenthood. The rights of married parents to the care and custody of their children seldom are questioned, whereas the C.S.M.C. founders considered that their rights were not necessarily recognized. Legally they did have the right to the care and custody of their children, but pressure to adopt meant that those rights were not always acknowledged in practice. In fact, the rights of ex-nuptial mothers in this respect have been greater than those of married women who have to share parental rights with their husbands. What is true is that it is the children's rights vis-à-vis their father which are limited by ex-nuptial status, rather than the rights of the mother vis-à-vis the child. As a result of the recent Victorian Status of Children Act, 1974, no child is now to be deemed "illegitimate" or

(5) See Chapter 6, p. 169-70.
to suffer the disabilities which previously attended ex-nuptial birth. But this cannot give the ex-nuptial child equal rights with the nuptial child with regard to his father if the father's name is not registered on his birth certificate. (6)

The fifth point of difference, that of social status, is a much more difficult factor to determine. In spite of greater acceptance, there are still problems for unmarried women with children which are not shared by other married parents. These problems can occur in their employment, or socially, or they may arise for an ex-nuptial child at school. It is hard for a child to grasp what being ex-nuptial means and even harder for him to explain to other children. The matter of his father's name being different from his mother's and his own makes for problems not shared by a child of once-married parents.

Has the Council's policy been sensitive to all these differences? The C.S.M.C. aims to offer practical assistance and emotional support to its members. All disadvantaged groups in the community need this sort of help and it is vital that what is offered is the right sort of aid at the right time. The time at which single mothers are most vulnerable is during pregnancy and shortly after birth. This is also the point at which the group of ex-nuptial mothers is the most numerous, and also the time when the situation of single mothers is most different from that of other single parents. First, there is the burden of the decision about the

(6) See Chapter 7, p. 199.
child's future and the dislocation in the mother's social life and employment. The family of the mother may be too concerned with its own difficulties about the situation to offer much emotional support. Second, there is usually a cut of normal income through loss of employment. The present pension scheme\(^7\) has considerably relieved this financial stress. However, the Council has not paid as much attention to the period immediately before and after birth, as had the early V.C.O.S.S. Committee.\(^8\) The Council, for instance, has not considered alternatives to the fast vanishing maternity homes which previously provided support to ex-nuptial mothers before and after birth when their living arrangements were unsatisfactory, or when they wanted to be free of family pressures. In fact, none of the "task forces" recently set up by the Council have been concerned with this early stage of ex-nuptial motherhood at all, nor have they pressed for better or more numerous or more easily available counselling services for ex-nuptial mothers who usually must make decisions under very difficult circumstances.

On the positive side, the Council has done a great deal to bring about social acceptance of ex-nuptial mothers - always a greater problem for them than for other single parent families. Not only has it forced open discussion and acknowledgement of the difficulties of single mothers, but the very manner of the Council's public campaign in 1972 greatly helped public understanding and interest.\(^9\)

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\(^{(7)}\) Victorian Social Welfare Department Family Assistance payments which are available from the child's birth are now equal to the Supporting Mothers' Benefit which is $57.25 when the child is six months old. (Jan. 1976). See also Pavlin, "A Study of Stress in Pregnancy..." for a detailed consideration of this period.

\(^{(8)}\) See Chapter 3, p. 50.

\(^{(9)}\) See Chapter 3, p. 82.
The Committee of the Council at that time aimed at key areas of influence for change and it was moderate and painstaking in its approach. Consequently, it acquired a favourable reputation as a trail-blazer, rather than that of a "freakish" or "irresponsible" pressure group. Coercive tactics, of course, would hardly have been effective for a minority group such as the Council, but it secured a certain standing in the community during the period of its campaign for the pension and equal legal status, and this may well have laid the foundation for the grants received from the Ross Trust and the Australian Social Security Department in 1974. (10)

As we have seen, the essential difference between ex-nuptial and other one-parent families is their legal status. The Council has worked hard to eliminate anomalous legal disabilities for ex-nuptial children, and has even attempted to educate other ex-nuptial mothers with respect to more subtle forms of discrimination which they themselves can perpetuate by cutting the child off from the father. They have pointed out to their members on several occasions that they could discriminate against their child by not having the father's name on the child's birth certificate, or by refusing the father access to the child, that is to say, by preventing the child having the rights vis-à-vis his father enjoyed by nuptial children. (11) (There is no evidence that this initiative has had any widespread effect, perhaps because there is a fairly high turnover in attendance at the single mothers' meetings.)

(10) See Chapter 3, p. 58.
(11) See Chapter 4, p. 89.
The C.S.M.C. and the Total Group of Ex-nuptial Mothers

The Council really represents the interest of one group of ex-nuptial mothers - the single keeping or Category C mothers. No doubt, all ex-nuptial mothers and children are eligible to be members of the Council, but most of the needs of ex-nuptial mothers are seen in terms of this specific group only. This can be seen by examining the constitution of the Council. (12)

Many of the initiatives of the C.S.M.C. do, of course, benefit other categories of ex-nuptial mothers. The Council has been active in adoption reforms, particularly where this affects the rights of children to access to their natural parents, and also in work for the legal status of ex-nuptial children. However, the main target group remains single mothers who constitute only forty percent at most of all ex-nuptial mothers immediately after birth, and fewer still as two-parent partnerships are formed. (This is probably one of the reasons for the lack of a continuing attendance at meetings, or continuing membership of local groups.) Category A (adopting) mothers thus barely get into the picture. Neither the C.S.M.C. nor anyone else knows precisely what happens to adopting mothers once they have surrendered the child, since the need for confidentiality has prevented studies being carried out. Far more, however, is known about the successful outcome for adopted children in terms of physical health, absence of emotional problems in early

(12) See Chapter 3, p. 67.
life, and school achievement. (13) This, of course, is not the whole story of adoption, but it is part of it. The C.S.M.C. could provide a real service for mothers making the decision to surrender their children for adoption if they took more interest in the adoption outcome for the child, and made available such information to expectant mothers as well as providing counselling agencies for them.

The mothers who form two-parent partnerships (Category B) tend to drop out of the Council's orbit. (14) But, as we have seen, the transition from a one-parent family to a two-parent one is not easy and often cannot be sustained. (15) Nevertheless, some of these mothers have been very successful and their experience could help others. The majority of the Council members will make the same transition sooner or later and could use such help. This transition difficulty is not sufficiently appreciated and it certainly warrants further investigation of suitable marriage and pre-marriage counselling services for members.

Some of the Category C (single keeping) mothers become separated from their children eventually. This group was classified in Chapter 6 as Category D (those who cease to have direct care of their child, although the child is not adopted). Very little is known about how many mothers there are in this group, or what type

(13) See Chapter 6 p. 144.

(14) R. Kiely gave some of the reasons adduced by ex-nuptial mothers for refusal to participate in her C.S.M.C. survey, as follows: "I'm living with a fellow; I'm one of them still but I'm living a completely different kind of life"; (the ex-nuptial mother's mother) "She's married and living very happily in Surfer's Paradise. She's put it all behind her. She wants to forget it has ever happened. Her husband accepts the baby as his and I'm sure he wouldn't approve (of her taking part in the study), etc.

of difficulties they face. Perhaps the C.S.M.C., more than any other body, is in a position to draw attention to their plight and to co-operate with other agencies or departments in looking at the circumstances which precipitate the difficulties and to consider how they can best be relieved.

The C.S.M.C. and Single Mothers

This brings us back once more to the keeping single mothers' group (Category C). The founders of the C.S.M.C. were among these mothers and envisaged the Council as consisting of such single mothers, working to keep themselves and others in the same category. Have they been realistic in this? The accomplishments of the past have been dealt with in great detail. (16) Since 1975 the active work of the Council has been in the hands of various "task forces". There is, however, no task group specifically for the young mothers, as mentioned earlier, nor one which concerns itself with before and after birth services. This means that there is no more being done in these vital areas than there was in the past. One task force is concerned with accommodation and another, mentioned before, with baby clothes and equipment, but these services have not been greatly developed since the early days of the Council. Obviously, most mothers go elsewhere for material help if they need it, or it may be that the need is less acute. But it is more likely that the active

(16) See Chapter 4, p. 92.
present interests of the Council are expressed in the Welfare Rights and local groups task forces. The Council has wished to encourage local and branch groups to foster wider membership and participation, but the lack of success in this direction seems to suggest lack of ability to communicate, and a missing of the point concerning single mothers' real needs. Not even a full-time worker employed for a year on this project could really get the branch groups going. (17)

The demographic structure of the keeping ex-nuptial mother population may have something to do with this. The majority are young (under 22); they only have one ex-nuptial child; and they soon marry. (18) This means that they are more interested in immediate bridging welfare services and in having somebody else to stand up for their rights, than in identifying on a long-term basis with other ex-nuptial mothers. They need the help of the Council, but do not need to be part of it in a continuing way. The benefits of being an active Council member have been obvious in the case of the founding members. Their sense of purpose, their growth in experience and skill, their standing in the community, have justified the whole idea of self-help for single mothers. However, this has not proved anything about the necessity of continuing participation by all single mothers. The obvious benefit is to the older single mother who cares for her child alone on a long-term basis. (19)

(17) See Chapter 3, p.73.
(18) See Chapter 6, pp.154-170.
(19) See Chapter 6, p.173.
As we saw, the older keeping single mother and her child probably suffers more from the ex-nuptial situation than anyone else, and if participation in the Council's activities is of direct benefit to this group this would more than justify its existence. But a closer examination shows that only a very small number of mothers have been centrally involved in the Council for more than a year or two. (20) Five committee members who were part of the Council when it was founded still concern themselves in its affairs. Two have married, and three fall into the keeping single mothers' Category C. Undoubtedly, there have been many keeping single mothers involved in the Council over the five years of its existence who have greatly benefited, but they do not continue to use the Council's services or contribute to them in any systematic way. In the long run it seems that what the Council does on behalf of single mothers is more important to the whole group than their actual involvement in its activities. Social workers and childcare workers have emphasised that this hard-to-reach group will only maintain very temporary contact and that the initiative and effort must come from those who see contact as desirable, rather than the mothers themselves. (21) This is borne out in the experience of the Council committee members who have founded local groups only to have them disintegrate when they themselves ceased attending. (22)

(20) See Chapter 4, p. 88.
(21) See Chapter 3, p. 64.
(22) Jo Murray and Sandy Pitts in personal communications to the author.
Where welfare is concerned, there is always a shortfall of resources, whether these are material, or people to do the work, or people willing to accept responsibility. The effectiveness of the Council in meeting the future needs of single mothers may lie then more in some single mothers working for all single mothers rather than in attempts to involve all single mothers in the Council work itself.

The C.S.M.C. and the Future

This suggests a rather fragile future for the Council, for it assumes the continuing existence of a group of ex-nuptial mothers who are either willing and capable long-term single mothers, or ex-single mothers sufficiently devoted to the cause to continue to be involved after their marriage.

