

Not the retiring sort



New research into the intentions and aspirations
of New Zealand Baby Boomers
as the first of this generational cohort
approach traditional retirement age

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Acknowledgements

The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009, on which this report is based, is a comparative study, based substantially on the Boomer Dreams Study 2006, conducted by respected US social researchers, The Futures Company (formerly known as Yankelovich Inc.), and reported in the book "Generation Ageless" by J Walker Smith and Ann Clurman (2007). Permission to replicate and compare large parts of the US study is gratefully acknowledged.

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Abstract

Current social policy convention in New Zealand forecasts a future where the nation's million-strong baby boomer cohort will retire at 65, stressing the superannuation and healthcare resources of the country to (some predict) breaking point and leaving behind a skills gap that will reduce the productivity of the workforce and slow economic growth. These forecasts are premised on the idea that baby boomers want to retire at 65 and that their future behaviour can be reliably predicted based on the behaviour of the current population of over-65 year olds. Although widely adopted, these assumptions have no research base.

This report provides research evidence that these two key assumptions are inaccurate and misleading, by asking baby boomers themselves.

The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 is a comprehensive online attitudinal study of 1,162 New Zealand baby boomers born between 1946 and 1964. It is the first behavioural research of its type undertaken in New Zealand and is compared with the findings with the Boomer Dreams Study 2006, conducted in the USA in 2006 by The Futures Company. The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 provides some insights into what the social fabric of the nation might look like over the next forty years, looking at the dreams and aspirations of New Zealand baby boomers as they approach traditional retirement age. It finds that they are "not the retiring sort", but will instead renegotiate the meaning of work, leisure and aging.

Chapter 1: Introduction and background

As the first of New Zealand's largest and most influential generation approach 65, the big question taxing society and our economy is, "Will our aging baby boomers slip quietly into their golden years to become a burden on the young, or will they, rebellious to the last, reinvent the way we think of older people and the workforce?"

This research reports the findings of the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009, the most comprehensive study so far undertaken into the country's million-plus baby boomer generation and their plans for what's starting to be called their "unretirement".

Today's boomers are better educated, healthier, more affluent and better off than the generation before them. They are also likely to live twenty to thirty years after retirement age. Baby boomers the world over have notoriously never conformed as expected and, despite speculation, there is no evidence to suggest that they now plan to behave like the generation before them and "retire gracefully to do charitable works".

American, Australian and British baby boomers are typically not eagerly anticipating lives of disengaged retirement. Instead, many plan to work, contribute to social causes and continue to influence society, as they have all their lives. New Zealand baby boomers have similar (but not identical) aspirations and intentions, suggesting that current concerns about the burden they might be on pensions and social services, and the hole they might leave in the workforce, are quite misplaced.

Overseas research has found that many baby boomers want to keep working, but on their own terms and with more time for leisure, travel and their families.

It is important for businesses, social providers, public policy developers and Government to know what will happen in the future for New Zealand baby boomers, because of the potential social, financial, business and economic ramifications. The study asks New Zealand baby boomers what their plans and desires are for the future. Their answers have a distinctly New Zealand character but are similar to boomers overseas; they are likely to surprise social planners and both relieve and frustrate Generation X and Y workers.

New Zealand baby boomers want to renegotiate their life expectations, and have the numbers and economic might to drive society into any change they need.

The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 closely follows an American Boomer Dreams study conducted in 2006 by respected American social

researchers, The Futures Company (formerly Yankelovich Inc.), and is replicated with permission. This American firm originally coined the term, “Baby Boomers” in the 1960s and has been tracking the generational cohort for more than thirty years.

Purpose

The purpose of this attitudinal study is to inquire of New Zealand baby boomers what their intentions and aspirations are for the future as the first of them approach traditional retirement age, and to use that information to inform business, economic and social planners.

Research Questions

The principal question posed in this research is, “Will New Zealand baby boomers retire gracefully at 65 to do charitable works?”

The hypothesis of this study was that, in large but not necessarily universal numbers, they would not. This hypothesis was contrary to speculation in current New Zealand social policy literature, which was developed within a traditional economic contextual framework that assumed baby boomers would behave largely like the generation before them and according to a historical view of retired people. Attitudinal research emerging overseas suggested this traditional economic model was far from the reality baby boomers intended for themselves, and this view was supported anecdotally in New Zealand.

If the principal hypothesis (will they retire?) were found to be valid, a further question arose: **“If they do not, then what?”**

The hypothesis of this study was that New Zealand baby boomers would want to change the traditional work-life balance to enable them to “have it all” – fulfilling, meaningful work, continued affluence and leisure time to pursue their interests in family, travel and lifestyle preferences.

The second part of the principal hypothesis – “will they do charitable works?” – raised the question:

What are New Zealand baby boomers’ future intentions relating to voluntary participation in community activities and social causes?

If the research were to find New Zealand baby boomers did not retire in the traditional sense, would they have time to volunteer? The answer to this question is of interest to New Zealand’s large (and expected to grow) voluntary sector, with implications for staffing, talent pool, costs and potential users of services in

this sector. Any risks to this sector pose consequent risks to the Government's social mandate to provide core social services.

Related and significant to any study about New Zealand baby boomers was a question that had been widely assumed but not proven: **“Are New Zealand baby boomers the same as baby boomers overseas, particularly in the USA (where research data is plentiful)?”**

The hypothesis of this study was that New Zealand baby boomers were aligned with US boomers in their shared experiences of the formative events that united baby boomers as a generational cohort, such as a common sustained period of unbridled economic growth leading to the development of a culture of affluence. This hypothesis was able to be tested through the use of a comparative study; the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 being substantially comparable to the US Boomer Dreams Study 2006, and was expected to reveal cultural differences that differentiated the different populations.

Background to the study

Defining baby boomers

Demographics

The baby boom demographic phenomenon was an explosion of new births in the twenty years immediately following the end of World War Two. Similar population explosions occurred in a number of countries, including Australia, New Zealand, America, Canada and, arguably, the UK (which had two population spikes during the period, rather than a sustained “hump”, but overall saw a marked population increase). In general, the baby booms increased national populations by up to 100% at the time of their births. The boom tailed off in the mid-1960s, and while cut off dates varied across countries, they are commonly standardised around 1964. The end of the baby boom is partly attributed to the introduction of the contraceptive pill and the entrance of women into the workforce in large numbers.

Statistics New Zealand defines baby boomers as New Zealanders born between 1 January 1946 and 31 December 1965 (Statistics New Zealand, 1995a). During this twenty year period, 1.125 million babies were born in the country, almost doubling the population (which was just 1.7 million in 1946). By 1991, baby boomers comprised 30% of the population and they currently comprise more than a quarter of the population. By 2031, all of the baby boomers will be over 65 and will make up 21.3% of the population (Statistics New Zealand, 1995a), the largest “elderly” population in New Zealand’s history.

Australia likewise uses a 1946-1965 timeframe for defining its 5.5 million baby boomers, with a peak birth year of 1946. By 2030, 47% of Australia's wealth will be held by people over 65 (Quine & Carter, 2006).

The UK, which saw a large birth spike in 1946 and another at the end of the baby boom, defines the baby boom as being from 1945 to 1965, with 18.5 million babies born in the 20-year period. Today there are 17 million baby boomers in the UK, comprising 29% of the population (Huber & Skidmore, 2003).

In the USA, the definition is Americans born between 1 January 1946 and 31 December 1964, a total of 78 million people now comprising more than a quarter of the US population (US Census Bureau, 2006). Americans currently in their 50s or older earn more than \$2 trillion annually and control 70% of the country's personal financial assets (Dychtwald, 2005b).

International research convention among baby boomer studies is to include all residents in the country who are in the target age range, regardless of whether they were born in that country or immigrated at some point since 1946, and also regardless of whether they belong to groups that did not experience a baby boom. For example, Hispanic people in the USA did not experience a baby boom; Australia experienced a large immigration surge in the 1950s and 1960, mainly from Italy and Greece; In New Zealand, Maori had high birth rates throughout the first half of the 20th century, so did not experience the population spike that occurred in the New Zealand European population (Statistics New Zealand, 1995a). The reason for including groups not born into baby booms is that they were still to varying degrees raised or living in the same environment with the same influences as the main baby boomer population and they will continue to be part of the affected population.

Baby boomers are demographically characterised as better educated, healthier and better off financially than predecessor generations. They also come from more ethnically diverse backgrounds and display more diversity of household types than their parents (Statistics New Zealand, 1995a).

Generational cohort

“When baby boomers reach any stage of life, the issues that concern them – whether financial, interpersonal, or even hormonal – become the dominant social, political, and marketplace themes of the time. Boomers don't just populate existing life stages or consumer trends – they transform them” (Dychtwald, 2005b).

Smith and Clurman (2007) define a generational cohort as, “a sociological concept referring to a group of people who grew up and came of age together”. This is based on a view that people develop their lifelong core values and attitudes from the experiences of their formative years, and those collective

experiences unite communities of people of the same age into a definable character.

“The prevailing social environment created by these dynamics is the starting point that imbues a generation with a particular set of values from which it begins to understand its place, its opportunities, and its potential” (Smith & Clurman, 2007). Smith and Clurman suggest it is within this context that baby boomers have learned “what’s possible, what’s valuable and what it takes to get things done”.

While only a tiny number of early boomers protested the Vietnam War, and New Zealand’s level of involvement in this event differed from the US experience, all baby boomers were called upon to form views about it. The Apollo space programme was one of the first such milestone formative experiences to be communicated all around the world, following the advent of television across the developed world. Young baby boomers everywhere saw the world from space for the first time and were all influenced by the experience, even though only a very tiny number of people in just one country were actually engaged in the event.

Demographic theorists and economists define the baby boomer generation by the years they were born and the life stages and milestones they share, such as going to school, starting families and retiring. However, while these are important markers, all generations experience them; it is the character of how a population responds to life stages and milestones that differentiates a generational cohort from a generation.

There is diversity within the baby boomer generation and not all people born in the timeframe will necessarily identify with all of the characteristics that define the cohort. Quantitative studies measure the proportion of respondents who agree with defining characteristics and, where the proportions are large, the characteristics can be said to be representative of the cohort as a whole.

According to Smith and Clurman (2007), the character of a generational cohort “sets the tone for what it’s like to live and work in those times”.

Most generational cohort theorists consider the formative influences for baby boomers to comprise societal events: the Vietnam War, Woodstock, Apollo, JFK and Martin Luther King Jr, the Beatles and rock music for older boomers; television, economic shocks from oil and financial markets, Watergate, punk and pop music for younger boomers. In this contextual framework, the temptation to split the baby boomer cohort in two is understandable. Smith and Clurman (2007) however, posit the view that it is an overwhelming climate of sustained economic prosperity that formed the baby boomer cohort and continues to unite it in what they call a “psychology of affluence”.

To support this view of the importance of economic prosperity in forging the baby boomer character, Smith and Clurman acknowledged the impact of pop culture and politics, but ranked those things third, behind the economy and technology (first) and demographics (second).