While the number of ex-nuptial births is decreasing, the social pressure to meet the needs created by such births is also likely to diminish and there will be less community support for the Council so that it will have to generate its own energy and impetus. This was foreseen by Marie Coleman in 1973 when she spoke to the National Conference of Single Mothers' Organizations then in the first flush of triumph after gaining the Supporting Mothers' Benefit. "There are some words of caution which must be made at this stage", Mrs. Coleman said; "consider very carefully how to go about being part of the change process. Do not build up a complex State and
Federal bureaucracy in the expectation of Government financial support". (23)

One avenue open to the Council is to gain strength by joining with other single-parent organisations. This has happened in the United States and the United Kingdom. (24) However, as we have seen, the needs of these various groups are not identical and something of the peculiar purpose of the Council's work for single mothers would be lost by amalgamation. From this point of view, the proposal of the national body of the C.S.M.C. that there should be a federation, rather than a merger of single-parent organisations, might be a valuable compromise.

Until now, the C.S.M.C. has not been greatly concerned with demographic projections. The Council produced details of numbers and rates during the pension campaign, but its policy on the whole anticipates that the present situation will continue, that is to say, that ex-nuptial births will increase or stabilise. The fear expressed by some opponents of Supporting Mothers' Benefit, namely that it would increase ex-nuptial births, has proved groundless. Ex-nuptial births are not increasing in absolute numbers; nor are they, even in the face of a drastic decrease in nuptial births, increasing in proportion to total births. Single motherhood has hardly become a fashion! There is admittedly some variation among Australian States, but the differences remain consistent and obviously are not due to a


raising of pension levels. Examination of Age Specific Ex-Nuptial Birthrate up to 1971 shows the biggest increase to be in the youngest group of mothers. (25) Percentages in 1972 and 1973 showed increases in the under 20 compared to the over-20 group. (26) Figures for 1974 and 1975 were not available at the time of writing. (27) If the heavy weighting of this group in the total has continued to increase, the C.S.M.C. could profitably work for services for pregnant school girls, but the Council will then have increasing difficulty on the membership side if they want servers and served to be the same group. The very young are the most temporary ex-nuptial mothers of all. (28)

Summary

During the six years of its existence the accomplishments of the C.S.M.C. have been monumental for some ex-nuptial mothers, and helpful to some extent to practically the whole group. It has shown how social policy can be changed by the initiatives of a consumer group. Its way of working has produced a group of skilled and dedicated women, even if it has tended to spin off the less capable and committed by sheer centrifugal force. Its way of working has also favoured a forceful response to a crisis rather than the establishment of a supporting and continuing organisation; it has achieved its successes by brilliant and appropriate gestures rather than by sound administrative procedures.

(25) See Chapter 5, p. 112.
(26) See Chapter 5, p. 115.
(28) See Chapter 6, p. 155.
Largely as a result of the work of the Council, economic and legal inequalities for ex-nuptial mothers and children have almost disappeared, so that the gap in social provision between them and other one-parent families has considerably narrowed. In addition, the conflict of attitude between this band of young women, who were originally seen by themselves and others as an "out-group", and professionals no longer exists.

Their success, however, has itself generated new problems for them. Group cohesiveness is one problem, and the need for new directions is another. This may be a typical "natural history" of social reform movements. The original impetus and strength of the C.S.M.C. lay in the coincidence of the right people coming together at the right time. That times now are different for single mothers may be partly because of the Council's own actions, but it is also due to changes in political circumstances and to demographic shifts. In any event, the old rallying causes no longer evoke the same enthusiastic response. Most of the founders of the C.S.M.C. are still committed to the cause, but they cannot carry on without more of the kind of support from ex-nuptial mothers that they once had. Newer active members of the C.S.M.C. often prefer different orientations, but they have neither the community's nor the members' support. (29)

This leaves three main alternatives for the future: first, the C.S.M.C. can try to maintain the same aims and membership, living on its reputation for as long as it lasts, in a changing

(29) See Chapter 4, p.95.
situation, then disappearing. Second, it can work through the national body to which most of its founders have gravitated, and relying on the experience, commitment and perseverance of its members, act as a sort of ginger group. (30) This would enable it to foster particular projects and act as a consultant for policy-makers, and to provide a service and information centre for local groups interested in mutual support on specific problems. The third alternative would be to emphasize services rather than policy changes on a continuing basis. This would require a central office, probably in Melbourne where the support is strongest. Almost inevitably, this would involve employing professionals and some kind of co-ordination with other one-parent organisations, in the manner of a voluntary agency. This would be the most likely means of securing funds from government or other sources, as single-parent families formed by marriage break-up are more likely to increase than ex-nuptial families and may in the future attract greater community support. It is likely that the latter alternative would provide the most secure future for a single mothers' organisation, although it would be at the cost of losing its special character.

There is, then, a choice between an efficient but somewhat impersonal organisation that would continue to exist in a fairly stable way, and an enthusiastic and committed group sensitive to

(30) As, for instance, the "Gingerbread" Group has in the United Kingdom. See Finer Report, Vol. II, p.3.
the needs of ex-nuptial mothers and at the same time vulnerable to
demographic changes, changing interests of members, and lack of
public funding.

Social planning cannot be wholly independent of what
society is willing to sustain, and from this point of view it is
perhaps the quasi-bureaucratic alternative which has the best
chance of survival, in spite of the more specific and personal
contribution of an inspirational group such as the present C.S.M.C.
Chapter 9

"Attempt the end, and never stand to doubt; Nothing's so hard, but search will find it out."
Robert Herrick, "Seek and Find".

This study has had a limited aim and it has deliberately neglected many questions about ex-nuptial mothers and their children. It may, therefore, be useful to consider some of these questions in a summary way with a view to sketching out a general programme for further research into the ex-nuptial situation.

1. If ex-nuptial families are in need of special social provisions, it is necessary to know first how they differ from other parents and their children, and in particular they differ from other one-parent families. There may be important differences of self-perception and self-definition between ex-nuptial and other families, and these differences would, of course, have some effect on parent-child relationships. On the one hand, they could see themselves as "stigmatised" or as under-privileged; on the other hand, they could see themselves as resembling other families in every way save for marriage. This kind of information is important in considering
distribution and contact points for services and it could be obtained only by an extensive and in-depth attitude survey.

2. How homogeneous are ex-nuptial mothers as a group? Do they all have problems, or the same kinds of problems? This study suggests that there are distinct groups among ex-nuptial mothers. A more rigorous study might confirm and refine these groupings or even establish a new classification of groups. This could be investigated by using the same broad approach as Cutright's study which examines exhaustively the demographic trends in illegitimacy in the United States between 1920 and 1968 and relates its findings to a comprehensive range of empirical analyses. However, it is worth noting that Cutright found limitations in the relevance and accuracy of the raw data he obtained, and in Australia the situation is worse in many respects. For example, as was mentioned earlier, even fewer details are recorded in Australian birth, marriage and adoption data, and much information available from government departments lacks comparability. The question would also need to be approached in a longitudinal way similar to the cohort study of the National Children's Bureau in the United Kingdom. Much valuable information has been drawn from this study and the findings are widely quoted. However, there are social circumstances which obtain in the United Kingdom but which do not obtain in Australia. Another approach would be to undertake a statutory follow-up of ex-nuptial children within 12 months of birth in the interests of their welfare, as in New Zealand. This could provide a rich source of data, even if details were less extensive. A similar provision in Victoria would be one way to find out about the most elusive groups of ex-nuptial mothers

(1) See Chapter 5, p. 104. (2) See Chapter 2, p. 27. (3) See Appendix E.
at both ends of the needs spectrum - those who apparently manage without any special help, financial or otherwise, and those who cannot cope with their motherhood role at all and leave their children in the care of other people or institutions.

Taking the categories of ex-nuptial mothers listed in Chapter 6 separately, the sort of information needed to get a better and more complete picture of typical outcomes is as follows:

**Category A mothers (adopting):** While there has been a limited number of studies on adopted children with their adoptive parents, much work remains to be done. Does the knowledge, or lack of knowledge, of their origin affect these children's lives and the lives of their adoptive parents? What is the overall effect of parenthood for older parents in stable marriages?

Even less is known about the future lives of natural mothers. Most workers in the field have some idea of the immediate strain on certain mothers who surrender their children for adoption; but for the later period, after the mother has made her decision, information is fragmentary or non-existent. We do not know if this affects the relationship of the mother with her later nuptial or ex-nuptial children, although Cutright demonstrates that it may not affect her subsequent fertility.\(^{(4)}\) Quite obviously, the falling of adoption rates and the availability of support have coincided, but there are reasons for thinking that the relationship may not be

\(^{(4)}\) See Chapter 6, p.169, note 80.
one of pure cause and effect. For instance, the trend towards keeping rather than adopting is world-wide, although pension rights are not. However, there is a possibility that the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit has altered the structure of the adoption decision in some ways. (5)

An enquiry into the group of ex-nuptial mothers who surrender their children for adoption, while not directly connected with keeping single mothers, could nevertheless have great relevance to the sort of knowledge these latter need in order to make informed decisions about keeping their children or not. It would also provide a missing piece in the general picture of ex-nuptial mothers.

Information about Category A mothers (adopting) is a much more delicate matter than most of the other categories, for their ex-nuptial motherhood is a very temporary state. However, because of

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(5) Mrs. Marie Coleman mentioned in her address to the first National Conference of Single Mothers Organisations, 30 June 1973, that "discussions are taking place to establish a long-term study of a group of single mothers and their children, who receive the new benefit, and comparing them with a group of mothers and children from two-parent families". The author was informed by Mrs. Coleman (25 July 1973) that Miss Elizabeth Jeffries of the Australian Social Security Department in Adelaide would be organizing this research; however, no definite plans had been made when Miss Jeffries was contacted in August 1973. Mrs. Coleman also referred to the Family study at the University of New South Wales, but none of the bulletins published so far indicate the effect on family patterns of single mothers receiving benefits.
the provisions of the Adoption Act, all such mothers are interviewed by a social worker before they sign a consent to adoption. While it would not be proper to re-approach mothers whose consents had already been obtained, it might be possible to ask prospective adopting mothers if they would agree to being contacted after a given interval. This could be in the context of a general follow-up of an agency's clients to assess the long-term value of service. If the majority of mothers preferred not to participate, this in itself would be an indication of how they saw their possible role.

Category B mothers (cohabiting) include the widest variety of situations and yet they are virtually ignored in the literature on illegitimacy. At one extreme, there are the stable consensual unions where mothers and children need no special help at all. They do not need to make a decision to keep or not keep, nor do they need services apart from those available to all mothers. There are, of course, a few self-sufficient single mothers in this position, but they are not typical. If we knew how these women saw their situation and how they shaped their lives, it would be a considerable help in planning and constructing a preventive type of policy rather than a remedial one.

Then there are the less stable unions, existing before or after birth, some of which are probably legal marriages. A cohort study may provide a means of obtaining information, but this would be difficult to arrange in a comprehensive way as there is not even a likely future point of contact after the child's birth unless the

(6) Six such cases are known to the author.
mother applies for one type of pension or another. Some appear as deserted wives, or deserted *de facto* wives, but establishing a representative sample would not be possible outside the context of a study like that of the National Children's Bureau. However, there are important things to be found out. What happens to young women and their children who marry before or after an ex-nuptial birth? Is the impression of a high rate of marital breakdown, as suggested in this study, valid or not? What is the effect of an ex-nuptial birth on family dynamics? Some of the preliminary interviews for this study suggested that the close bond which unites the mother and child alone together before marriage may carry over and cause a troublesome imbalance in the family later. How well founded is this suggestion?