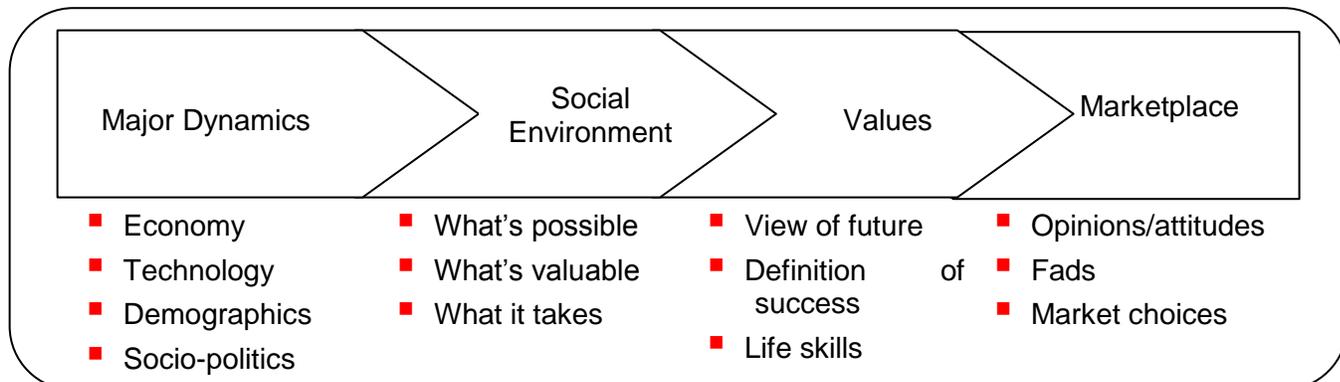


Figure 1: Generational Framework. from “*Generation Ageless*” by J Walker Smith & Ann Clurman (2007), page xix

Defining retirement

In the 1880s Germany’s Chancellor, Otto van Bismarck, created Europe’s first pension plan to provide state support and entitlements for old people considered too feeble to work. The age of entitlement was set at 65, at a time when average life expectancy was 45 (Dychtwald, 2005b). Prior to that, people worked until they died, and their roles in society changed to suit their skills, experience and fitness.

During the twentieth century, retirement came to be seen by some as a tool to remove older workers from the workforce into their “golden years” to make way for younger workers, particularly as the baby boom bulge moved through the workforce and put upward pressure on the job market. By the end of the twentieth century, retirement had come to be seen as a triumph of twentieth century prosperity and a “right”. It was a social benefit promised to reward workers for “decades of demanding and often unfulfilling labour” (Smith & Clurman, 2007).

At the same time, average life expectancy increased to the mid-70s (and higher for women). If the age of pension entitlement today were adjusted to take account of the increase in average life expectancy, it would be 70 instead of the current 65.

Today, retirement age varies across countries. In Australia, the traditional age at which retirement starts has been 55 (Quine & Carter, 2006). In Canada it is 60 (Statistics Canada, 2006). A third of American workers retire at 55, with the proportion rising to half by the age of 60 (Dendinger, 2005). In New Zealand, the

Retirement Commissioner advises that there is no official retirement age, but the age at which Government superannuation begins to be paid (previously 60, currently 65 and subject to change) is generally taken to be the age of retirement.

Retirement can be defined as a “one time event that permanently divides work life from leisure” (Dychtwald, 2004); a “complete withdrawal from the workforce” (Dendinger, 2005); “complete and worry-free disengagement from the workaday world” (Smith & Clurman, 2007); to “step aside and let others take the reins” (Smith & Clurman, 2007); “to remove from view, withdraw from society” (Bogan & Davies, 2007). The word retirement carries connotations of deceleration and withdrawal from the world, a gradual wind down to death, or “waiting for God”. In the UK, Huber & Skidmore (2003) report that retirement is about “not working”, but say that, “to view it as the twilight of a career beyond which meaningful self-fulfillment becomes impossible is inadequate”.

While the New Zealand Retirement Commission does not have a set definition and considers there to be many options for older people, when called upon it will define retirement as “the situation where an employee permanently withdraws from the regular paid workforce” (Retirement Commission, 2008).

Smith and Clurman (2007) list the key elements of the traditional concept of retirement as “not working”; “pensioned” (living more frugally on savings or fixed pension); “maturity” (age, limitations and legacy); “surrender – stepping aside to let the next generation set the societal agenda”; and “closure”.

American gerontologist Dr Ken Dychtwald has described the concept of retirement as outdated, saying it “should be put out to pasture” in favour of new approaches to suit the changing work ambitions of both workers and employers (Dychtwald, 2004).

The “golden years” ideal of retirement required that older people be willing to step back and let the next generation take charge, and that the next generation be able to generate enough income to pay the cost of their elders’ retirement.

Defining “charitable works”

The US Bureau of Statistics (2009) defines volunteers as “persons who perform unpaid volunteer activities” through an organisation. It does not include persons who volunteer in a more informal manner. For example, a person who coaches children’s rugby through a local sports club would be considered a volunteer, but if they organise informal sessions at a local park, they would not be included in official statistics.

New Zealand's Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector also defines volunteering in this way, as, "unpaid work outside of the home for or through an organisation" (OCVS, 2008). Statistics New Zealand includes more than 97,000 non-profit bodies as "organisations", in the fields of human rights, health, education, sport, religious, social services, arts and culture, emergency services, environment and conservation, human and animal welfare, and community support and development (Volunteering NZ, 2009a).

Volunteering New Zealand (2009b) includes in its definition of voluntary roles, "advocacy, design, tutoring, planting, driving, research, supporting, PR and promotion, befriending, interviewing, mentoring, counselling, information technology, strategic and business planning, human resource management, and marketing".

The US Bureau of Statistics (2009) reports baby boomers as having the highest volunteer rate of any age group, volunteering at higher rates than their predecessor generations at the same age. Based on population projections, the number of volunteers in the US over 65 is projected to increase 50% over the next 13 years. This projection does not take account of any multiplier or divider effect from deferred retirement. It is the potential impact of the "unretirement" hypothesis on these volunteering projections that is of interest in this report.

Another American survey undertaken in March 2007 by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNAC, 2007) looked at volunteer retention and turnover. Among its key findings was an observation that 69.3% of baby boomer volunteers who remained in the workforce retained their level of volunteering, compared with 60.5% who moved out of the workforce; this is counter-intuitive to current New Zealand thinking that reducing the amount of free time baby boomers had after retirement age (by deferring retirement) would reduce their availability to volunteer. Another key finding of the study was that the higher volunteer rate of baby boomers was tied to higher education levels and having children later in life, two factors the study said were connected to higher volunteer rates.

Smith & Clurman's 2006 Boomer Dreams Study found that American baby boomers had a strong sense of moral certainty and an unshakeable belief that they could make a difference so that the world could be a better place. The US study found that boomers were passionate about what they could contribute as individuals to get involved and help out (Smith & Clurman, 2007). Boomers in the USA universally agreed (93.7%) that it was important to look for ways to "get involved and improve society". These findings suggest a predisposition among baby boomers to personal involvement in volunteering.

Huber & Skidmore (2003) cited a 2002 MORI Social Values Study that is otherwise unpublished (and unavailable to review independently), that rated

British baby boomers against a range of community engagement value statements.

In contrast to American attitudes, the MORI study found that only 42% of British baby boomers agreed with the statement, “the groups and organisations I belong to mean a lot to me”; while just 26.5% of them agreed that, “Everyone has a duty to do voluntary work at some time in their lives”, compared to 39% of their predecessor cohort. The MORI researchers interpreted this as a lack of commitment among British baby boomers to volunteering and supporting causes. No further research was available to verify or refute the MORI findings, or to explain the variances between these two large baby boomer populations.

A Statistics New Zealand time use survey measured voluntary work at 5% of the total New Zealand workforce (Statistics NZ, 1999). The same survey showed that 65-74 year olds were among the highest contributors to voluntary work, contributing the greatest number of hours; there is no data on any possible cohort effect so it is not known whether the 1998-99 study would necessarily apply to baby boomers, who generally have different behaviour patterns to their predecessor generations (the fact that people who were 65-74 in 1998 volunteered heavily does not necessarily mean that baby boomers will behave in the same way, and the possibility of a multiplier or divider effect of deferred retirement is considered by Statistics New Zealand).

The time use survey also showed 65-74 year olds were among the highest contributors to voluntary work, with people 65 and over having 31% of their time free to participate in volunteering (Statistics New Zealand, 1999).

In 2007, 33.8% of all New Zealanders over the age of ten volunteered (OCVS, 2008). Voluntary sector commentator Martin Cowling (2009) recently estimated that 60% of social services in New Zealand were being delivered by people over 64, with a total collective volunteer contribution of 270 million hours a year by a million volunteers.

However little is known about the potential impact on the volunteering community of a million baby boomers turning 65 over the next 20 years. Past statistics on contributions among the newly retired are not necessarily an indicator of future behaviour, particularly among the highly unpredictable baby boomer population.

Dunstan and Thomson’s (2006) report posited that increasing numbers of older New Zealanders would be more likely to take on increasingly important roles in both paid and volunteer work. “Older workers will not necessarily want fulltime paid or unpaid work but will seek a balance between work, family and leisure activities,” their commentary for Statistics New Zealand stated. There was at the time no demographic evidence on which to base that view, yet they foresaw a

possible increase in demand for part time and casual work and more flexible working arrangements.

According to Fein (2006), the benefits of volunteering include a chance to use your talents, feeling valued while giving something back, a greater likelihood of feeling optimistic about the future, a sense that your older years are a new chapter in your life, staying connected with others, providing intellectual stimulation and promoting better health.

Background to the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009

The Futures Group (formerly known as Yankelovich Inc.), has been tracking and monitoring the behaviour of American baby boomers since the 1960s and originally coined the term, “baby boomers”. In 2006, this research company conducted an attitudinal study of more than a thousand American baby boomers, using a behavioural and generational cohort contextual frame.

Called the Boomer Dreams Study 2006, it built on the company’s existing knowledge of this cohort to probe into what the social fabric of the nation might look like over the next forty years, driven by a generation they knew historically swept all traditional expectations aside in its lifelong quest for self-expression and meaning.

The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 was defined after an extensive literature research revealed a dearth of attitudinal research into New Zealand’s own baby boomer population, amid serious concerns about future planning for workplace skill gaps, aged health care and superannuation provisions that appeared to have been informed by traditional economic models of retirement. cursory informal inquiry among baby boomer colleagues failed to identify anyone who saw such traditional plans in their own future. Instead, their views appeared to be more closely reflected in a book not widely circulated but uncovered during the literature search. That book was Smith and Clurman’s “Generation Ageless”; out of its reading arose the idea of replicating the US study in New Zealand.

In the 1960s, lack of forward planning for New Zealand’s million-plus population saw them schooled in draughty, prefabricated classrooms hastily dragged onto overcrowded school playing fields. Failure to understand and make informed plans for the future could lead to the nightmare prospect of prefabricated rest homes or perhaps to the burgeoning growth of seniors cruise ships.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Literature on this subject is both plentiful and unhelpful. A number of research studies and literature reviews have been conducted in the USA, which has a large baby boomer cohort (78 million) of commercial interest to marketers. Some studies have been conducted in other markets with baby boomer populations, but with varying levels of relevance to the actual likely intentions of baby boomers.

Relatively little academic literature exists in Australia, the UK, or Canada. In New Zealand, very little is known about the behaviour of our own baby boomer population as it heads into retirement age. In the absence of such literature, overseas research, particularly from the US, has often been used as a proxy for local information. However, the validity of applying this proxy has not been tested.

Several literature reviews are available that gather together existing pieces of evidence of what is known about baby boomer behaviour (Quine & Carter, 2006; Huber & Skidmore, 2003; Dendinger *et al*, 2005), but they universally note a “paucity of published research” (Quine & Carter, 2006) on baby boomers’ expectations for their old age. Huber and Skidmore (2003) express concern that the “only thing missing from the ageing debate so far (at least in the UK) is any serious interrogation of the values and attitudes of baby boomers”.

Such studies acknowledge a need to plan for the future needs of baby boomers, without actually developing any; several literature reviews summarise their findings by making urgent calls to develop research that specifically investigates baby boomers’ expectations and actions as they begin to enter retirement age, to inform social policy development and the planning of social programmes.

A review of existing literature across several countries with baby boomer populations exposes two major schools of thought, a Traditional Economic School (including a Transitional School), and a Behavioural School.

Traditional Economic School

The Traditional Economic School operates within the contextual framework that retirement is the desired and ultimate goal and that therefore all research and modelling work should focus on how that goal can be achieved and what impacts might result. It utilises historic economic and demographic modelling, and is premised on the assumption that baby boomers will in future behave like the generation before them and that predictions about future baby boomer retirement needs can be predicted by extrapolating economic data from the current generation of retired people. This assumption has no research foundation, but in the absence of any other view, has been widely adopted.

The traditional view of a normal working life is that people will spend their first 20 years learning, the next 40 years working and the final 10 years in rest and play (Huber & Skidmore, 2003). As the final block of years has lengthened, social policy developers have used economic modelling to try and make behaviours continue to fit the model, such as modelling lengthening the 40 to pay for the 10; proposals to raise the age of superannuation entitlement are examples of this strategy in action.

Literature of the Traditional Economic School tends to be based on the views and expectations of economists and social policy planners, rather than on the stated intentions of baby boomers themselves. Where baby boomer surveys are included, they tend to be littered with questions biased towards traditional assumptions, which skews any findings (akin to asking the classic loaded question, “When did you stop beating your wife?”). Subsequent recommendations focus around limiting the damage risk of boomer retiree dependency.

For example, the Quine and Carter (2006) review in Australia asked research questions about the health and care needs, future housing needs, financial provisions and responsibility for the burden of care of ageing baby boomers, all premised on the notion that they would retire from productive social contributions and become a burden on the economy. It referenced studies which asked baby boomer respondents distinctly biased questions such as what they were doing to minimise future health problems.

A Canadian book, “New Frontiers of Research on Retirement” (Statistics Canada, 2006), began with a recognition that baby boomers (in Canada, as elsewhere) had caused “fundamental changes” in every social institution their cohort had touched so far, and posited that retirement would be “no exception”. However, all of its subsequent conclusions were based on historical demographic statistics and any concessions to non-retirement were assumed to be driven by economic necessity. One-fifth of Canadian workers in Statistics Canada’s 2002 General Social Survey said they did not intend to retire at all, and the book acknowledged that Canadians were living longer, yet the only focus of the statistician’s report was on the possible negative economic impacts on pension plans. Statistics Canada did however note that self-employed workers, comprising fifteen percent of the workforce, were ten percent more likely than salaried workers to delay retirement, and that this might lead to an increase in the rate of self-employment. Such indicators of alternative viewpoints were acknowledged, but discarded without comment or investigation.

Quine and Carter (2006) noted that there “appeared to be far more opinion than research” in print, and this is a characteristic of Traditional Economic School literature.

An Australian qualitative study of leading-edge baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1955) by Susan Quine and Diana Bernard (2006) noted that “much of the literature is based on policy makers’ and researchers’ opinions and projections of baby boomers’ expectations, rather than baby boomers’ own opinions and experiences.” The study, made up of 12 focus groups in New South Wales, was biased by the Traditional Economic School contextual framework, with dialogue topics including “planning for retirement”, “having enough money”, “responsibility (cost to the Government)”, and “health insurance”. There is always a risk of steering focus groups and, unsurprisingly, the key findings of the Quine and Bernard research were that many baby boomers had not planned for their retirement or old age, and that low-income boomers were relying on Government pensions. While there were some alternative-view indicator quotes, such as, “I have no plans to retire,” and, “I don’t find retirement interesting for me at the moment”, these conversations were not pursued because they weren’t viewed as the object of the research.

Australia’s federally funded Survey of Retirement Attitudes and Motivations (2006) similarly fell into the question bias trap, while trying to determine if Australia’s baby boomers would be likely to heed government calls for them to remain in the workplace. Survey respondents were asked to choose which major factor influenced why they thought they would work beyond their preferred retirement age. The seven options available to respondents were: not enough financial security; not able to access superannuation funds; not able to access a government benefit; partner’s preferences; continuing financial responsibility for dependents, need to continue to pay my mortgage; and other debts. Any other reasons (such as a personal preference to work) were lumped together under “other”.

The prevailing traditional view has resulted in a number of alarming and concerning conclusions being drawn about future social planning that there is very little, if any, unbiased research evidence to support.

An example of such conclusions based on unverified economic assumptions is the casually accepted statement, “Modelling has suggested that over the next 20 years the Australian labour supply will dry up” (Quine & Carter, 2006). Further examples can be seen in the Australian National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling’s estimate that “70-75% of baby boomers will have retired completely by 2020” (Kelly, 2003), just eleven years from now; and in Paul Longman’s “Born to Pay” (1987), which analyses American social security and Medicare entitlements and warns of a “looming social crisis” as benefits become unsustainable. Bogan & Davies (2007) go so far as to describe retirement as a “crisis” with the potential to cause “lasting damage”.

If true, these are alarming statistics and opinions. They are simple demographic and economic projections, and do not take into account human behaviour, yet they continue to be promulgated and foster intergenerational resentment, such as

discussed in Henry Fairlie's "Greedy Geezers" article in the New Republic magazine (Fairlie, 1988).

Fairlie, convinced that the traditional economic model was likely to transpire and faced with the prospect of two thirds of America's annual federal budget going to supporting the elderly, asked, "What is wrong with a society that is willing to drain itself to foster such an unproductive section of its population?"

Mermin, Johnson & Murphy's 2007 report into why boomers might plan to work longer (Mermin *et al*, 2007) used existing research data from the US Health and Retirement Study and analysed in within a traditional economic conceptual framework that assumed "that rational workers weigh the costs and benefits of continued employment when making retirement decisions". Following the economic model, they theorised that factors that increased work benefits would encourage later retirement and that factors that increased the cost of remaining at work would lead to earlier retirements. The US Health and Retirement Study, on which Mermin *et al*'s work was based, predicted "deficits at best and insolvency at worst" for the US social security system, Medicare, and employer-sponsored pension schemes. The study also projected a future drop in economic growth as experienced workers began to withdraw from the workforce, leading to skill gaps and worker shortages that would impede economic progress. The study noted changes in economic, social and demographic trends but, in the absence of any human behavioural considerations, was unable to explain them, instead concluding that financial considerations would be paramount and that workers' decisions would be based on rational thinking.

A fatal flaw of relying on modelling and research developed using a Traditional Economic School conceptual framework as guidance for developing social policy is that there is no reliable research evidence to show it is accurate. Many authors reporting the findings of this School also hint at "some research" (usually not quoted) that suggests the future real impact of retiring baby boomers may be different than traditionally predicted, but does not usually pursue it.

The determination of researchers and commentators to hold on to this economic viewpoint has made them unable to pick up on early indicators that baby boomers' plans for themselves might differ from those forecast by the Traditional Economic School.

Transitional School

Indicators that the traditional economic model did not fit with the actual behaviour of the first boomers to reach retirement age began to surface in literature over the last decade, which has captured early moves to transitional, part time and succession-planned staged retirements. While the Transitional School acknowledges a movement by some boomers away from the retirement their parents enjoyed, the prevailing assumptions remain entrenched in the traditional

economic conceptual framework. As a result, thinking in this area has not gained much traction among baby boomer audiences.

Popular self-help books such as Fein's "Baby Boomer's Guide to the New Work Place" (2006), Bogan & Davies' "Avoid Retirement and Stay Alive" (2007), Jamieson's "The New Retirement: Smart Tips for Baby Boomers" (2008), and many other books, reports and articles all discuss alternative ways to manage retirement by working, securing financial independence and learning to live with more time and less money at your disposal. Included in the Transitional School are theories about rehirement (retiring then being reemployed by the same employer) (Dychtwald, 2005); bridge jobs (lower skill jobs in between career and retirement); "phased retirement" (reducing hours of work between full time and zero time, in preparation for retirement); and "transitional" jobs, full or part time, in the lead up to retirement.

The contextual framework for this school of thought is that continued working in any form is a way to achieve an assumed desired goal of non-work, or full retirement; in effect, coping strategies.

American gerontologist Ken Dychtwald's early work on ageing was transitional. In "Age Power" (Dychtwald, 1999), warned of five social "train wrecks" that needed to be prevented: using 65 as a marker of old age when average life expectancy had risen to 76; epidemics of chronic disease if there were no dramatic shift in healthcare; a forecast elder "care crunch"; and, millions of baby boomers heading into a poverty-stricken old age. The fifth train wreck, "without envisioning a new purpose for old age, we are creating an elder wasteland", saw the beginning of Dychtwald's shift to the Behavioural School, when he coined the term, "middlescence" to describe baby boomers' extension of the middle-aged stage of their lives.

The common flaw of both the Traditional and Transitional Schools is that they both presume retirement is the ultimate goal for baby boomers, yet there is increasing evidence emerging that this is not the case and that baby boomers do not see the traditional concept of retirement as applying to them. If this is the case, it is not surprising that literature about financial planning for retirement (Metlife, 2009) is finding boomers unprepared – they may be unprepared for something they have no intention of doing.

Behavioural School

A Behavioural School, led by social commentators such as gerontologist Ken Dychtwald, the Association of American Retired Persons (AARP), and the Futures Company, has emerged in America over the last decade, and in some way in the UK (Huber & Skidmore, 2003).

In his 1990 book, *Age Wave*, Dychtwald observed that the traditional linear life plan was being reworked into a cyclic life plan by baby boomers wanting to balance interesting work with their other interests – leisure, family, social causes. A cyclic rather than linear model explained how boomers were constantly reinventing their careers, and asked, “what if tomorrow’s elders saw the doorway between work and retirement as revolving instead of one way?”

Literature from this school tends to be based on surveys among baby boomers themselves, premised on the idea that baby boomers have always behaved in ways different from their predecessor generation and may have independent and unprecedented views about their future.

At every stage of their lives, baby boomers have been at the forefront of radical social, economic and political change. Huber & Skidmore (2003) suggest that “the way this most influential generation in recent social history chooses to adapt to changing circumstances will have a dramatic impact”.

Proponents of the Behavioural School anticipate that baby boomers will not simply age, but will instead determine how the rest of society will perceive and treat older adults and aging (Smith & Clurman, 2007; Dychtwald, 2005a; AARP, 2007; Huber & Skidmore, 2003).

While not including any fresh attitudinal research from the UK, Huber and Skidmore (2003) acknowledged a need for the conceptual framework to focus “less on abstract demographics or economic trends and look in much closer detail at the underlying social, cultural and attitudinal characteristics of the baby boomer generation”.

Instead of loading questions around economic models, researchers in the Behavioural School use behavioural models based on previously researched patterns of baby boomer behaviour as a basis for framing research questions designed to reveal attitudes and future intentions.

Typical research questions asked by researchers belonging to this school are open-ended or posit attitudinal statements that baby boomers can respond to in ranked scales. For example, “spending more time with family” or “my best years are behind me” (Smith & Clurman, 2007) are the types of attitudinal statements that help clarify baby boomer attitudes to ageing and work/life balance.

The findings of research of this type have been unexpected, even by the researchers who designed them.

Baby boomer research respondents understand that they will live longer and better than their predecessor generations. When asked unloaded questions about the future, they express a desire to spend the extra lifetime they have to

embark on fresh adventures and “remake the world into a better place” (Smith & Clurman, 2007).

They report that they have no intention of giving up on life’s possibilities; they are not yet done with living. Smith and Clurman (2007) suggest baby boomers – at least in the USA – will “look to push past the traditional limits of old age and everything associated with it”. They will “refashion retirement” and redefine work.

Dr Ken Dychtwald said, “we asked boomers for their hopes, fears and thoughts about retirement and what we got was the systematic dismantling of all of our preconceptions about the future, for not only this generation, but for nearly all of society’s institutions (Dychtwald, 2005a).”

In a study conducted for Merrill Lynch in 2005 (Dychtwald, 2005a), Dychtwald looked at how American baby boomers envisioned their retirement and concluded that their views (and the massive population bulge supporting those views) would “fundamentally reinvent retirement”, with 76% intending to keep working past 64, perhaps in an entirely new job.

The Boomer Dreams Study 2006 (Smith & Clurman, 2007) suggested it would be a mistake to plan for baby boomers as if they were “decelerating”, as such thinking runs counter to their generational character. In New Zealand, developing research questions within a contextual framework that boomers were going to retire (the traditional economic model) will put the focus on the wrong set of needs, interests and opportunities; findings from such research ask questions irrelevant to baby boomers and therefore lack meaning.