**Category C mothers (single):** We do know something about Category C mothers, even those in Australia, although the limitations of extant studies are considerable, and much more work remains to be done in the same area to improve the focus and scope of the findings. There is also the task of bringing these findings up-to-date in line with demographic and pension changes. Some sub-categories of this group have received scant attention - for instance, pregnant school girls and migrant mothers who have a double family dislocation to face.

**Category D mothers (not having direct custody of their children):** There are also the mothers who start off in Category C and are somehow separated from their children by a variety of circumstances. We know

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(7) See Appendix F.
from details of admission to institutions that these may be the children most at risk. There are certainly some who are cared for well or indifferently by others and of whom no details are known. Overseas studies in the past have estimated their proportion between 7 percent and 20 percent. There appears to be fewer in Victoria, but their exact numbers are unknown. Until some comprehensive cohort study is designed, a wide selection of case studies, illustrating at least the present known range of situations, could give some insight into the lives of these mothers.

A beginning might be made by using information that is already available. Two instances come to mind. We know Category C and D mothers are most at risk. If the records of a group of applicants for Family Assistance in the Victorian Social Welfare Department, who represent 70% of this group, were followed through from their transfer to the Supporting Mothers' Benefit to the point at which they cancelled the Benefit (probably well before the child reached school age in most cases), and a note made of their accommodation and maintenance arrangements, further births, employment, as well as their reasons for cancellation of the Benefit, a great deal of information which is now missing would emerge. If further birth records were kept, or the mothers were to give permission for periodic interviews, the range and depth of what could be discovered would be greatly enhanced.

(8) See Chapter 6, p.177.
With some sort of context-study such as this present enquiry as a background, it might be possible to augment what is known by either a "structural-functional" analysis of typical families,\(^{(9)}\) or by a "personal construct" approach. The personal interviews of ex-nuptial mothers and others for this study suggested that ex-nuptial motherhood is always seen in one framework or another, and therefore is conceptualized in many different and conflicting ways. Many of the approaches which seem obvious could be quite transformed if they were seen in different perspectives or frameworks.

An exhaustive study of the attitudes towards the ex-nuptial situation (by the mothers themselves, by their relatives, by professionals, and by members of the community) and their practical consequences could allow for some far-reaching reconstruction of how the phenomenon of ex-nuptiality is perceived. The attempt to look at the different constructions put on the activities of the Council for the Single Mother and Her Child was a move in this direction.\(^{(10)}\)

Another study of individual ex-nuptial mothers could be helpful. In-depth interviews of keeping single mothers might explore their perceptions of themselves as mothers of one-parent families, and second, their perceptions of the reason why they were one-parent families. Was it an occasion of mourning for what might have been?

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\(^{(9)}\) Along the lines of the Australian Family study conducted by the University of N.S.W.

\(^{(10)}\) See Chapter 3, pp. 60-66.
Or for self-reckoning? Or a sense of failure? Or, on the other hand, was it an occasion of achievement, a realisation of a sense of their own single-handed capacity to be an adequate parent?

A third line of enquiry would be concerned with how ex-nuptial mothers saw male parents. Do they, for instance, see male parents as their own partners, or as dependents, or as essential figures in the parent-child triangle, or even as a social figurehead for themselves or their children?

The same sort of enquiry could be used for any of the ex-nuptial groups of course, but only following a preparatory enquiry of the type attempted here for the Category C mothers.

3. A further set of questions relate to issues of social policy vis-à-vis ex-nuptial mothers and their children. This study has been restricted to what the C.S.M.C. thought on the subject of social policy and it has not raised the more general questions as to who precisely have the right to have their needs met, who has the obligation to meet them, and how this may be best done.

(a) The most obvious question is that of financial support. Chapter 7 gave some account of how this issue has appeared at different times and places, and what is the present "philosophy" underlying the pension system for unsupported mothers in Australia. In fact, as we have seen, the pension provisions are residual,
ad hoc and piecemeal. The government has been prepared for some
time to assume responsibility for certain missing male parents -
for instance, in the case of widows or deserted wives. However,
this created anomalies when viewed from the receiving end, so to
speak, for it did not seem just that some children and their mothers,
whose need was parallel to the others, should be excluded simply
because of the unsatisfactory marital status of the mother. The
Supporting Mothers' Benefit was introduced to remedy this anomaly.
Thus, it now seems that what underlies present practice is the
child's right to support, including its right to full-time care
by its mother if she so desires. If this is the case, then it
should be made quite explicit.

Again, as noted before, much work remains to be done in
the area of the overall effects of receiving the Benefit. Thus,
it might be asked whether it helps all children, and whether it
would be advantageous to have a differential benefit among different
sub-groups?

We have noted how applications for the Supporting Mothers'
Benefit diminish as the child grows older, but not whether a flat
rate of benefit is appropriate. (11) There are cases, although they
may be rare, where the effect of a single mother staying alone with
her child has an isolating effect on both of them. Unless the
mother has frequent contact with other adults, her situation is

(11) The rate is not completely flat. There is a $6 loading where
the child is under six years.
different from that of a married woman in more ways than the financial dimension.

A detailed study of recipients of government pensions could be designed in various ways, but a general analysis of applicants from their records, followed by careful in-depth interviewing of different categories of mothers to gauge the effect of receiving the Supporting Mothers' Benefit, could test commonly held assumptions about its real benefit or otherwise. This could be viewed both from the point of view of its effectiveness in meeting real needs, and also from the point of view of its efficacy in meeting those needs in the most economical way. The national body of the C.S.M.C. is at present strongly advocating a generalized allowance to all one-parent families which could conceivably be a simpler and less costly system. A similar plan has been recommended by the Finer Commission\(^\text{12}\) in the somewhat different circumstances of the British system of social security. But at the moment we have not the knowledge necessary to improve or re-structure the present Australian programme.

This is a period of rapid change, and insufficiently understood policies can have unintended results. What of the universal rather than the particularist approach to one-parent families whatever their background or salary level? We know from the Poverty Enquiry in Australia, as well as from the Finer Commission

in England, that one-income low-earning two-parent families can be more financially vulnerable than many one-parent families. It may be that an adequate child allowance that is taxable would be better suited to the intention of universal social security than category pensions. But, assuming that the latter are here to stay, a first step would be to sort out the differences between ex-nuptial mothers and their children and other one-parent families. This is implicit in the earlier discussion of in-depth studies of our categories.

There are also questions related to decision-making.

(b) De facto wives may or may not be in a similar position to formerly married women, but single ex-nuptial mothers are not. First, they have a decision to make: that is they have to plan to be a one-parent family. Second, they do not have at any stage the moral support of a male partner, and they probably have considerably weaker extended family links. Even their past friendships can be disrupted by the occurrence of an ex-nuptial birth.

As far as helping ex-nuptial mothers in decision-making is concerned, it is facile to say that there should be a larger network of accessible counselling services. We do not know what kind of counselling has been effective, even using the criterion of "satisfaction" with the decision made. Nor do we know what "accessibility" means. Every ex-nuptial mother who goes to a public hospital (and this would exclude quite a number) is likely to be referred to a social worker. However, if she needs continuing support, or needs to re-think her decision later, she would have to be a skilled user of services to know where to go, or even to feel able to approach an
appropriate person. Some day-care and baby-health centres or community social workers have taken this kind of responsibility, but their experience has not been tapped to consider provision of a wider network of services.

(c) The second point of difference of ex-nuptial from other families is their isolation. The fact of marriage establishes, permanently or temporarily, a connection with two families of origin - the status of being a daughter- or son-in-law is a much clearer one than that of a boy or girl friend. If this status is established before the event that creates the one-parent family, in general the family rights and obligations will be much less ambiguous than where it is not established.

As we have seen, in the great majority of cases these relatively weak links are reinforced by subsequent marriage or the establishment of a two-parent partnership. At this point it is what ex-nuptial mothers do have in common with other mothers that is not sufficiently emphasized - that is the need for marriage and pre-marriage counselling. Both single mothers and divorced partners remarrying have high failure rates. (13) Counselling may or may not help here for we do not know the reasons for this tendency to failure. (14)

(14) W.J. Goode, 1966, "A Sociological Perspective on Marital Dissolution in Sociology of the Family, ed. Michael Anderson, p. 308, says that marriage between 15-19 year olds is about 50% higher for women in older age groups - a fact which is obviously relevant here. There may be other factors common to the single mother and other groups with high breakdown rates which need to be investigated.
(d) Other problems - by no means exclusive to ex-nuptial mothers - which loom large in the group as a whole, were mentioned in Chapter 6. These need further attention, particularly those connected with the accommodation of ex-nuptial mothers.

The old solution of maternity homes for pregnant single women is no longer in much demand and these homes are fast disappearing. However, the relationship between demographic changes, demands for particular services, and community institutions, is complex and there is a great need to understand why this change has come about and whether alternative accommodation is still needed before confinement. (15) The problem goes beyond that of providing cheap and adequate housing. Studies have shown that who the mothers live with - relatives, a male partner - is also crucial, since among other things it affects their mobility and child-care capacity.

c) Ex-nuptial mothers' deterioration in socio-economic status has previously been mentioned. The situation may have changed somewhat with the introduction of the Supporting Mothers' Benefit, nonetheless the interruption of schooling and vocational training for young mothers is a serious matter and it is far from clear that Australian Social Security Department retraining is designed to meet this need. Some careful evaluation of the effectiveness of this retraining for single mothers might be very fruitful.

Briefly then, these are the questions that need further investigation before social policy changes are made to meet the needs of ex-nuptial mothers and their children.

4. An important issue not mentioned in this study concerns the missing figure in the parent-child triangle - the father. This study has followed the matriarchal approach popularized by Bowlby and implicitly accepted by policy makers and the C.S.M.C. Priority has been given to the needs of the child and those claimed by mothers on their behalf. Ex-nuptial fathers have never claimed their rights, and indeed they would not have got very far if they had. It is assumed, rightly or wrongly, that they do not want to do so. Legally their position is an unenviable one - they have the right or obligation to maintain the child, but they do not have the right to be actively involved in its upbringing. The father does not have the options either to approve or to disapprove of the child's adoption by strangers, and the child is permanently lost to him if it remains with the mother who later marries another man and they jointly adopt. Where the outcome of ex-nuptial conception for the father is concerned, there is a wide range of possibilities. The mother cannot but be aware of pregnancy, birth and the continuing existence of the child. Some fathers, however, are excluded even from the knowledge of their fatherhood. Other fathers know but would rather not. Some use the pregnancy as a pretext to force a marriage, or to avoid one. Other fathers may be as moved by and concerned about their prospective parenthood as the mother. Of course, where there is a stable de facto union, the father's
relationship with his child would be similar to that of a married father.

Some ex-nuptial mothers think that additional legal rights may foster increased interest by the father, but there is no evidence whatever on this point. A change in attitudes leading ex-nuptial fathers to press their parental rights could take a long time. In Australia, no research has been done in the area, although there have been a number of overseas studies which have encouraged some agencies to interview putative fathers where possible.