New Zealand research

The prevailing view of social planners in New Zealand is of the Traditional Economic School, despite a dearth of supporting research. Statistics New Zealand’s (2001) widely-cited age dependency ratios are used to calculate how many “workers” – people aged 15-64 – will be available in the workforce to support the over-65 population. This measure is highly susceptible to inaccuracy because it assumes all people 15-64 are workers (disregarding students, home makers, people unable to work and others); it also assumes all people over 65 are not working. Other measures of workforce participation (Statistics NZ, 2007) only count full time traditional work, and assume all other employment options to be “not working”; this lack of provision for non-traditional employment models will not allow economists to capture an accurate picture of emerging changes in such models.

Research in New Zealand is evolving from transitional to behavioural. Several New Zealand researchers (Dwyer, 2005; McGregor, 2006; McPherson, 2008; Alpass, 2007; Davey, 2008) have discussed the possibilities that lie before baby boomers, with an open-minded awareness that the traditional concept of

retirement might no longer be adequate, yet they are still a bit constrained by the contextual framework that “work” equals “job”, that “retirement” equals “leisure”, and that the two are mutually exclusive.

The EEO Trust has conducted research into the future shape of the New Zealand workforce, which it perceives to be faced with a potential skills gap and ageing profile. The Trust’s Work and Income Report 2006 (McGregor, 2006) was not specifically representative of New Zealand baby boomers; it surveyed widely among its membership (but not among non-member employers), included workers who were not baby boomers (albeit boomers were a large contingent), and excluded non-workers. It did however raise some useful discussion points for further research.

The EEO Trust Work and Age Report 2006 (McGregor, 2006) explored what older workers wanted from work and found the New Zealand workplace largely unprepared for the expectations of its workers. Notably, respondents reported feeling that their skills and ideas were not valued and that they were being passed up for training, promotion and employment opportunities because of their age. Eighty percent of respondents were looking for flexibility in work hours per week, work weeks per month and work months per year. Unfortunately, 85% of those respondents who had already retired had not had access to such an opportunity.

While the Work and Age Report (McGregor, 2006) cited finances and health as the main factors workers thought about prior to retirement, it did note workers under 45 (non-baby boomers) were more likely to be focused on finances. Other factors nominated by respondents were job satisfaction and enjoyment (top); interesting and challenging opportunities such as travel, creative pursuits and voluntary work; and their partner’s work. While they wanted to spend more time with family, they felt their professional contribution was still valued and they expressed a need for mental stimulation and activity. These options were presented as either-or choices, rather than integrated choices, but they were acknowledged as important factors for employers to consider, which demonstrated a more behaviourally-disposed mindset by the researchers.

The 2006 findings were followed up in a 2008 EEO Trust report, “Boomers and Beyond” (McPherson, 2008), which probed attitudes of receptivity by employers and recruiters to older candidates.

McPherson’s research found that recruiters saw older people as “more reliable and having a better attitude to work than younger people”, but that recruiters also found some older workers “inflexible and not well adapted to new ways of working”. Recruiters also reported views that they claimed were held by employers (but that may have been their own) that older people “did not have enough energy or physical capacity for senior management roles”. McPherson

noted that most recruiters had not changed their practices to accommodate the ageing workforce.

Other promising research is being conducted in New Zealand. The New Zealand Health, Work and Retirement Longitudinal Study (HWT Study), led by Massey University researchers in collaboration with the Health Research Council of New Zealand, has been underway since 2006 and results from the first wave of survey results have been published (Alpass, 2008). The HWT Study tracks 8,000 55-70 (in 2006) year olds over several years and will provide some very useful information on the correlation between older people's intentions and expectations and their actual behaviours and realities. The study includes just the leading edge first five years of the baby boom generation, together with older non-baby boomers, so comparisons can only be made with caution. The HWT Study is focused on health and retirement, and falls into the same trap as the earlier-mentioned EEO Trust research of assuming work and retirement were mutually exclusive, and also assuming that the term "work" comprises no more than a job; while these assumptions may be valid for the generation before baby boomers, they are not necessarily valid among baby boomers themselves. However, some findings from the first wave of 2006 results are useful in informing New Zealand debate about future provisions for baby boomers.

In particular, the study asked workers whether they wished to stop paid employment completely after they retired, or continue in some form of paid employment; 70.6% said they would prefer to continue in some form of employment.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents said they were positively committed to their careers, while 75% reported being satisfied to some extent and 84% reported a moderate to high level of job satisfaction. When asked at what age they wished to retire, the mean age reported was 67, not the 65 used by policy planners; fewer than half of respondents said they would retire completely at 65, despite two-thirds of respondents being of pre-baby boomer age. The study found that the more people were engaged with their work the more likely they were to stay working longer. Contrary to recruiter views expressed in the "Boomers and Beyond" study (McPherson, 2008), HWT respondents, when asked to agree or disagree with the statement, "I feel pressure to retire" responded with a very low 10.5% (lower among leading edge baby boomers, at 7.4%).

In summary, New Zealand researchers are aware of changes emerging in the workplace and the social fabric of the nation, and are starting to measure the "what" – the size and nature of that change, and some of the effects. They are not yet measuring the "why", but "why" questions are emerging from recent research; a study that measured the "why" could certainly inform these ongoing studies.

The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 is the first large-scale quantitative study conducted in New Zealand that is premised fully on the assumptions of the Behavioural School. It responds to the “why” questions currently being identified by other New Zealand social researchers in this field.

The findings of the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 answers calls from local and international researchers into improve the pool of published research on baby boomers’ own expectations of their post-65 futures.

It also replicates (with permission) parts of the US Boomer Dreams Study 2006 (Smith & Clurman, 2007), and draws comparisons between the two boomer populations. This allows for testing of a widely held proxy assumption (the assumption that overseas research, particularly from the USA, can be used as a proxy for New Zealand baby boomer behaviour) has not been tested here.

Chapter 3: Methodology and survey design

Qualitative Research

This research study was conducted using focus groups to gain qualitative insights into whether New Zealand baby boomers' life views were broadly consistent with the views expressed by boomers in comparable overseas studies.

Each focus group was made up of New Zealand residents born between 1 January 1946 and 31 December 1964. Focus Group One (8 participants) was white collar office workers in central Auckland; Focus Group Two was a broad geographical spread of 15 participants on social micro-blogging site, Twitter, where all participants self-identified as New Zealanders in the specified age range. Twitter users were characterised as early-adopters of new communication technology. The original plan of the research was to conduct a second face-to-face focus group of professional women, however in reviewing the results of Focus Group One, it was decided that a higher socio-economic group would not yield different results from Focus Group One, but that a lower socio-economic focus group might provide more insights. Considerable efforts were made to establish a white/blue collar South Auckland focus group, but efforts were abandoned after failure to attract sufficient participants.

No focus group participants were paid for participation; participants in Focus Group One were provided with refreshments during a lunchtime session.

The focus groups were asked the same series of discussion-stimulating questions, using an open-ended, "thinking about..." question frame (Appendix A). The Twitter focus group was an experiment to see whether the new microblogging site could be used, entirely without support (such as from a linked blog or website explaining the activity in more detail than Twitter's 140-characters-per-message format could allow), to identify a small baby boomer focus group community, and whether a focus group-style interaction could be formed. Contrary to the pattern of adoption of other social media, Twitter attracts Baby Boomers, with 45-54 year olds being 36% more likely than average to visit Twitter, making them the highest indexing group. Older boomers, 55-64, are as likely (indexing at 100%) as any other age group to visit Twitter (emarketer. 2009). The group-linking website www.twibes.com was used to search for New Zealand based Twitter users and visual examination of 40 Twitter homepages provided some guidance for a broad appeal for participation or passing-on (retweeting) of the appeal. 19 respondents were culled to 15 core New Zealand-based baby boomers with mutual follow-settings, and focus group questions were posted on the microblog. Beyond a few initial responses, the Twitter focus group was unsuccessful; while participants were happy to follow and share, they were largely silent about responding to specific questions, even though they were actively tweeting within the target timeframe.

This failure to develop a Twitter focus group might be explained by research conducted in May 2009 by Harvard researchers Bill Heil and Mikolaj Piskorski (2009). This team conducted an examination of a random sample of 300,000 Twitter users in May 2009 and concluded that Twitter was being used as more of a “one-way, one-to-many publishing service” than a two way “peer-to-peer communication network” (Heil & Piskorski, 2009).

Focus group participants were asked not to participate in the main study due to the risk of “respondent burden” (Statistics New Zealand, 1995b).

Quantitative Study

Survey Design

The quantitative attitudinal study was largely modelled on the US Boomer Dreams Study 2006, an online attitudinal survey conducted by the Futures Company, and reported in the book, “Generation Ageless” (Smith & Clurman, 2007). It included a number of values questions reframed in a range of ways (such as negative, then later positive) to reduce question bias.

The New Zealand study replicated a substantial number of questions from the US Boomer Dreams Study 2006, but omitted multiple social values questions about patriotism, religion and premarital sex, in order to shorten the survey and on the assumption that New Zealand attitudes to these topics are less polarised than US attitudes. Some questions on these topics were retained as a check on these assumptions, but reframing to verify responses was reduced. Some statements were reframed into New Zealand vernacular in order to obtain comparable results.

The New Zealand study also incorporated some statements that were idiosyncratic of New Zealand, having been raised in focus groups (for example: “I want to carve my own road”) and recognising the high proportion of self-employment or business ownership among New Zealand baby boomers (for example, the inclusion of a “continue with my own business” option alongside the US “start my own business” option).

Also, because focus group data was not as extensive as desired, the New Zealand study included options for respondents’ individual “other” answers, to capture gaps in assumptions about New Zealand baby boomer intentions.

Testing and verification

The draft survey was sent for comments to a number of survey design and subject matter experts. Ann Clurman, the co-author of the American study, provided verification of the order of choices (most positive to most negative,

rather than most negative to most positive) to allow close replication, and assistance with aligning the two studies. Massey University supervisors Janet Sayers and Dennis Viehland verified design questions and inclusion of contact details and ethics statements. Marketing expert Caroline Bland reviewed the survey for consumer appeal and research robustness.

The draft survey was also sent to the Retirement Commissioner, Diana Crossan, and baby boomer/retirement researcher Maire Dwyer, for review. Ms Dwyer responded that she was satisfied with the direction and scope of the research; Ms Crossan was unable to respond prior to the launch of the survey.

Finally, Paul Buckland completed a “fresh eyes” sense-check on the survey and corrected errors that could have impacted on the survey.

Pilot survey

A pilot survey was conducted in the week prior to launching the survey. Ten respondents were surveyed and their answers aggregated and reviewed to ensure technical links were robust, the survey was readable, the questions were easy to answer and unambiguous and each person was able to complete the survey to their satisfaction. Respondents were interviewed and some small changes were made to the survey as a result.

Following the pilot and pending the public launch of the main survey, pilot respondents were asked not to participate in the survey proper, due to the risk of “respondent burden” (Statistics New Zealand, 1995b).

Survey Instrument

A link to a copy of the survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix B.

The survey questionnaire was developed using the online survey creation website, Survey Monkey, and utilising Survey Monkey’s encryption and verisign security services to protect respondents’ answers from online hackers. For further anonymity of respondents, the IP-recognition service was disabled.

The survey established demographic data to enable a target population-representative sample to be identified; respondents answering outside the year-of-birth or geographic criteria were directed to exit the survey and universally did; their responses were deleted from the results.

Respondents were asked to rate attitudinal statements on rating scales, to answer specific questions or to make either-or choices. The choices on the rating scales were randomised to reduce recency and latency bias, and the rating

scales were ordered in the same way as the US study (from most favourable to least favourable option), for accurate comparison.

Responses were recorded using a button click system that in most cases allowed for one answer only, forcing respondents into a choice. The questions were not made compulsory; the length and complexity of the survey was considered barrier enough without adding a “must answer” barrier to participation. As a result, the number of respondents answering each question varied slightly and reduced in total as the survey progressed (drop out).

The dropout risk was mitigated (but not eliminated) with a warning statement at the start of the survey.

Survey Sample

The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 is intended to reflect the views and intentions of all people living in New Zealand at the time of the survey (28 July – 10 August 2009), who were born between 1 January 1946 and 31 December 1964, and who have access to the internet, by sampling a representative subset of this population of interest.

According to Nielsen Media’s Q2 2008 to Q1 2009 internet use survey data, this population totals 935,004, or 88.6% of the total estimated current baby boomer population of 1,055,000 (Candy, 2009); a census of the total 935,004 population of interest was deemed too impractical and expensive to achieve.

The selected age range varies from Statistics New Zealand’s definition of baby boomers by one year (Statistics New Zealand’s definition is 1 January 1946 to 31 December 1965), but is consistent with the US Census Bureau definition used in the US study, allowing for comparison between the two national populations. Consistent with both US and New Zealand census definitions, the study includes all people defined above and does not differentiate by country of birth (that is, immigrants meeting the birthdate requirements are included).

Statistics New Zealand (1995a) advises that the baby boomer population profile closely follows that of the general New Zealand population, with a slight bias to urban locations. Internet usage is skewed towards urban and younger baby boomers, and higher income levels.

New Zealand baby boomer adoption of the internet, while not universal, is very high at 88.6%. The benefits of speed, geographic spread, ease of answering and accessibility of the internet among the target population, and the ability of the survey site to aggregate survey responses electronically, were deemed to be greater advantages than the risk of excluding part of the wider baby boomer population (ie. those without internet access) from participation. Typically, Maori,

lower income and rural people are less inclined to have internet access and this study does not claim to be representative of the particular characteristics of these groups.

The survey was conducted online for 14 days, from 28 July to 10 August 2009, inclusive, and attracted a representative sample of 1,162 qualified respondents. In comparison, the US study ran for ten days from 26 June to 5 July 2006, among a representative sample of 1,023 baby boomers. No payments were made for participation, promotion or referrals in relation to the survey.

Survey participants self-selected, rather than being randomly selected by the researcher. Random selection would have been preferable, as it generally reduces the risk of getting a non-representative sample and also reduces the risk of biasing factors (Statistics New Zealand, 1995b), however this was offset by broadly publicising the survey in mainstream national media and by the universally-accepted self-select nature of the internet. All members of the target population had equal opportunity to participate.

In order to promote wide demographic participation, the survey was launched on 28 July 2009 with a mass media release, sent to all major TV, radio, press and online news networks throughout the country. The link to the survey was developed as an easy-to-convey and remember website address, www.boomerdreams.co.nz, which linked seamlessly into the survey introduction page.

Coverage was achieved on Newstalk ZB, National Radio (Afternoons with Jim Mora), New Zealand Herald Sideswipe, TV3 Sunrise, Scoop, Stuff, YahooXtra News, Voxy (which developed a discussion thread), and the EEO Trust Newsletter. Two New Zealand baby boomer websites also linked to the survey. Media coverage was monitored using Google Alerts, but it is not certain how much coverage was not captured. All coverage that was monitored represented the survey accurately.

Wide participation was also enhanced through a viral email campaign, requesting participation and pass-on to other New Zealand baby boomers.

Email contacts with known Maori network connections were specifically targeted to encourage Maori participation, but this remained at a low 4.1% of participants.

1,162 people who self-identified as New Zealand baby boomers answered the survey. The survey's length (20 minutes or more) and complexity, and some unmeasured internet connection issues reduced the number of participants who completed the entire survey by up to a third. As a result, survey results are provided with individual question respondent numbers.

While weighting of the survey results to more closely represent known demographics of the target population (using age, gender and location) would have been desirable, the survey instrument did not have this functionality. However, it is possible to view the correlations between the target population and the survey respondents' profiles, to gain some insight into the degree of representativeness.

Figure 2 shows respondents' ages compared to the target demographic provided by Nielsen Media (Candy, 2009). There are more older baby boomers in the survey than in the target population of internet-using baby boomers (who tend to be younger); while this is counter-intuitive to the conventional wisdom that older people participate less in online surveys, it probably reflects their degree of interest in the topic.

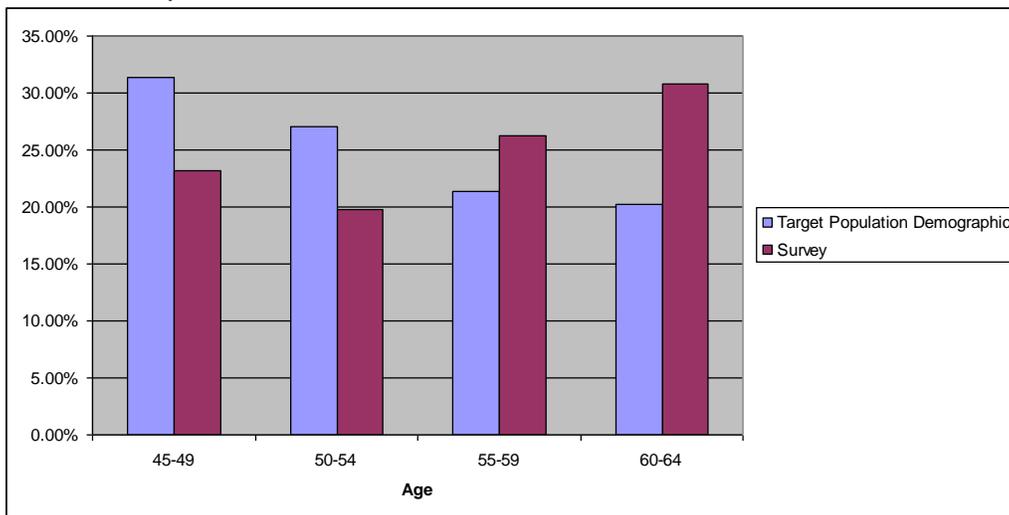


Figure 2: Target population age demographics compared to survey respondents

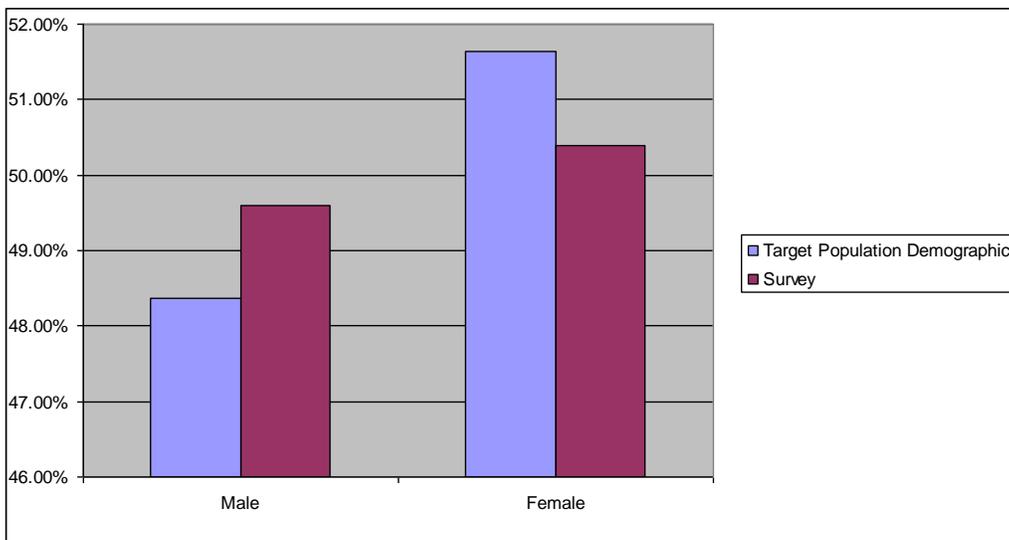


Figure 3: Target population gender demographics compared to survey respondents

The gender profile of survey respondents naturally falls within 1.2% of the profile of the target population.

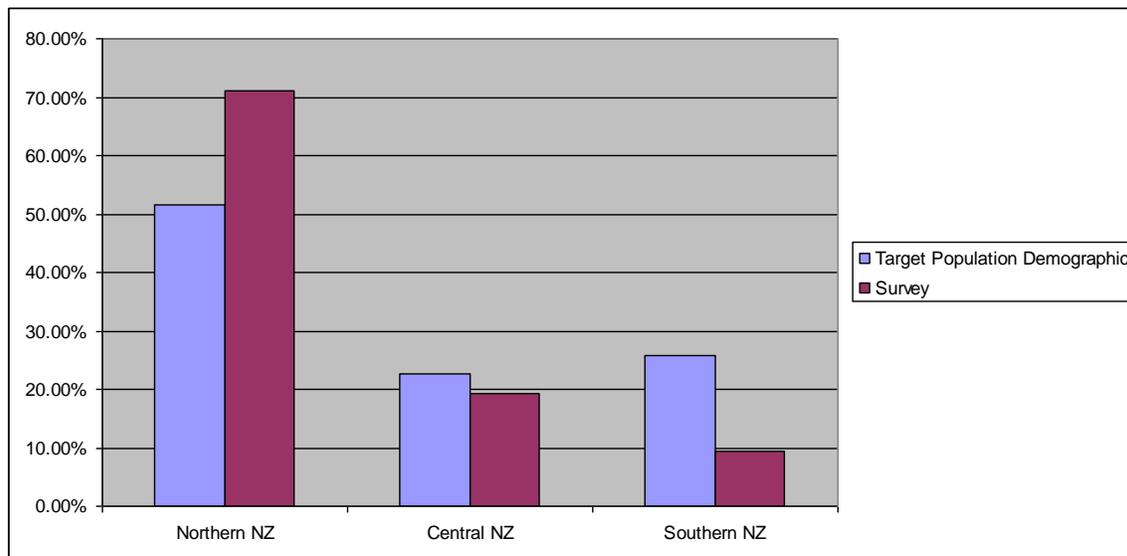


Figure 4: Target population location demographics compared to survey respondents

The greatest variance between the survey respondents and the target population is geographic, despite a separate media appeal being sent to South Island media in the second week of survey collection alerting them that Auckland was out-responding them. The upper half of the North Island is over-represented and the South Island is under-represented.

The expected margin of error for a representative sample size of more than a thousand closely matching the target demographic profile is 3.5% at the 95% confidence level (Dodd, 2008). This survey has a representative sample of 1,162 respondents, but the variations from the target demographic increase the margin of error. The broad brushstroke “mood of the cohort” nature of this research (where a view of the “majority” holding an opinion can range from 75 to 92%) requires that the sample be representative, but small variations in percentages do not significantly impact on the findings.

The sampling strategy is comparable to the US study, so comparisons between the two populations are valid.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics statements were announced and explained to focus group participants and care taken to ensure they understood participation was voluntary and confidential of individually-identifiable responses.

Ethics and confidentiality statements were included in the introduction to the quantitative survey.

Concerns about security and confidentiality of personal information provided over the internet were dealt with by the researcher subscribing to encryption and Verisign security services provided by Survey Monkey, and individual responses were made anonymous to the researcher by the option to not record individual computer IP addresses when respondents logged on to the survey. Respondents were advised that individual survey forms would be permanently deleted within 12 months of completion of the study.

Survey results were stored in Survey Monkey's encrypted website and were downloaded as aggregated results only.

The attitudinal and subjective nature of this research project made it susceptible to question bias. This was addressed through choice randomisation and multiple framing of questions, as outlined in the survey design.

Chapter 4: Results

Youthful spirit

New Zealander baby boomers resoundingly agree that a person is not “old” until they are in their eighties. The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 asked boomers, “how old is ‘old’?” and the mean answer was 81 years. This is slightly more optimistic than US boomers’ perception, which is 79.5 (Smith & Clurman, 2007).

Almost all (98.6%) New Zealand baby boomers agree that people should try to maintain a youthful spirit about life.

Eighty-nine percent agree that age is a state of mind and 88% aren’t worried about getting older. New Zealand boomers disagree (79%) that their best years are behind them and 70% do not see themselves facing any limits whatsoever because of their age. Overwhelmingly (91.6%), they disagree that there is little for people their age to look forward to besides getting older and coping with old age.