Information in this area would be of great value in the light of changing social attitudes and policy towards the ex-nuptial

family group. Any measures which allowed or encouraged the father to play a positive role in the life of his child would ease the strain of the ex-nuptial situation for the child and possibly for the mother as well. It would also ease the cost to the community at large which has the final responsibility for providing against the disabilities suffered by these mothers and children.

5. Another central issue not so far considered is that of the prevention of ex-nuptial conceptions. This study has taken the fact of ex-nuptial motherhood as a given state, but it is worthwhile drawing attention to the simplistic nature of the ideas that are usually advanced on the subject. Two plans for remedying ex-nuptial conceptions are often mentioned: sex education in schools, and freely available contraceptives and contraceptive advice. With regard to sex education, obviously there are many different kinds of such education. However, very little investigation has been done on their differential effects with regard to ex-nuptial pregnancies, or indeed on the question whether there are any types of sex education correlated with high or low rates of ex-nuptial conception. As far as contraception is concerned, Cutright (17) has shown that, with respect to the U.S., states which provided extensive contraceptive programmes had similar rates of ex-nuptial conceptions to the states where programmes were relatively deficient.

It seems that an investigation of these issues might be more profitable if it were taken one step further back. The first

(16) (contd.) the Unmarried Mother and Her Child; Benjamin Schlesinger, The One Parent Family: Perspectives and Annotated Bibliography, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1969.
question would be what other factors are connected with high or low incidence of extra-marital sexual intercourse? This might be investigated along the lines of Christensen's cross-cultural comparisons. (18) Second, the factors connected with the use or non-use of contraception among the sexually active unmarried might be explored. As far as the first question is concerned, it is known that the prevalence of pre-marital sexual intercourse varies from place to place, from country to country, and from time to time. Thus, it cannot be assumed to be independent of other factors, and it could profitably be investigated. (19) With regard to the second question: some studies have been done on the non-use of


contraception among the sexually active unmarried in Australia, but
the findings have not been conclusive\(^{(20)}\) since the question of why
certain groups used contraception and others did not was not
explored. A rigorous study remains to be done in the area.\(^{(21)}\)

\(^{(20)}\) C. Wood et al, "Unwed Mothers: A Study of 100 Girls in Melbourne,
Victoria", Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology, 6, 1,
April, 1970, pp. 51-5.

\(^{(21)}\) The study of Helen M. Pavlin, A Study of Stress in Pregnancy and
its Implications for Social Work, M.S.W. Thesis, University of
Queensland, 1975, provides much detailed information about motives
for not using contraception by both married and unmarried women.
Pavlin does not, however, differentiate between the two groups.
Conclusions

It is hoped that by now certain tentative answers to
the questions posed in Chapter 1 may have emerged.

1. "The problem of the single mother and her child" has
now been more precisely defined and it has been shown what
distinctions need to be made among the various categories of
ex-nuptial mothers. It has also been indicated what further
research needs to be done for a complete and definitive investi-
gation of the complex issues that constitute "the problem" of
the ex-nuptial mother and her child.

2. The popular stereotype of the single mother has been
subjected to critical analysis. While it is true that some ex-
nuptial mothers are young single women bringing up their children
by themselves (Category C mothers), this is not true of all ex-
nuptial mothers, and in any case the Category C situation is a
relatively transitory stage.

3. While it has not been possible to investigate the
dynamics of the one-parent family, it has been suggested that
this is a question of considerable moment since those Category C
mothers who do not subsequently marry or enter into partnerships,
or who marry and separate, are a small but centrally important group
with special needs.

4. The relationship between ex-nuptial and other one-parent
families has been discussed from various points of view. Although
there are many advantages in considering ex-nuptial families as a species of the general class of one-parent families, there are also significant differences between the two. One crucial difference is that Category C ex-nuptial families have never been originally two-parent families, whereas other one-parent families are, so to speak, two-parent families manqué. This difference has legal and social consequences, and it also probably has psychological consequences both for the ex-nuptial mother and her child.

5. The C.S.M.C. has provided a focus for the discussion in this study. The origins, motivations, achievements and limitations of the C.S.M.C. have been analysed and a "natural history" of this unique and remarkable organisation has been sketched. Whether the advent of the C.S.M.C. happily coincided with the growth of a new social awareness of the problems of the ex-nuptial mother and her child and a lessening of prejudice against "illegitimacy", or whether the C.S.M.C. itself "made history" by directly bringing about these changes - the fact remains that the stigma and legal and economic advantages suffered by ex-nuptial mothers and their children has been considerably alleviated since the founding of this self-help organisation.

In a sense, the C.S.M.C. has been too successful for its own organisational good, for ex-nuptial mothers are no longer seen by the public as an acutely deprived group needing help, nor do the majority of ex-nuptial mothers themselves see their situation
as a rallying-point. As a result, the future of the C.S.M.C. remains unclear and it may be that it will have to assume a new form in order to meet the changes brought about in the ex-nuptial situation largely as a consequence of its own past efforts.

6. As an incidental, but important, aspect of this study, particular attention has been given to indicating the many direct and indirect sources of information and evidence regarding ex-nuptial motherhood, and to discussing how those sources may best be used and interpreted. Special consideration has been given to data relating to the demographic context of the ex-nuptial situation and it has strongly been suggested that further research in this field would contribute most to an understanding of the problems of the various categories of ex-nuptial mothers and their children.
APPENDIX A

EX-Nuptial Births - Statistics
<table>
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<th>Scotland</th>
<th>N.Z.</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Sweden</th>
<th>U.S.A.</th>
<th>Australia</th>
<th>Norway</th>
<th>Belgium</th>
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(a) From a table supplied by Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics (Melbourne).
(b) Half year only.
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<td>12.1</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>50.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>26.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>39.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>(39)*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39.56</td>
<td>(52)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 1971 N.Z. non-Maori figures shown in brackets.

Information from Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics (Melbourne).
New Zealand Statistical Abstract 1974
### TABLE 10*(a)*

Nuptial First Births and Subsequent Births*(b)*

Australia, 1946 to 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Nuptial confinements</th>
<th>Proportion of first to total nuptial confinements (per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First births</td>
<td>Other Births</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Average -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946-50</td>
<td>63,413</td>
<td>109,044</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-55</td>
<td>63,062</td>
<td>128,176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-60</td>
<td>65,695</td>
<td>144,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-65</td>
<td>69,280</td>
<td>147,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966-70</td>
<td>81,103</td>
<td>138,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Total -</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>76,127</td>
<td>133,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>81,341</td>
<td>138,124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>85,650</td>
<td>142,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>88,412</td>
<td>145,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>95,418</td>
<td>152,820</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*a* From Australian Year Book 1973, p. 175.

*b* Excludes particulars of full-blood Aborigines before 1966.
TABLE 11
Australia Ex-nuptial Confinements by Age, Numbers and Rates 1911-1971 *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1911</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>1933</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>1947</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>1954</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>Rate</th>
<th>1971</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>8.82</td>
<td>1561</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>1542</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>1647</td>
<td>6.09</td>
<td>1796</td>
<td>6.67</td>
<td>3364</td>
<td>9.67</td>
<td>6337</td>
<td>13.49</td>
<td>9439</td>
<td>19.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>2715</td>
<td>17.72</td>
<td>2341</td>
<td>15.12</td>
<td>1744</td>
<td>8.89</td>
<td>2537</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>2409</td>
<td>20.26</td>
<td>3455</td>
<td>25.87</td>
<td>4922</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>7793</td>
<td>39.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>1247</td>
<td>15.59</td>
<td>1166</td>
<td>12.97</td>
<td>776</td>
<td>7.89</td>
<td>1435</td>
<td>20.93</td>
<td>1764</td>
<td>32.50</td>
<td>2043</td>
<td>48.50</td>
<td>2321</td>
<td>48.87</td>
<td>3498</td>
<td>58.53</td>
</tr>
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<td>30-34</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>11.53</td>
<td>503</td>
<td>8.59</td>
<td>896</td>
<td>18.01</td>
<td>1133</td>
<td>27.68</td>
<td>1581</td>
<td>46.69</td>
<td>1405</td>
<td>48.34</td>
<td>1801</td>
<td>51.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>9.94</td>
<td>424</td>
<td>9.66</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>6.89</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>12.35</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>17.89</td>
<td>1026</td>
<td>28.73</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>30.43</td>
<td>948</td>
<td>31.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>8.45</td>
<td>339</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>8.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total age group</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.42</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.23</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.13</td>
<td></td>
<td>20.70</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage never married by age 44</td>
<td>19.34</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.32</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.78</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.90</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.45</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Abstract of Table supplied by Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics (Melbourne).
### TABLE 12

Australia - Percentages (a) of Brides Pregnant at Marriage by Age Group 1910-1971 (b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Births</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Births</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Births</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Births</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-19</td>
<td>2276</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>2430</td>
<td>46.1</td>
<td>4099</td>
<td>52.1</td>
<td>3495</td>
<td>36.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>5157</td>
<td>33.8</td>
<td>6068</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>6055</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>5734</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>1878</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>2435</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>1654</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>1834</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>15.8</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>506</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 and over</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not stated</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10021</td>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>11861</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>12574</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>11802</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) The percentages represent, for each age group, the approximate proportion of marriages in which the bride was pregnant. The figures should be regarded as approximations only, for the reasons set out below. There are difficulties in matching the number of pregnant brides with births where the duration of marriage was less than 9 completed months, with the marriages from which they originated.

1. Some of the brides will have had a birthday between the marriage and the birth and will have moved into a higher age group.
2. Marriage figures include brides who died or left Australia; birth figures will include children of overseas marriages.
3. Brides who had miscarriages or stillbirths would be included in the marriage total but not in the birth total.
4. Marriages and births registrations are sometimes delayed into another year.
5. All nuptial first births where duration of marriage is less than nine months have been included. Some may be premature births conceived after marriage. Late births conceived before marriage would not be included.

(b) Abstract of Table supplied by Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics (Melbourne).
### TABLE 13

Australia: Brides Pregnant at Marriage and Ex-nuptial Confinements by Number, Percentage in Total Births, Percentage in Out-of-Wedlock Conceived Births and Rates (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brides pregnant at marriage</td>
<td>10021</td>
<td>9693</td>
<td>11861</td>
<td>10495</td>
<td>12574</td>
<td>12277</td>
<td>11802</td>
<td>14130</td>
<td>12187</td>
<td>12663</td>
<td>13271</td>
<td>16632</td>
<td>18207</td>
<td>21233</td>
<td>21920</td>
<td>23769</td>
<td>25101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent. of total births</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate (b)</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>17.33</td>
<td>16.56</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>28.</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-nuptial births</td>
<td>6669</td>
<td>7074</td>
<td>6602</td>
<td>6463</td>
<td>5935</td>
<td>5239</td>
<td>4775</td>
<td>7263</td>
<td>7324</td>
<td>8027</td>
<td>8537</td>
<td>10987</td>
<td>12269</td>
<td>15531</td>
<td>16830</td>
<td>21367</td>
<td>25629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent. of total births</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S.E.N.B.R.</td>
<td>12.34</td>
<td>10.42</td>
<td>6.83</td>
<td>11.41</td>
<td>14.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Out-of-Wedlock conceived births</td>
<td>16690</td>
<td>16767</td>
<td>18463</td>
<td>16958</td>
<td>18509</td>
<td>17516</td>
<td>16577</td>
<td>21393</td>
<td>19511</td>
<td>20690</td>
<td>21808</td>
<td>27619</td>
<td>30476</td>
<td>36764</td>
<td>38750</td>
<td>45136</td>
<td>50730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent. of total births</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried women between ages 15-44</td>
<td>560359</td>
<td>605266</td>
<td>741193</td>
<td>635781</td>
<td>566600</td>
<td>650413</td>
<td>787019</td>
<td>852965</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total births</td>
<td>116801</td>
<td>122193</td>
<td>13646136198</td>
<td>128399</td>
<td>111269</td>
<td>126347</td>
<td>182384</td>
<td>190591</td>
<td>202256</td>
<td>207577</td>
<td>230326</td>
<td>239986</td>
<td>222854</td>
<td>222731</td>
<td>257516</td>
<td>276362</td>
<td>264969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-nuptial births as a percentage of all out-of-wedlock conceived births</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>O.W.C.B.Rate</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23.6</td>
<td>33.6</td>
<td>36.5</td>
<td>46.8</td>
<td>49.2</td>
<td>59.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Calculated from tables supplied by Australian Bureau of Census and Statistics (Melbourne).

b) Rate as expressed as the number of premaritally conceived births per 1000 unmarried women in the child bearing age between 15-44.
APPENDIX B

AGE SPECIFIC EX-NUPTIAL BIRTHRATE AND THE MARITAL STATUS OF MOTHERS

There is an unavoidable inaccuracy in published ex-nuptial rates which have been calculated on the basis of a population at risk of ex-nuptial pregnancy, which contains all single, widowed and divorced women, but which does not contain any married women, even those who are separated from their husbands. Illsley and Gill\(^1\) see this as evidence of confusion over the concept of ex-nuptiality since it is not clear whether the term "ex-nuptial" refers to the civil status of the child or of the mother.

The Registrar-General for England and Wales estimated that in 1964 37% of mothers of illegitimate children had been married at some stage, and noted that there was a tendency for these mothers to describe their confinements as nuptial ones. (Fuller details are given in the Weir study.\(^2\))

Cutright\(^3\) devotes an appendix to the discussion of the

---

\(^1\) Illsley and Gill, "Changing Trends in Illegitimacy", Social Science and Medicine, 1968, p. 415 et seq.

\(^2\) Sylvia Weir, "A Study of Unmarried Mothers and Their Children in Scotland 1970", Scottish Health Services Studies 13, p. 20 and Appendix C.

effect of including permanently separated women in the denominator of the illegitimacy rate; thus, for example, the included rate was 19 per 1000 lower in 1960, and 15.4 lower in 1968.

Ex-nuptial rates in Australia and New Zealand also ignore the incidence of ex-nuptial confinements among married women.

The rise in the number of births in an age group is a composite of a number of factors affecting both the numerator (ex-nuptial births) and the denominator (all unmarried women in this age group), so that these figures will be inaccurate to an unknown degree. One very probable effect would be greater distortion in the older age groups where many more of the women would be married and would be inclined to register the children as children of their legal husband. Therefore the rise in A.S.E.N.B.R. in younger groups of women may not be as significant as it appears.
APPENDIX C

NEW ZEALAND DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE
STUDY 1975

A study of illegitimate births in New Zealand in 1970 provides a good deal of detailed information about the outcome of ex-nuptial births in that country based on demographic information, and a statutory follow up investigation by social workers of the Department of Social Welfare.

It provides an analysis of a comprehensive set of figures not, as far as it can be ascertained, ever attempted in Australia. Certain advance information was kindly provided for this study by the Chief Research Officer, Dr John Jensen, which is given here and to which reference is made in the text of this study.

Concerning this information Dr Jensen wrote on the 29th May 1975, as follows:

From our 1970 survey of illegitimate births occurring in New Zealand we do have a certain amount of information on the factors associated with various types of placement arrangements made for the children. For the purposes of analysis, the sample of births was divided into four placement groups as follows:

- those placed for adoption (the adoption group)
- those kept by their mother in a non-cohabiting situation (the single group)
- those kept by the mother who was living in a cohabiting situation (the cohabiting group)
- those living in other situations (e.g. foster homes, relatives, institution, etc.) (the miscellaneous group).

This categorisation into placement groups was based on the child's placement situation at the time of the statutory investigation made by social workers of this Department. On average this visit is made some three months after the birth of the child. Thus the placement groups relate to the first permanent placement made after the birth and do not necessarily reflect the eventual placement made for the child. The tables presented in Appendix 1 to this letter show the relationship between the four placement groups and a number of variables which are related to placement. The tables cover all the variables mentioned in your letter with the exception of urban/rural differences.

We have also undertaken a multivariate analysis of the variables associated with the mother's decision to place her child for adoption. The results of this analysis will be reported in the monograph...

Our sample was not a random sample of ex-nuptial births occurring in New Zealand and ways in which it differs from such a sample are examined in the monograph (to be published). The sample used for the analysis was a 50% random sample of 84% of ex-nuptial births occurring during 1970.

The tables below were appended to Dr Jensen's letter.

* These have been re-numbered in order to be consistent with the other tables in this study.
### TABLE 14

Educational Achievement of the Mother by Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Educational Achievement of Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1783)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 15

Occupational Status of the Mother by Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Occupational Status of Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(816)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 16
Age of the Mother by Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Age of the Mother</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less than 20 yrs</td>
<td>20-24 yrs</td>
<td>25 yrs or older</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>30.5%</td>
<td>15.1%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>33.5%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
<td>27.1%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>24.1%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>35.3%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1468)</td>
<td>(1164)</td>
<td>(680)</td>
<td>(133)</td>
<td>(3445)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 17
Race of the Mother by Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Race of the Mother</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>European</td>
<td>Maori</td>
<td>Other Races</td>
<td>Not known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>29.9%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
<td>38.8%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>44.0%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2300)</td>
<td>(897)</td>
<td>(188)</td>
<td>(60)</td>
<td>(3445)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 18
Living Situation of the Mother at the Time of Conception
by the Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Living Situation of the Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabitng</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1306)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 19
Living Situation of the Mother during the Last Two Months
of Pregnancy by the Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Living Situation of the Mother</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With Parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>57.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabitng</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(932)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 20

Moves of the Mother by the Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Movements of the Mother</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Move Move</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moved because of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Another reason or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>18.8% 54.9% 25.2%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>31.2% 29.8% 34.8%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>37.7% 7.0% 27.9%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>12.3% 8.3% 12.1%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% 100% 100% 100% 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1697) (1204) (448) (96) (3445)

### TABLE 21

Marital Status of the Mother at the Time of the Birth by the Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>Marital Status of the Mother</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single Married Married Married Marital Divorced Not known</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Separated Widowed Widowed Widowed Divorced</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>36.0% 11.6% 16.93 16.7%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>32.9% 19.5% 30.0% 16.7%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabiting</td>
<td>19.6% 61.4% 43.1% 26.4%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>11.5% 7.6% 10.0% 40.2%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100% 100% 100% 100% 100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2873) (370) (130) (72) (3445)
TABLE 22

Previous Ex-nuptial Children by the Placement of the Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>No previous children</th>
<th>One previous child</th>
<th>Some previous but number not known and more than one previous child</th>
<th>Not known whether any previous children</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adoption</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
<td>31.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohabitating</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>38.7%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
<td>42.7%</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2451)</td>
<td>(545)</td>
<td>(374)</td>
<td>(75)</td>
<td>(3445)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ESTIMATIONS OF OUTCOME OF EX-NUPTIAL BIRTHS
IN SELECTED STUDIES

I. Marriage or cohabitation rate:

Four follow-up studies of ex-nuptial mothers are examined here in order to estimate the proportion of keeping ex-nuptial mothers (Category C mothers) who are single when confined but who form two-parent partnerships by the time the child is approximately of school age. These studies differ considerably in the composition and size of their samples, the time and place of birth, and in the stage after birth when the mothers were contacted.

Three of these studies show that more than half the mothers in question marry or cohabit. The U.S. study (Sauber) and the two Australian studies (Johns, and Wilson and Smith) explicitly exclude mothers living in de facto relationships when the child was born. The British study (National Children's Bureau) includes only relationships which are considered reasonably stable (i.e. temporary unions are excluded) and this may be the reason why they show a somewhat lower rate of marriage and cohabitation than the Australian studies.
The details of these studies are as follows: (i) Sauber, writing in the U.S., and investigating 333 mothers six months after the birth of their first child in the year 1968, found that 51% of the sample were married, not including de facto relationships. (ii) The National Children's Bureau study in the United Kingdom showed that of a sample of 504 illegitimate children born in 1958, 73% (or 379 children) were in two-parent families by the time they were seven years old. One hundred and sixty of the 504 children were adopted, and 219 were with their mothers and their natural father or step-fathers. Thus of the 344 children who were not adopted 64% were in two-parent homes. (iii) In Victoria Johns found that of the 90 ex-nuptial mothers who kept their children the exact marital status of only 60 was known at the end of the three married or year period of the study. Of these 49 mothers (or 82%) had/entered into a de facto relationship. Of these in turn 33 (or 55%) were apparently successful relationships. However, as 65% of Johns's sample were under the age of 20 when they were confined, and thus about to enter the age group which has the highest marrying rate of all, it is to be expected that their cohabiting rate, even within three years, would be higher than that of more representative samples of ex-nuptial mothers such as those of Sauber in the U.S., and the National Children's Bureau in the United Kingdom. The Johns study

(2) See E. Crellin, M.L. Kellmer Pringle and P. West, Born Illegitimate, p. 58.
(3) N. Johns, The Health of Babies Kept by Their Single Mothers.
(4) See Chapter 6, p. 152.
has the advantage, for our purposes, of having been done in Victoria and fairly recently (1969-72), so that its high rate suggests that at least as many ex-nuptial mothers form two-parent partnerships after the birth of their child in Victoria as they do in the overseas countries which have been mentioned. (iv) Wilson and Smith's study\(^{(5)}\) is of a small sample (38 mothers) and the marital situation of the mothers was known only 15 months after birth. However, as 14 (or 37%) of these ex-nuptial mothers were in two-parent situations at this stage, it provides corroborative evidence for Johns's study. Wilson and Smith also note that five of these mothers had separated from their partners, and that four of those remaining with their partners described themselves as "unhappy". (In all of the above-mentioned studies there seems to have been a significant breakdown rate. But the effect of the marriage, and probably of the de facto relationship as well, would be to remove the mothers from the unmarried category of benefit recipients. Some of them, of course, would probably have re-applied under the deserted wife or deserted de facto category at a later date.)