Like their American counterparts, New Zealand baby boomers have no intention of retiring in what they perceive to be only their middle-age, but unlike Americans, New Zealand boomers’ views in this area are more emphatic and universal. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of them say they have no intention of having a quiet retirement, compared to just 57.6% of American baby boomers, and 80% of New Zealanders say they have no intention of acting their age, compared to 68% of Americans. Both populations agree equally strongly (89%) that there is no reason for them to feel any less vital and energetic as they get older.

New Zealand boomers have a younger (in spirit) and more vigorous profile than their American counterparts, but are also grounded in a strong sense of social responsibility. More than 90% of them believe they have a part to play in addressing the important social issues facing the country, and almost 89% say they expect to pay their own way in the future. 89% say they have no intention of living beyond their means, but that doesn’t mean they’re prepared to see their means restricted – unlike their American counterparts, New Zealand baby boomers will find ways to get more rather than make do with less.

They remain youthful in profile – flexible, idealistic, individualistic, challenging, searching for answers, special, and above all, boundlessly, resiliently optimistic about the future.

Table 1: New Zealand and American baby boomers' agreement with statements relating to Youthfulness, ranked

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.			
Answer Options	NZ % top 2 boxes	US % top 2 boxes	NZ Response Count
People should try to maintain a youthful spirit about life	98.6%	96.6%	765
The possibilities afforded to us by technology are only going to continue to grow	97.6%	96.6%	828
In the future, older people will be much more active and engaged than older people in the past	94.1%	88.7%	769
I know how to use technology to make my life more interesting and more enjoyable	93.1%	90.2%	793
I believe that life is a set of endless opportunities no matter what your age	92.3%	87.3%	804
I like knowing what young people are doing and creating	91.7%	87.7%	772
Disagree: There is little for people my age to look forward to besides getting older and coping with old age	91.6%	85.6%	772
There is no reason why young people and older people can't enjoy the same kinds of things	90.7%	92.2%	806
There is no reason that you have to feel less vital and energetic as you get older	89.1%	89.0%	773
Age is a state of mind	89.0%	-	776
Disagree: I worry all the time about getting older	88.2%	84.8%	788
I like to discover new ways to use things and teach them to others	85.9%	86.1%	757
People my age can learn a lot from young people	85.0%	68.5%	768
I enjoy keeping up with new trends and the latest happenings	83.8%	57.2%	761
Disagree: The future belongs to the next generation, my generation won't have much to do with it	83.7%	83.2%	768
Disagree: My best years are behind me	79.3%	74.3%	769
I am always trying to think of something new and different to work toward	75.4%	69.2%	765
Disagree: I always try to act my age	73.0%	60.2%	789
I do not see myself as facing any limits whatsoever because of my age	69.7%	56.9%	824
The best years of Baby Boomers are yet to come	69.4%	60.8%	777
I like to seek out and try once in a lifetime experiences	69.0%	59.6%	790
I never look back, I always look forward	61.9%	43.3%	764
Disagree: Most people will never achieve the Kiwi/American dream	55.9%	46.5%	757
I like being the first to know about new technologies	52.3%	50.3%	772
Our society has become too dependent on technology and doesn't know how to function without it	50.3%	72.3%	767
Aging is inevitable so we just have to get used to slowing down and doing less	45.6%	49.7%	804

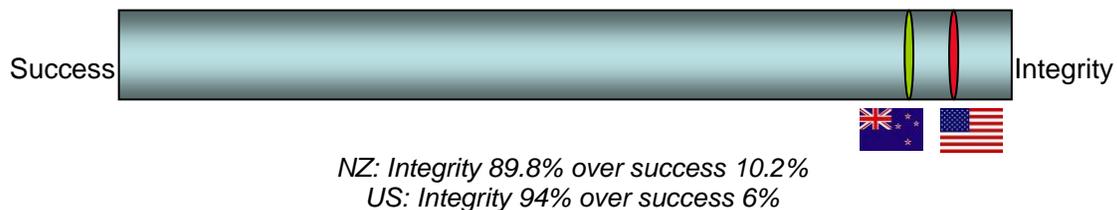
Sources: *New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009; US Boomer Dreams Study 2006*

New Zealand baby boomer values

Survey respondents were shown 25 pairs of statements and asked to choose which one of the two they identified with more closely. The major findings are discussed below and a full table of the 25 polarised value sets is shown in Appendix C.

Integrity

New Zealand baby boomers value integrity over success, but not quite as highly as US boomers. While not moralistic, they have a strong moral compass (82% agree that they have a very clear sense of right and wrong), and most agree that people have a responsibility to leave the world a better place (94% agree).

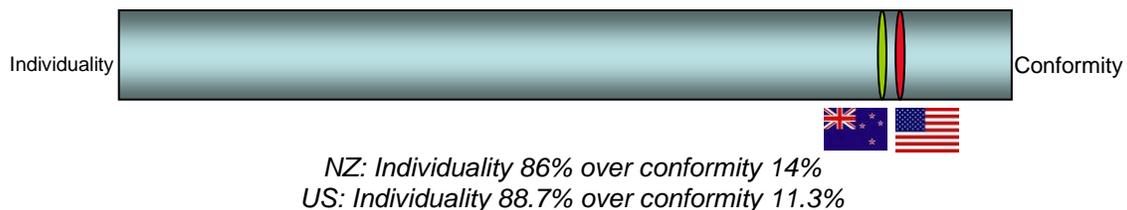


New Zealand baby boomers bring this integrity into the workplace and nearly three quarters of them (73%) will not work just for money.

Eighty-two percent of New Zealand boomers prefer to spend their money on life-enriching experiences such as travel and adventures, over success status symbols. They are 17% more likely than Americans (65%) to have this attitude/ Material things are not important to 53% of them, who see the Kiwi dream as being more about the way they live their life (74%) than about the things they have.

Individuality

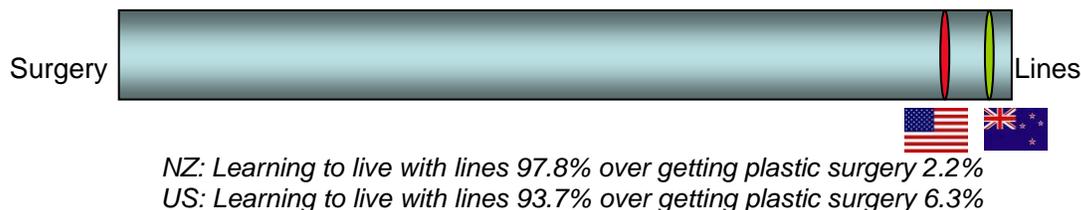
Both populations value their individuality highly.



Seventy-six percent of New Zealand boomers intend to spend time over the next 5-10 years carving out their own future path, and 81% agree that everybody should be able to do their own thing.

Vitality but not regained youth

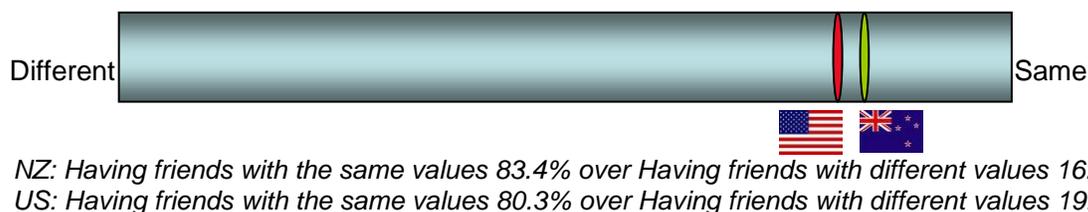
New Zealand boomers think they should learn to live with lines rather than having plastic surgery to get rid of the lines, and they are, unsurprisingly, ahead of the US in this view.



While they are concerned about trying to stay in shape (80%) and intend to focus more on improving their fitness and health (91%), New Zealand boomers do not wish they actually were younger. Eighty-three percent disagree with the statement, “I want to do everything I possibly can to look 10 or 15 years younger”; 52% disagree it’s important to keep their look current and fashionable; and 67% are not concerned about doing whatever they can to make themselves look attractive.

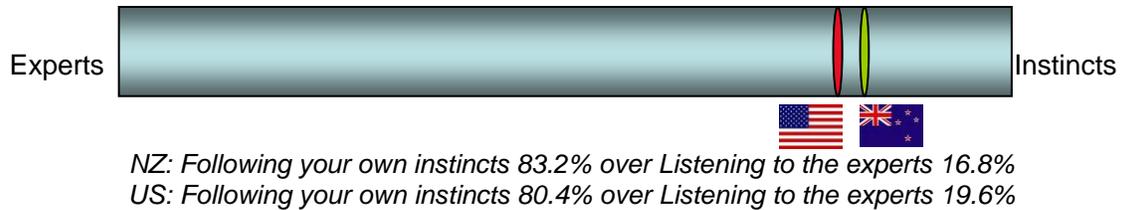
Shared values

New Zealand boomers tend to prefer to have friends who share their values, rather than choosing friends with different values from them; similar to but slightly more than American boomers. Nearly 54% of New Zealand baby boomers think that most other New Zealanders share their personal values and point of view.



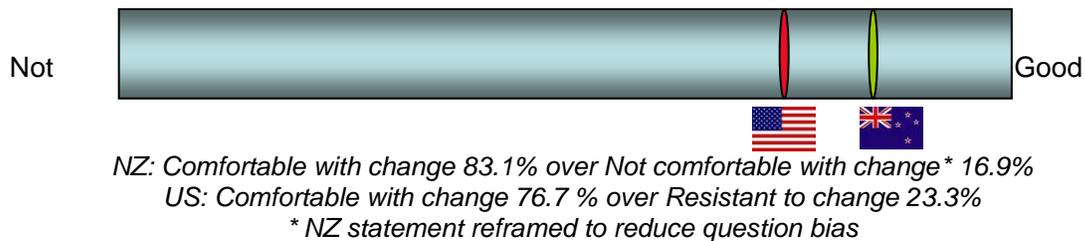
Instinctiveness

All baby boomers trust their own instincts over the opinions of experts, with New Zealand boomers marginally more likely to express this preference when asked to choose. Almost all (97%) New Zealand boomers say they trust their instincts in general, slightly more than in the US (95%). This finding is consistent with the strong moral certainty of New Zealand baby boomers (82% have a very clear sense of right and wrong).



Change

New Zealand boomers are very comfortable with change, more so than their American counterparts.

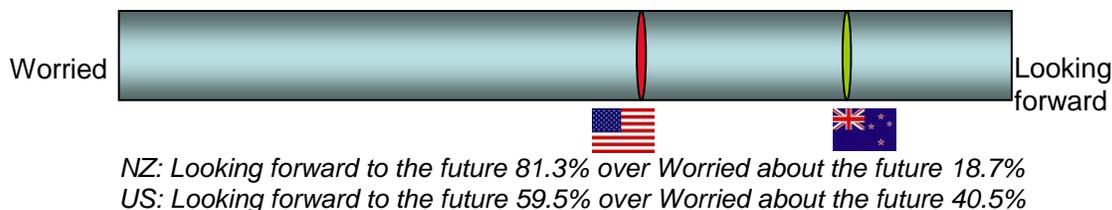


Fewer than 45% of New Zealand baby boomers agree with the statement, “Once I get something established and working in my life, I don’t like to change it”, whereas two-thirds (66%) of American boomers agree. More than 80% still like to change things about themselves just for the sake of changing, compared to 66% of American boomers; 88% agree that it’s important to continually challenge the established way of doing things (compared to 70%); and more than 90% of New Zealand boomers are happy to simply pick up and start over whenever life closes in on them, compared to 66% of American boomers.

However, while more than 73% of New Zealand boomers disagree that people who accept things are better off than those who try to change them, more than 87% of US baby boomers disagree with the same statement. This disparity may be due to cynicism about whether Americans think they’d be better off than whether they think they should or shouldn’t try to change things.

Optimism about the future

It may be the resilient optimism that New Zealand baby boomers display in such greater proportions than American baby boomers that explains why New Zealanders’ optimism about the future is substantially higher than that expressed by American boomers, despite the American study having been conducted in good economic times (2006) and the New Zealand study being conducted during a recession (2009).

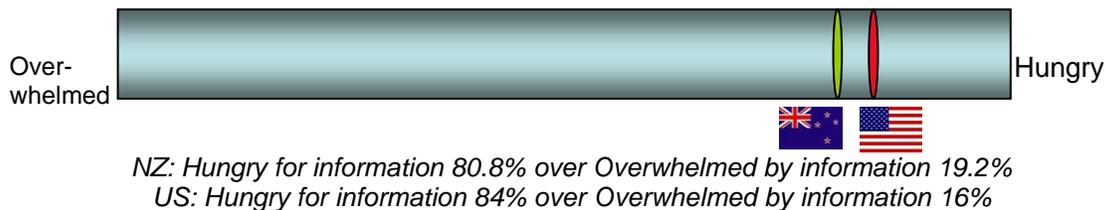


The US baby boomer profile identified distinct differences between “haves” and “have nots”, with “have nots” being more pessimistic and worried about the future. New Zealand’s more egalitarian society does not see such a wide socio-economic divide; in addition, New Zealand baby boomers have been socially conditioned throughout their lives to expect safety net support from the state. New Zealand baby boomers enjoyed high quality free education, including tertiary; excellent health care; and an expectation of a livable retirement pension amidst a background of economic prosperity. It may be a lifetime of the security of this safety net that has fostered this unshakeable optimism, or it may be endemic in the New Zealand character.

Most (92.3%) New Zealand boomers agree with the statement, “life is a set of endless opportunities no matter what your age”, compared with 87.3% of US boomers.

Information

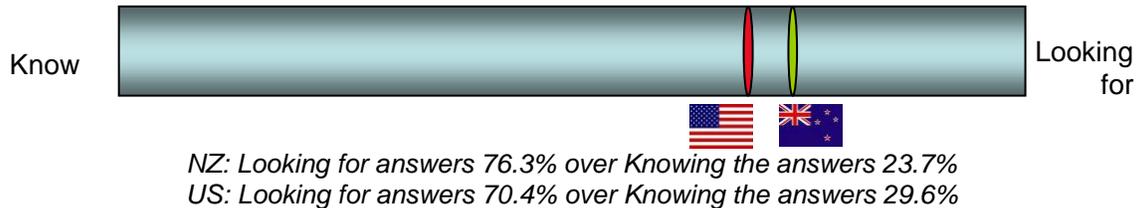
New Zealand Baby Boomers are hungry for information, almost as hungry as their American cousins. This characteristic is prevalent in baby boomers but not in the generational cohorts before them. It is counter-intuitive to the traditional view that “old people” are overwhelmed by how much information is now available to them, and suggests that baby boomers are prepared to use technology to help them gather the information they need.



Internet penetration is 88.6% among New Zealand baby boomers (Candy, 2009); more than 97% of them agree that the possibilities afforded to them by technology are only going to continue to grow and 93% agree they know how to use technology to make their lives more interesting and enjoyable. They are not opting out and winding down; they are determined to stay current.

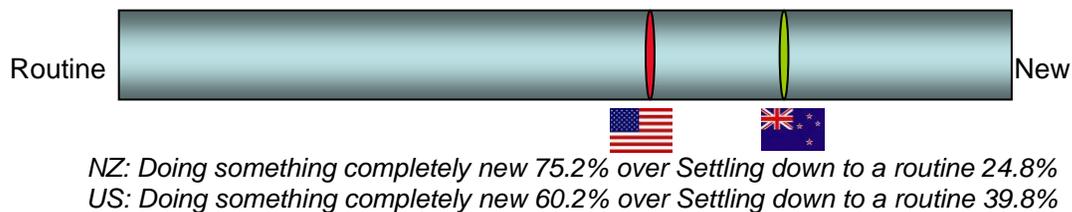
Curiosity

New Zealand baby boomers are still searching for answers, rather than assuming their now-extensive life experiences have equipped them with all of the knowledge they need to pass down; this trait distinguishes baby boomers, in New Zealand and elsewhere, from their predecessor generations.



Adventurousness

New Zealand baby boomers are keen on doing something completely new in preference to settling down to a routine. They are 15% more likely than American boomers to feel this way.



This adventurousness is highly characteristic of New Zealand baby boomers, who do not see any limits put on them whatsoever despite their increasing age (70% agree, compared to just 57% of American baby boomers). They intend to spend their next years doing things they've always wanted to do (90%); having new adventures that are exciting and new (88%); and getting more out of life (87%). Travel makes up an important part of their future plans (81%) and will spawn a new age of Boomer OEs.

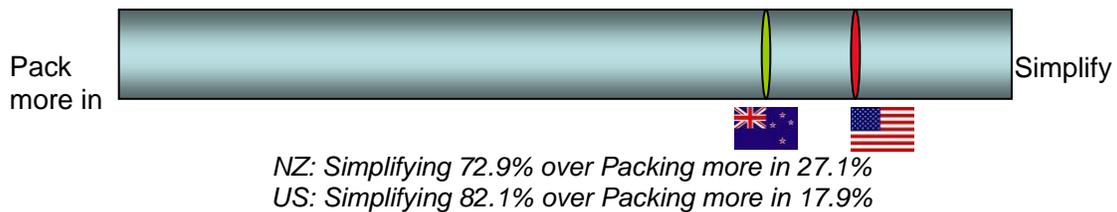
This adventurous spirit permeates every aspect of the New Zealand baby boomer's life, from leisure interests, to self-discovery, to the workplace.

Three quarters of them (73%) plan to explore their potential in new and interesting ways; 72% plan to fulfill their lifelong dreams and ambitions; 63% plan to find something totally new to do and the same number plan to unleash their personal potential. 60% plan to test themselves in new ways to prove themselves; half plan to move somewhere new, a third plan to start a new career, 21% will start their own business ... in fact, settling down to a routine doesn't appear to be on the agenda at all. The sense of endless possibilities before them is evidenced in their depth of commitment to a wide range of choices. Three

quarters of them are risk-takers (74% disagree with the statement, “I am more concerned than ever about protecting myself and not taking any risks at all”).

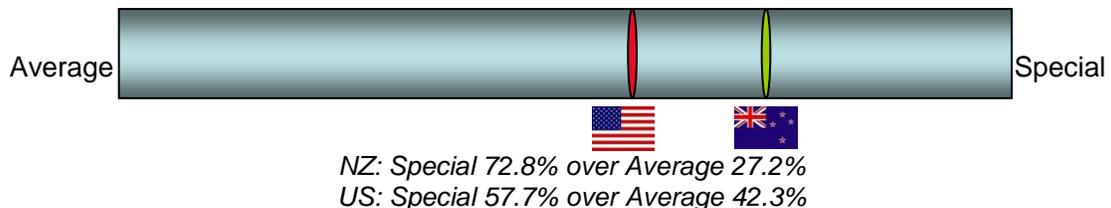
Simplicity

All boomers prefer simplifying over packing more in, with Americans more likely to hold this view. New Zealanders in general enjoy a simpler, more relaxed lifestyle in a considerably smaller and less crowded population, so this difference is not surprising.



Being more special

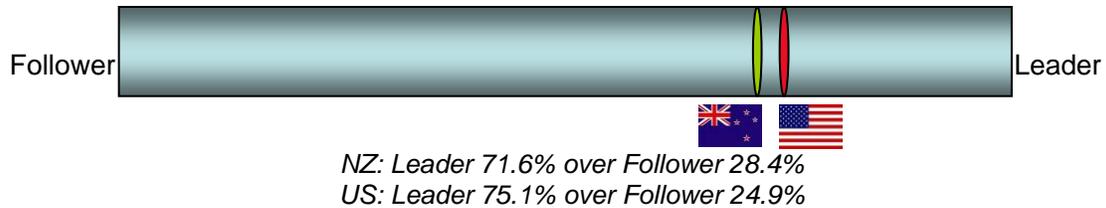
New Zealand baby boomers see themselves as special rather than average, and they are twenty percent more likely to feel this way than American boomers.



Because the New Zealand population does not display the same economic divide as the American population, and because New Zealand baby boomers have been cushioned from true economic hardship by a lifetime of social welfare safety net, the “presumption of economic security” (Smith & Clurman, 2007) that forged the baby boomer character remains unassailable in the New Zealand population. The nature of New Zealand’s protected and lush environment allows New Zealand baby boomers to personally experience abundance, and therefore continue to see themselves as particularly privileged.

Leadership

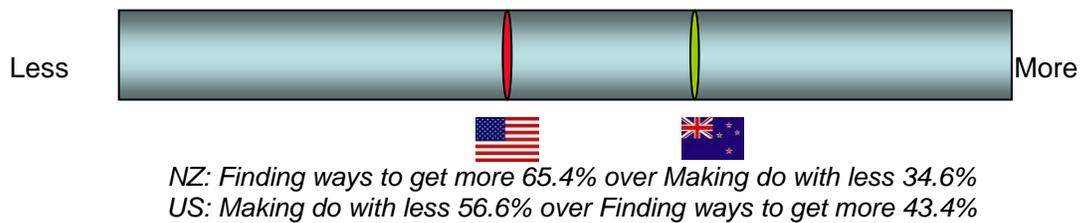
All boomers identify with being a leader over being a follower, with New Zealanders displaying a slight cultural tendency towards reticence.



However, the sense of being a leader displays itself in New Zealand baby boomers as fierce individuality, self-responsibility and independence. Three quarters of them believe the route to the Kiwi dream is to forge it themselves and that they can “carve their own path”. Their strong sense of moral certainty (82%) also factors in their leadership character.

Ingenuity

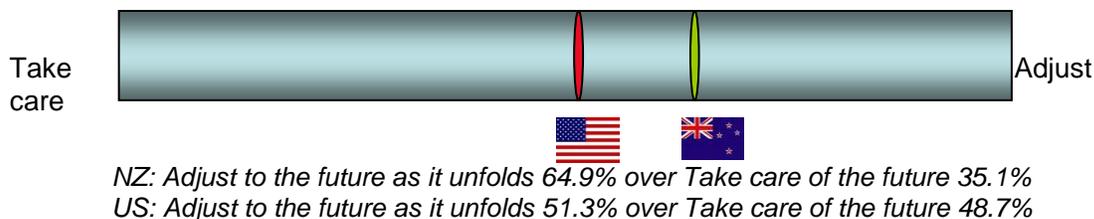
New Zealand boomers vary from US boomers in one major area, which is their unwillingness to make do with less and their willingness to use their Kiwi ingenuity to find ways to get more, which is a cornerstone New Zealand cultural trait that supports a general baby boomer unwillingness to compromise on what they want. The majority of American boomers are prepared to try to make do with less, whereas New Zealand boomers will continue to find ways to get more; there is a 22% gap between the views of the two populations, despite the New Zealand study being conducted during the 2009 recession.



New Zealand baby boomers are unwilling to accept things the way they are (73%); they have a high tolerance for continually challenging the established way of doing things (88%) and they consistently opt in large numbers for novelty and change.

Flexibility

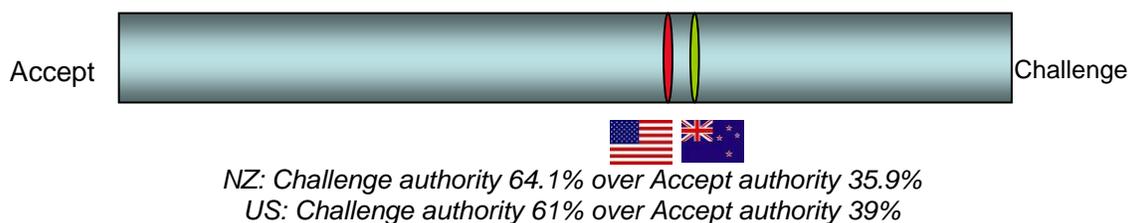
New Zealanders would rather adjust to the future than take care of it, more so than Americans, although both populations are equally laid-back.