These figures do not allow an accurate calculation of the percentage of two-parent partnerships formed by the time an ex-nuptial child enters school. However, a round figure of 60% does not seem an unreasonable estimate, based on the evidence that is available. It will be assumed in this study then that 60% of the total ex-nuptial mothers who keep their children in Victoria will be living with those

children in two-parent partnerships by the time the child is between
five and six years old. This will include the 12% of known legitima-
tions (6) and the 8% of children who are adopted by their natural
mothers when they marry men who are not the natural fathers of the
children. (7) The remaining 40% will be drawn from among the
children not known to be legitimated or adopted by their mothers. (8)
The following table sets out these figures for purposes of comparison:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>No. in Sample</th>
<th>Percentage in Two-Parent Homes</th>
<th>Time after birth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sauber</td>
<td>1968</td>
<td>New York, U.S.</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Children's Bureau</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>7 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johns</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson &amp; Smith</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>N.S.W.</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Calculation of children not adopted and not in the care of
their mothers:

There is no doubt that there are a number of children who
have been kept for a time by single mothers but who have not sub-

(6) Shown in Table 5, p. 140.
(7) These figures are available in the Annual Reports of the Social
Welfare Department. This percentage for 1973-74 is shown in the
Annual Report for 1974, p. 75.
(8) See Table 5, p. 140, note (b).
sequently remained permanently in their mother's care. It is very difficult to find out what proportion of the total number of ex-nuptial births would have this outcome. As far as government records are concerned they are an elusive group. Some children in institutions would be in this category, but many would not as they may have been left in the care of grandparents, other relatives, or even chance acquaintances, about whom no records exist.

These children do not appear in great numbers in follow-up studies of single mothers in Australia. Johns mentions six cases out of the 90 in her sample three years after birth. Wilson and Smith do not mention any in their sample of 38 after 15 months. In 1961 Tierney(9) found that in the case of children over three years of age less than 20% of children in care were born out of wedlock. Tierney claimed that there was little difference between privately placed children and state wards apart from the fact that fewer children born of de facto marriages are privately placed. He quoted the total number of children in institutions as being 6918, so if 20 per cent are ex-nuptial this would include nearly 1400 ex-nuptial children.

No investigation of the population of children in care has been done in Victoria since Tierney's study. However, in 1972 21% of all children admitted to Allambie were ex-nuptial children.

(165 out of 344) (10) and a pilot study of wards of state in Victoria in 1974 (11) showed that 16% were ex-nuptial. During 1974 there were approximately 2000 wards in approved children's homes, so this would mean that about 320 children of all ages were in care or only about 25% of the number who were in care in 1961.

What is quite unknown is the number of ex-nuptial children for whom informal arrangements have been made, namely, those left with friends or relatives, but it seems unlikely that this would be as high as shown by the N.Z. study (See Appendix C) which mentions a figure of 11% for those living in foster homes or with relatives or in institutions, or whose whereabouts is unknown.

For the purposes of this study, the number of ex-nuptial children who would not be adopted nor still in the care of their natural mother will be assumed to be less than 1%. This is in accordance with the Social Welfare Department estimate mentioned above.

(10) Figures supplied by Miss E. Bennett, Director of Family Welfare, Victorian Social Welfare Department.
(11) Social Welfare Department Pilot Study on Children Admitted to Care in 1974, Table 12, p. 34.
APPENDIX E

ABSTRACTS OF INFORMATION FROM RECORDS OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT (VICTORIA); THE AUSTRALIAN SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT (MELBOURNE); THE ROYAL WOMEN'S HOSPITAL (MELBOURNE); THE MERCY PUBLIC MATERNITY HOSPITAL (MELBOURNE)

TABLE 24(a)

Ex-nuptial Mothers Assisted by the Social Welfare Department of Victoria (Unmarried Mother Category)(b)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date eligible</th>
<th>No. cancelled</th>
<th>No. receiving benefits</th>
<th>Percent. full benefit</th>
<th>Percent. 22</th>
<th>Percent. one child</th>
<th>Average duration of benefit in months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 1973</td>
<td>5900</td>
<td>986</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1792</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1974</td>
<td>N.K.</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>75.5</td>
<td>98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Deserted De Facto Category)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1973</td>
<td>N.K.</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>46.5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>809</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1974</td>
<td>N.K.</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24.3(d)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Taken from Government of Victoria, Social Welfare Department, Assistance Payments, Statistical Tables, 30.6.71-30.6.72, 1.7.73-30.6.74. See Chapter 6, p.146.

(b) See Table 5, Chapter 6, p. 140, Category C.

(c) Not Known. There is no means of estimating the probable number of de facto relations which break down.

(d) Figures for deserted de facto wives are not very reliable, as full details are only given for 60 per cent of this group.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Transfer to A.S.S.D.</th>
<th>Marriage No Co-operation</th>
<th>Return to Work</th>
<th>Move out of State</th>
<th>Increased Maintenance</th>
<th>No Maintenance Action taken</th>
<th>Child Adopted</th>
<th>Child Made Ward</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Single Mothers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>68.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deserted De Facto Wife</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Cases</td>
<td>Percentage on Full Benefit</td>
<td>Percentage receiving Maintenance</td>
<td>Percentage with 1 Child only</td>
<td>Percentage under 22</td>
<td>Percentage in workforce</td>
<td>Place of Birth</td>
<td>Accommodation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1974 3047</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 1974 3375</td>
<td>93.4</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>83.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unmarried Mothers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>De Facto Wives</th>
<th>Percentage on Full Benefit</th>
<th>Percentage receiving Maintenance</th>
<th>Percentage with 1 Child only</th>
<th>Percentage under 22</th>
<th>Percentage in workforce</th>
<th>Place of Birth</th>
<th>Accommodation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 16, 1974628</td>
<td>83.12</td>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 30, 1974752</td>
<td>87.37</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41.8</td>
<td>9.04</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Taken from A.S.S.D. Pension Masterfile Special Research Reports 16.4.74, 13.9.74, 12.4.75.
TABLE 27
Royal Women's Hospital Medical Social Work Department Records (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ex-nuptial confinements</th>
<th>Percentage of total ex-nuptial confinements in Victoria</th>
<th>Adoptions arranged</th>
<th>Percentage adopted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>1398</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1506</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>382</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>1463</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>27.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>1568</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>1198</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Kindly made available by Miss K. Lancaster, Senior Social Worker, with the permission of Dr. J. Trevaks, Medical Superintendent.
TABLE 28
Mercy Public Maternity Hospital Ex-nuptial Confinements 1974 (a)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Kept</th>
<th>Adopted</th>
<th>Percentage adopted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1971-72</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-73</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973-74</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Made available by Sister Kathleen Grant, Senior Medical Social Worker.
**APPENDIX F**

**DETAILS OF AUSTRALIAN RESEARCH STUDIES CONCERNING EX-MUPTIAL MOTHERS**

**TABLE 29**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Aim</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Size of Sample</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type of Contact</th>
<th>Implications</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brotherton, P. &amp; Meredith, E.</td>
<td>&quot;Some Characteristics of a Sample of Single Mothers&quot; (Journal article).</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>To differentiate Melbourne 124 entitate 1) between keeping &amp; adopting single mothers 2) between single mothers who had been in maternity homes &amp; those who had not.</td>
<td>Melbourne</td>
<td>Patients of Quest-Royal Women's Innomia Hospital admin-known to be married single but by agency not de facto social between Aug. workers. &amp; Sept. 1971, having contact with four Melbourne social work agencies.</td>
<td>Keepers for very older, less educated, more often Protestant. Adoption decision made in pregnancy. Limitation of sample to women seeking more social work often seeking services social workers so that coping single mothers, those from rural areas &amp; those who used private services, tend to be excluded. High proportion of Catholic adopters may be due to proximity of Catholic single mothers' maternity homes to hospital.</td>
<td>Very valuable study providing corroboratation of overseas trends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garnot-Smith, C.</td>
<td>&quot;The Single Mother&quot; (M.S.W. Thesis)</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>To examine current trends.</td>
<td>Perth</td>
<td>Study of 22 out of 30 patients contacted in an ante-natal clinic at a public hospital &amp; months before birth.</td>
<td>One in-depth interview.</td>
<td>Some corroboration of overseas studies concerning background &amp; single different between adopting &amp; keeping ex-muptial mothers.</td>
<td>Broad focus of enquiry, &amp; limitations of sample size &amp; representativeness. Contact meant that findings were very generalized, but on the whole they provide useful confirmation of other Australian studies.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Size of sample</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Type of contact</td>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healy, J.</td>
<td>The Decision Making of Single Mothers: An Important Choice-Situation in Life (B.A. Honors. Thesis in Psychology)</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Investigate the interaction of multi-variable variables of decision to keep ex-nuptial child by mother.</td>
<td>Melbourne 67</td>
<td>1) Biographical and psychological, related to the conceptualization and evaluation of social choices; 2) G.P.I. test administration.</td>
<td>Single mothers from two Melbourne maternity homes.</td>
<td>Neither psychological nor sociological variables correlated significantly with decision to keep. But two personal variables did: a) help anticipated from parents, noted. The author also notes that this objective approach may not be an adequate investigation of the decision phenomenon.</td>
<td>An outstanding study of key importance, economically designed and presented with a precise psychological focus. Although there is little consideration of sample representativeness, the small size and consequent lack of generalizability is noted.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healy, J.</td>
<td>As above Stage 2.</td>
<td>1973</td>
<td>To follow leads of above.</td>
<td>As above 57</td>
<td>Taken from two maternity hospitals (i.e., representative of wider population).</td>
<td>Self-reporting questionnaire - &quot;loss&quot; self-image, and workers' reports on the &quot;best interests&quot; of mother and child.</td>
<td>Keepers tended to have a negative or &quot;loser&quot; self-image, and inflexible attitudes.</td>
<td>The writer concludes that further investigation between personal constructs and important decisions in life would be justified on the basis of the study. The value of an in-depth investigation of this nature is excellently illustrated.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiely, R.</td>
<td>Social Attitudes to Single Mothers (B.A.Hons. Thesis)</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>To document Melbourne 7 Single mothers recorded in touch with C.S.M.C.</td>
<td>Melbourne 7</td>
<td>Single mothers recorded in touch with C.S.M.C.</td>
<td>Interview Exploratory study suggested that more systematic study would be justified.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Size of sample</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Type of contact</td>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kiely, R.</td>
<td>Unnamed study (M.A. Thesis in preparation)</td>
<td>1974-75</td>
<td>To Melb. examine social &amp; personal situation of single mothers in Melbourne.</td>
<td></td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Random sample of mothers on C.S.M.C. circulating list &amp; matched married sample.</td>
<td>Self-administered detailed &amp; extensive questionnaire on many social &amp; personal aspects of single mothers experience.</td>
<td>Provides corroborative evidence of other studies on the personal &amp; social needs of single mothers for a loving partnership &amp; financial security. It also illustrates the more frequent occurrence of a disrupted family background among the single mothers in the sample, than among the married controls.</td>
<td>Although this study is not yet completed, its preliminary findings have provided a wide range of information not otherwise available. It is, however, restricted to single mothers who have been in contact with C.S.M.C. &amp; includes very few of these mothers who have subsequently formed two-parent partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts, J.</td>
<td>&quot;The Un-... Who Keeps Her Child&quot; (Journal article)</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>To Sydney investigate needs of single mothers who keep their children.</td>
<td></td>
<td>133</td>
<td>Keeping ex-nuptial mothers from three public hospitals &amp; one hostel for unmarried mothers.</td>
<td>Social work contacts.</td>
<td>Main needs as seen by social workers were described as financial security, day care, accommodation, support &amp; counselling.</td>
<td>No controlled follow up of sample, but the wide experience of writer in the field and her perceptive observation of trends makes this a useful survey of the 1969 scene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannugan, M. &amp; Wood, M.</td>
<td>A Study of 100 Girls in Melbourne, Victoria&quot; (Journal article)</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>To Melb. investigate certain factors associated with illegitimate birth.</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Consecutive group booking for confinement at Queen Victoria Hospital, Melbourne.</td>
<td>2 x 1 hour interviews.</td>
<td>Younger group than total ex-nuptial mother population, 97% primiparae. Over 50% had discussed marriage before intercourse; 78% had knowledge of possible consequences of pre-marital intercourse.</td>
<td>Representativeness of group unknown; no control group. Study of descriptive value only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shannugan, N. &amp; Meredith, E.</td>
<td>&quot;The Risk of Pre-marital Conception&quot; (Journal article)</td>
<td>1969</td>
<td>To Melb. determine number of women at risk of pre-marital pregnancy in a lower socio-economic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td>200</td>
<td>English-speaking women delivered at Queen Victoria Hospital.</td>
<td>Self-administered questionnaire.</td>
<td>Pre-marital coitus took place in 70% of cases, mostly between engaged couples 60% of whom did not use contraception.</td>
<td>Does not directly bear on risk of ex-nuptial birth. It seems likely that most women in this group who risked pre-marital conception did so in the context of probable future marriage rather than ex-nuptial birth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood, C.</td>
<td>&quot;Birth Control N., MacKenzie, Lower Baron, M., Socio-Lewis, E. economic Group in Melbourne&quot; (Journal article)</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>To Melb. investigate extent of use and non-use of contraception.</td>
<td></td>
<td>209</td>
<td>Women recently confined in Queen Victoria Hospital.</td>
<td>Questionnaire filled in by interviewer on use of and views on contraception.</td>
<td>75% had some knowledge of birth control; 64% had used some form of it; 10% of total had not used it because of ignorance of contraceptive methods.</td>
<td>It seems likely from this study that lack of knowledge of contraception is less often a reason for non-use than other reasons among the lower socio-economic class of women investigated. There is no indication whether these women included unmarried as well as married women. It is hard to justify the conclusion that education in family planning will necessarily increase the use of contraception on the evidence of this study, as its availability, and the effect of availability on use, is not investigated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Aim</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Size of sample</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Type of contact</td>
<td>Implications</td>
<td>Remarks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wilson, J. &amp; Smith, B.</td>
<td>&quot;They Kept 1974 To investigate and adjustment of unmarried mothers who could be contacted, &amp; who had been confined during July &amp; August 1971 at the Royal Hospital for Women, Sydney.</td>
<td>1974</td>
<td>Their Babies: A Follow-up Study of 38 Unmarried Mothers, 15 Months After Confinement</td>
<td>Sydney</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38 out of 47 ex-nuptial mothers who could be contacted, &amp; who had been confined during July &amp; August 1971 at the Royal Hospital for Women, Sydney.</td>
<td>One interview by a social worker.</td>
<td>Generally the child and the mother were doing well except in personal relationships with men.</td>
<td>Small sample without control group, some useful corroboration of other studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Focus</td>
<td>Source</td>
<td>Implications</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Paper)</td>
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<td>astrology of ex-nuptial mothers.</td>
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<td>(Monograph)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sackville, R;</td>
<td>&quot;The Disabilities of Children in Australia: A Preliminary Analysis&quot;</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>All States.</td>
<td>Investigation of law relating to illegitimacy.</td>
<td>Common Law, Case Law and Legislation.</td>
<td>Although the most recent Status of Children’s Acts in several States have improved the situation since these articles were written, they provide a valuable source of documentation on legal issues and dilemmas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lanteri, A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Journal article in Two Parts)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Report on Deserted Wives</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Detailed investigation of social circumstances of fatherless families including those of ex-nuptial mothers.</td>
<td>Welfare Legislation; Australian literature on subject; Housing Authorities; Agency submissions; Magistrates Courts records; Census figures; Income Tax records; Education Authorities; Health Authorities.</td>
<td>Extreme and continuing emotional and material needs not being met by community provisions.</td>
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<td>Australian</td>
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<td>Council of</td>
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<td>Social Services.</td>
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APPENDIX G

PUBLIC VIEWS ON EX-NUPTIAL MOTHERS:
ILLUSTRATIONS FROM
MEDIA REPORTS,
HANSARD, ETC.

**Mamie on Monday**

**Concern now for the fate of unmarried mothers**

WHAT happens to the single mother? What happens to the baby? What are their problems?

At the Australian Perinatal Association's conference in Canberra Dr. Nan Johns today spoke about these problems.

Dr. Johns, a research fellow at Melbourne University's department of paediatrics at the Royal Children's Hospital, told the conference about a survey carried out on 90 single women and their babies. This survey is the first of its kind in Australia.

The women chosen to participate in the survey gave birth at the Royal Women's Hospital. Forty per cent of all Victorian caesarean births occur at that hospital.

The children of these women do not represent a cross-section of the caesarean children of the community, but are representative of that group which normally would be in a large maternity hospital.

A research sample from the whole year around was taken—one in four of all babies kept by their single mothers.

Until five years ago research was concentrated for the history of the mother and why the mother kept the baby.

Now, however, there is world-wide increase in concern for the fate of the mother and the baby.

Dr. Johns said that Danish and Scandinavian people generally accept caesarean births quite naturally as a community problem and their welfare system reflects this.

"In Denmark," he said, "the father is required by law to support the baby until its education is completed, and child care is provided.

"To enable a comparison to be made, "control" groups of married women and children and children of married women of the same socio-economic group as the single mothers were selected.

"Comparing the girls keeping their babies with the "control" group, we found the single mothers had left school earlier, had had more jobs, had poorer health and had lost either their mother or father.

"These measurable factors are only part of the story. Nonetheless, it would seem that viewed from a physical and economic standpoint, the girls who kept their babies were those least well-equipped to do so." The pregnancies, confinement and delivery of the single girls were the same as the control groups. Contrary to popular belief there were no more premature births among the single girls than among the others.

"The majority of single mothers were teenagers and had been "going steady." None of them had used effective birth control measures regularly.

"Sixty-seven percent of the single women who kept their babies could not give the baby adequate care because it was "mine." Forty-five percent gave the children for adoption because it was "best for the baby."

Dr. Johns said the girls "were not interested in their babies" in his "best interest" showed maturity of thought.

"I went to see him this afternoon so it would be a real person I would be meeting, not a sort of vision. He was lively, I will go and see him again before I leave, but I am still sad in my heart that I am doing the right thing." The first year of the girls keeping their babies was characterized by relief that a decision had been made, followed by financial insecurity in many cases.

"In 1969 there was no single mother's pension. Girls received a six-week benefit (for a week in the hospital) that could be extended to six months if the girl was breast-feeding the baby with medical approval.

"The second year appeared least favorable, with a greater number of the single mothers' children presenting emotional problems. The most striking of these was a great unwillingness to be separated from the mother."

After three years, 34 of the women had married. 18 gave the baby to the father of the child. Six had given up. Six had since separated.

"Fourteen are living with their husbands. Twenty-three are single. Thirty-four have had 44 more babies. Of these, 34 were born in a new marriage. Single girls have had eight more babies.

"Twelve are living on their own earnings, seven are getting the single mothers' pension and four are supported by their own families."

"Only two of the single mothers made full use of the government's creches in the first year. The real need for their babies themselves or had their neighbor or relatives care for them.

"The weight of the single women's babies and the babies in the control group started off equal. At the end of three years the adopted babies were significantly heavier than single mothers' babies or the babies of the married control group."

"Because of conditions there is a threat when a baby is adopted, the adopted baby now belongs to a potentially and socially secure group in society," Dr. Johns said.

The adopted babies had less problems than the other babies.

"The saddest problems were the problems of the single girls living alone—inefficiency and boredom."

"The problems of the single girl keeping her baby can be classed as immediate and long term. A single mother put the matter in the inital when she said she needed a more regular income and someone who cares.

"An interesting development in the past few years is the formation of the Council for Single Mothers, a self-help movement initiated by single mothers."

"But before any sort of organization should be encouraged and supported."

"Babies kept by their single mothers have not fared worse than those of adoptive parents. From this generally disadvantaged section of the community, they who have fared less well, however, than the more privileged adopted babies."

"But side by side with these factors lie the "intangibles," many of which cannot be measured in a study covering only the first three years of life."

"For example— the security of knowing one's own mother and not being to dream, a person which adopted children may do later in life."

"Born illegitimate is still born disadvantaged but may be disadvantaged than we might have thought 10 years ago."

"I may be wrong — there are no clearcut answers."

Mamie Smith
Ex-nuptial Births

(Question No. 5713)

Mr Hayden asked the Minister for Social Services, upon notice:

(1) How many ex-nuptial births were there in each State during each of the last 5 years.

(2) How many of the children concerned were (a) adopted out, (b) kept in institutions and (c) kept by the mother during each of the last 2 years for which figures are available.

(3) Are any estimates available of how many mothers who keep their children (a) subsequently marry the father, (b) subsequently wed a person other than the father and (c) remain unmarried.

(4) What payments have been made to the States under the States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act since its introduction and is it able to estimate the proportion of this amount which is paid to single mothers with children.

(5) What would be the estimated cost to the Commonwealth if payments to a single mother with children were taken over from the States and paid at the rate which applies to Class A widows under the Social Services Act.

(6) Has he any information relating to the proportion of single mothers with children who receive (a) partial and (b) full benefits under relevant State legislation.

(7) Can he ascertain the average length of time for which single mothers with children receive allowances.

Mr Wentworth—The answer to the honourable member's question is as follows:

The Commonwealth Statistician has supplied the following information in reply to parts (1) to (3) of the honourable member's question:

(1) Ex-nuptial live births registered in each State and Territory of Australia during the years 1966 to 1970 are shown in the table below:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>6,035</td>
<td>3,378</td>
<td>3,232</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>1,761</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>16,850</td>
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<tr>
<td>1967</td>
<td>6,500</td>
<td>3,409</td>
<td>3,525</td>
<td>1,375</td>
<td>1,944</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>17,734</td>
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<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>6,622</td>
<td>4,166</td>
<td>3,756</td>
<td>1,558</td>
<td>2,014</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>19,171</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>6,860</td>
<td>4,098</td>
<td>3,825</td>
<td>1,508</td>
<td>2,221</td>
<td>647</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>19,585</td>
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<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>7,455</td>
<td>4,420</td>
<td>4,251</td>
<td>1,715</td>
<td>2,316</td>
<td>650</td>
<td>426</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>21,367</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Where a child is born to Aboriginal parents who were tribally married, the child is classified as nuptial. However, the high incidence of ex-nuptial births in the Northern Territory is due in part to difficulties in identifying tribally married Aboriginal parents.

(2) The Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics does not have detailed statistics available on the situation of illegitimate children. The New South Wales Department of Child Welfare, as co-ordinator for Australian child welfare estimates, is able to provide the following information on the number of illegitimate children adopted in the 12 months ending June 1971. There is no linkage between these adoptions, which can occur at any age, and the number of ex-nuptial births over the past 5 years.

ADOPTION ORDERS FOR ILLEGITIMATE CHILDREN FINALISED, 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State or Territory</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,313</td>
<td>2,813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>884</td>
<td>706</td>
<td>1,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>1,314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>365</td>
<td>748</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasmania</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Territory</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) (b), (2) (c) and (3) Appropriate statistics are not available.

(4) to (7) Payments for which reimbursement may be claimed from the Commonwealth under the States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act are a State Government responsibility. Detailed statistics are not maintained by the State authorities and accordingly the information from which to provide answers to the honourable member's questions is not available.

The following information, however, is available from the financial records of my Department:

Payments under the States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1968-69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969-70</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970-71</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971-72 (to 30.4.72)</td>
<td>4,012,181</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1967-68: 200,732
1968-69: 1,430,262
1969-70: 1,852,133
1970-71: 3,091,218
1971-72: 4,012,181
In regard to recent discussions on illegitimacy laws, I would like to move that removing the word illegitimate be held in abeyance until the subject has been looked at by the whole of the organisation and the feelings of all girls concerned can be assessed. It would seem that there is a general feeling that there is no objection to this removal of the word from the statute books; however, I, for one, at this stage would oppose it.

The law, as I see it at the moment, is such that it gives sole control over the rights of the child without any outside interference from any person, including the father of the child, to the mother. This, I feel, as long as the mother is capable, means that there is a much greater chance of stability in the upbringing of the child. While I recognise that one of the aims of the Council is in fact to encourage the father of the child to take an interest, I still feel that as things stand at present, good protection in law is given to the mother in her responsibility. If the law is changed, what exactly would it mean?

Would it mean: That we have to give the fathers the same rights that they are at present given in the case of separation or divorce? This would suggest to me the creation of an unstabilised conflict situation for the child to be brought up in. Perhaps with demands for a six month sharing or perhaps occasional weekends or maybe occasional daily visits and the resultant confusion. There is the strong possibility of the development of inconsistent relationships being brought into existence which would add to the confusion in the child's mind.

Would it mean: In the case of marriage, that if the father gets married and establishes a home he could then apply for permanent custody of the child and use his married state as evidence that he is more suitable than the unmarried girl to bring up this child. If the girl gets married,
then there is a strong chance of increasing the conflict within the child. Mum is married to one man, but this other man is my father, especially if the father is not the most desirable of images.

These are only a couple of questions that seem important to me to be answered before any move is made within the legal sphere. I would, at the moment, question what the likely benefits of the child are to be if the word is removed.

Having the name of the father on the birth certificate does not relieve the mother of the responsibility of informing the child of the nature of its birth and coping with any possible reaction. Nor does having the father acknowledge the child in law mean that he will of necessity make sure that the child is not excluded from any will. That, of course, if many of the girls are likely to have children that are fathered by future millionaires.

Before we launch into this effort, which I claim is not as important as an organised effort to develop a good and efficient welfare service, I would like to see the arguments for and against well circulated within the area groups and among the girls so that a true reasoned approach can be assessed.

I have recently been assured that this legislation can be done without giving the father rights; however I do remember being at a discussion at which it came to light that the father must be given some rights and that single mothers must decide what rights would be acceptable to them.

My suggestion is that area groups must take this topic for discussion. Every girl should be given a chance to consider her position and that of her child before expressing an opinion and action being taken.

Jean Finan
Single girls 'use babies as income'  

**UNMARRIED** mothers are keeping their babies so they can continue receiving money from the Federal Government.

A consultant paediatrician at Sydney's Royal North Shore Hospital, Dr Clair Isbister, made this claim yesterday.

Dr Isbister said she recently visited a country hospital where two unmarried girls were keeping their babies because of the added income.

**NO ONUS**

She told the 26th biennial conference of the Australian Council of Catholic Women: "Our Federal Government has recently indicated that fathers appear to be unnecessary except as providers of money which the Government now does for unmarried mothers as young as 15 and 16.

"These girls have no obligation to learn child care so we have them rearing fatherless children in increasing numbers."

They had no knowledge of child care — "they can't even look after themselves, much less a child" — yet had more money than they had ever earned she said.

"You and I are paying for this, yet married women accepting their responsibilities and making homes for their families cannot receive this allowance," she said.

Both the Government and Opposition had promised more child day-care centres to allow more women to join the work force.

Dr Isbister said she was sure that this form of child rearing was extremely hazardous.

"We cannot afford to let the nuclear type family break down to this.

"There will be plenty of women trying to escape their responsibilities, demanding child-minding facilities and it is up to us to demand the type of facilities best suited to good families, not bad."
5. Two replies to Dr. Isbister.


The Editor,
The Australian,
32 Walsh Street,
Melbourne, 3000.

Dear Sir,

In an article 19/9, The Australian (Single Mothers Use Babies as Income) Dr. Claire Isbister claimed that she had visited a country hospital where 2 unmarried girls were keeping their babies because of the added income.

How different it sounds to say that they are not able to keep their children because of the added income.

They now have a choice.

Dr. Isbister is a paediatrician. I wonder if her prejudices lead her to treat the children of the single mothers any differently from any other child. And if not, why does she have the continuing desire to select the single mother as the recipient of her comments on social welfare benefits. What about the deserted mothers, the widowed mothers, the deserted father etc., as an educated professional person she could help the concerned people (Government Social Welfare Agencies etc.) try and solve some of the problems of the single parent family - merely casting slurs seems such a waste of talent and effort.

Yours sincerely,

Kate Behan,
Public Relations Officer.
The Editor,
The Age,
Spencer Street,
MELBOURNE.

Dear Sir,

The Council for the Single Mother and Her Child (Victoria) has noted with regret that well-known consultant paediatrician, Dr. Claire Isbister has again attacked single mothers.

We find it very sad that a woman of Dr. Isbister's undoubted intelligence and eminence should apparently have a "blind spot" about those women in the community who happen to remain single when they have children.

She appears not to be aware of up-to-date research in England, and at Melbourne's Queen Victoria Hospital, which indicated that there is no identifiable "type" or rather, stereotype, of single mother.

Dr. Isbister expresses concern about the lack of knowledge of child-care among single mothers, and of course she is right. The same can also be said of most married mothers - unless they happen to be qualified paediatricians, infant welfare sisters, or mothercraft nurses.

Dr. Isbister also refers to mothers who "can't even look after themselves, much less a child", and again we must say that not only some single mothers, but many married mothers can be described thus.

Single mothers are perhaps more aware than married mothers, because they have formed an organization which will help them to help themselves, to increase their knowledge of child care through contact with experts, and to tide them over the occasional difficulty with practical help.

So long as people like Dr. Isbister continue to stress that the single mother is "abnormal", and refuse to accept her as just another member of society, the single mother will find it harder to bring up her child with love, care, and happiness.

Punishment and condemnation of single mothers and their children appears to have no effect on illegitimacy birth rates, and certainly seems unjustifiable in genuinely Christian women.

If women of talent devoted more energy to the prevention of unwanted pregnancies through the promotion of family planning and sex education (including education in human relationships), they would meet with little opposition from the community at large. They would certainly meet with none from this Council.

Yours sincerely,

Jo. Murray

Accommodation Officer
Minister has doubts on pension

CANBERRA. — The Federal pension for single mothers could make many young women permanently dependent on welfare payments, the Minister for Social Security, Senator Guilfoyle, said yesterday.

Senator Guilfoyle said she was concerned that payments under the supporting mothers' scheme introduced by Labor had grown from about $70 million last year to $125 million this financial year.

She has asked for a report from her department on the programme.

Senator Guilfoyle said she accepted the need for a single girl with a young child to receive support. "But I question whether, if a woman chose not to get married, she should be able to receive support for any number of children until they are 16," she said.

Senator Guilfoyle said she would like to see more emphasis on training single mothers to re-enter the workforce.

The long term effect of the supporting mothers' programme could be to create dependency — when other programmes were trying to make women more independent and freer to enter the economic life of the community.

Senator Guilfoyle said males should also accept their responsibility of providing for their children.

She was concerned that the single mothers' scheme could cut across this.
Members of the Council for the Single Mother and Her Child will meet the
Minister for Social Security, Senator Guilfoyle, tomorrow to put forward their
case for retention of the present supporting mother’s benefits. BELOW, a single
mother voices the fears of many women in a similar position that they and their
children will be among the victims of the Federal Government’s economy drive.

Single mother puts her case

I am frightened by the article in “The Age” 23.1.76
quoting the Minister for Social Security, Senator M.
Guilfoyle as considering making economies in the
Supporting Mothers’
scheme.

I am a single mother with
a child aged two. Already
I live a life that the major-
ity of modern women
would not find acceptable. I
carry the responsibility of
supplying my child with a
suitable home, food, electricity, gas, cloth-
ing and transport. How
much can you save for even
a small emergency?

Underlying the financial
difficulties is the problem of
isolation and loneliness
which further saps the
strength and morale of the
single mother. Providing a
decent home and care
is a twenty-four hour a day job, leaving little time for
leisure activities if the burden is carried by one. Yet
the single mother is more
in need of social contacts
than her married counterpart. It is difficult to
find or afford suitable
child-minders. Entertainment is
expensive and the trappings
to mix socially are
costly. Finally there is the stigma which still clings to
the single mother limiting
her contacts to those who
accept her situation

Yet single mothers
manage. Over the past year as
the pension has improved,
it has become clear that
more adequate single
mothers are no longer de
pendent on the support of
emergency accommodation
and social work services.

They can effectively handle
their own financial and ac-
commodation problems.

Our children are already
deprieved of a father. Is the
Australian public going to allow this vulnerable minor-
ity of children to be further
deprieved of a mother as
she struggles to maintain a
home and a decent standard
of living?

Mr. Fraser stated he
would protect the interests
of all sectors of the com-
munity. I can only pray he
does so.

June P. Chomley (Black-
burn).
Single mothers are in for a shock if a reported cost-cutting suggestion by the Minister for Social Security, Senator Guilfoyle, is adopted.

According to what I can only describe as "an impeccable source", Senator Guilfoyle had asked the Social Security Department to examine the possibility of work means-testing single mothers when their children turn six.

They would have to prove they could not go out to work before they would receive the supporting mothers' benefit.

This would appear to support a strong rumor in Canberra that Senator Guilfoyle had ordered a cut of $20 million a year in the supporting mothers' benefits.

The scheme, introduced by Labor, cost $123 million this financial year. But in Melbourne yesterday, the Council for the Single Mother and Her Child reported that after "a frank and open exchange of views" with four CSMC representatives, Senator Guilfoyle had promised that the benefits would not be cut.

The CSMC had sought the interview to discuss recent statements by Senator Guilfoyle which appeared to be critical of single mothers who decided to apply for the benefits so they could stay home to rear their children.

Senator Guilfoyle's reassurance to the CSMC seems more in line with the content of her maiden speech in the Senate during the Budget debate of 1971-72 than with her quoted remarks about single mothers in recent weeks and the unofficial news circulating in Canberra.

In her maiden speech, Senator Guilfoyle said:

"If government leads to enrich the lives of its people, and if government recogonises that it has the powers which
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