Within that flexibility, however, is a strong sense of self-determination.

Challenge

The willingness to challenge rather than accept authority has been characteristic of boomers throughout their lives and remains a priority even as they age; this trait is slightly more prevalent in New Zealand.



New Zealand baby boomers also agree that it is important for people to continually challenge the established way of doing things (88% agree).

In summary, New Zealand baby boomers value several distinctive character traits that are in varying degrees similar to American baby boomer traits.

- Integrity
- Individuality
- Vitality
- Shared values
- Instinctiveness
- Change
- Optimism about the future
- Information
- Curiosity
- Adventurousness
- Simplicity
- Being more special
- Leadership
- Ingenuity

- Flexibility
- Challenge

A list of the full 25 polarised value sets and the comparative results are available in Appendix C.

Dimensions of character

Huber & Skidmore (2003) identified two distinctive characteristics among UK baby boomers, individualism and liberalism.

Smith & Clurman (2007) identified characteristics of youthfulness (immortality) and morality. The youthfulness characteristic is dominant and includes a number of dimensions, as shown in the figure below.

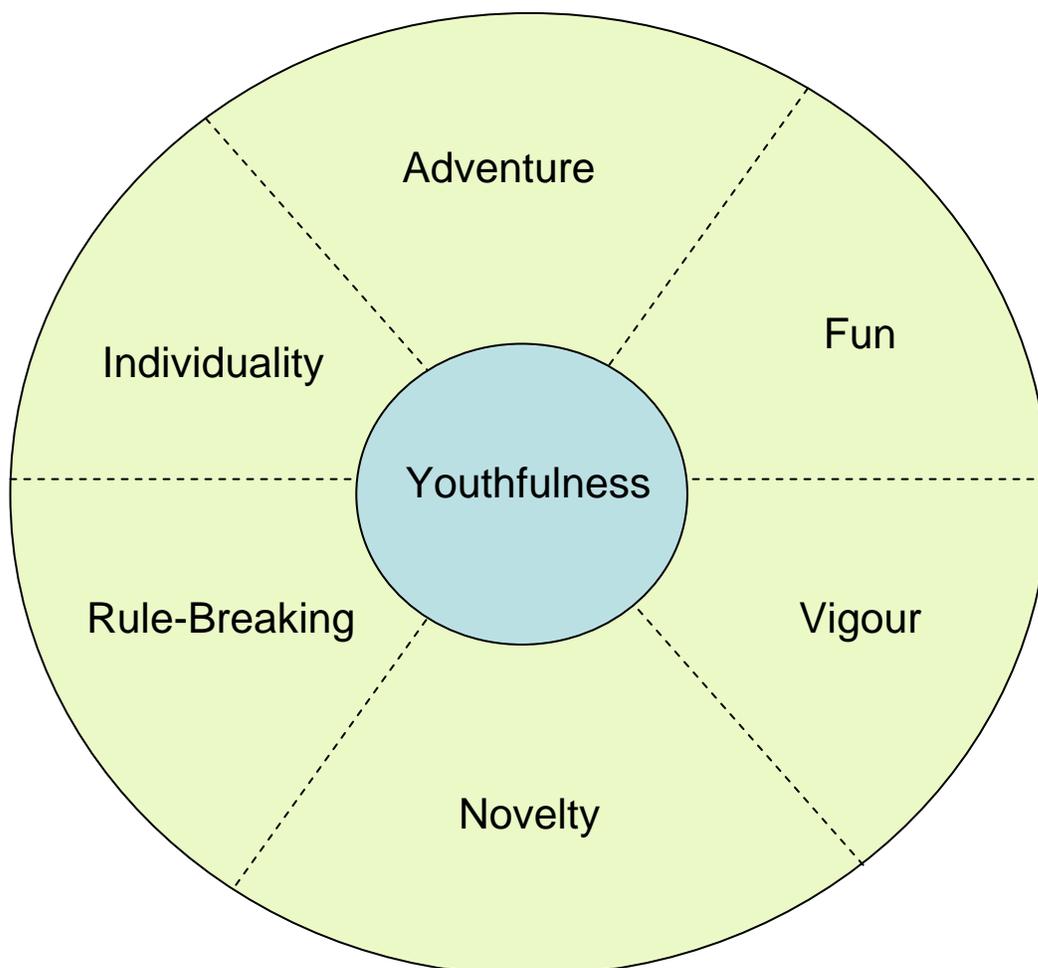


Figure 5: Smith & Clurman's Dimensions of Youthfulness, from "Generation Ageless" (Smith & Clurman, 2007), p. 26.

The significance of this is that the midlife of American baby boomers has a distinctively youthful aspect to it, which will carry over to older age. US baby boomers want to continue to matter and impact on the world. They have no intention of decelerating or fading out of the limelight.

Smith & Clurman's US Baby Boomer Characteristics

Summarised from "Generation Ageless" (Smith & Clurman, 2007).

Presumption of prosperity

- Unlimited potential & opportunities fueled by economic plenty
- Presumption of economic security, rooted in unbridled economic optimism, unprecedented abundance and wide ranging prosperity
- No need to sacrifice their interests or desires
- No need to accept conformity or limitations
- Unfettered, indulgent, absorbed, celebratory self
- No need to worry about economic survival, so free pursuit of fulfillment, enlightenment and meaning
- Economic problems (1973 oil shock and 1979 "confluence of crises" downturn led to drop in trust in public institutions and authorities) – boomers choice was to downsize expectations and learn to live with less or gear up to be more aggressive about securing what they wanted (boomers chose the latter)

Psychology of Affluence – the New Values

- Greater emphasis on self
- Less structured lifestyles
- More enriching personal environments
- Rule breakers par excellence (the self not being hemmed in)
- Superiority of novelty (all about the new, of which youth was the epitome)

After 1979, emergence of the New Realism

- Single minded focus on not losing
- Aggressive self interest "greed is good"
- Conspicuous consumption – luxury as an everyday experience
- Fundamental belief in a future that affords them the generational luxury of focusing on self-discovery, self-development and self-fulfillment.
- No interest in sacrifice of self

Not accepting limits means not compromising

- Confrontational
- Polarising
- Uncompromising
- Face challenges and limits by changing the kind of self on which they focus

Figure 6: Smith & Clurman's US Baby Boomer Characteristics

The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 had somewhat different findings. The study listed 140 attitudinal statements and asked respondents to agree or disagree on a four-point scale; this report's findings list the percentages of respondents selecting the top two "agree" choices. A full table of the 140 agree/disagree statements is available in Appendix D. To reduce question bias, a number of statements were expressed in the negative; they appear at the bottom of the table in Appendix D but are commonly reversed in this report to provide greater meaning.

In New Zealand, the two distinctive characteristics of baby boomers are vitality and responsibility, with vitality being more prevalent.

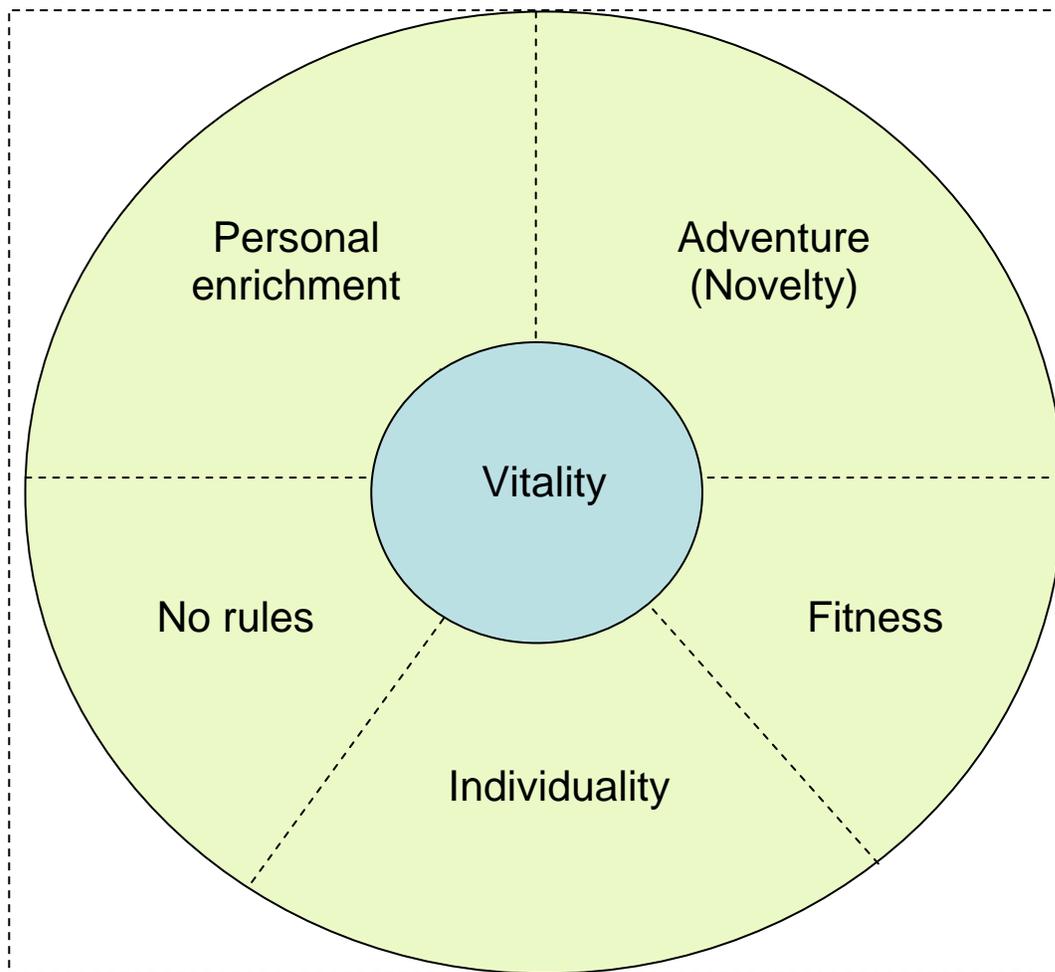


Figure 7: Dimensions of Kiwi Vitality

New Zealand baby boomers are less interested in rule-breaking and more likely to assume the rules simply don't apply to them. They are nearly 18% more likely than their American counterparts to focus their future energies on playing by fewer rules. They care less about fighting to champion social injustice and

causes to change the status quo, and more about using their innate Kiwi ingenuity to find new ways to get what they want, letting the status quo change as a result.

They're more about fitness than vigour, per se. They're more sporting, more outdoorsy and more likely to be physically vital and they almost universally (91%) plan to stay that way. They are nearly 30% more likely than their American counterparts to work towards being more physically active. They almost universally agree (94%) that in the future older people will be much more active and engaged than their predecessor generation, and they see no reason to feel less vital and energetic as they age (89%).

When they are not out exploring the world, New Zealand baby boomers savour their quiet satisfactions. Not asked in the US study but prevalent in the New Zealand optional responses was a focus on relationships, particularly with partners, and also with family. Personal enrichment is more important in greater depth in the New Zealand character than in the US baby boomer. Learning new skills or hobbies (84%, compared to 71% in the US), reading more books (89%, compared to 76% of American boomers)), enjoying more leisure activities (88%) and making new friends (83%, compared to 67% of American boomers) rate highly in the future plans of New Zealand baby boomers. They will also indulge themselves with more of life's luxuries more often (72%, compared to 48% of American boomers).

New Zealand baby boomers are strongly driven by the adventure dimension and associate this dimension with novelty. With their almost universally resilient optimism, they see no barriers to them reshaping their lives for their greater satisfaction. They have very little resistance to change (in fact they embrace it) and are both flexible and ingenious. Travel features highly in their plans – many baby boomers “did their OE”, or travelled internationally on extended working holidays, during their youth. The OE experience, once thought endemic in New Zealand, is no longer something young people do (although the ‘gap year’ is emerging), but New Zealand baby boomers plan to reprise it. Eighty-one percent plan to travel the world in the future, compared to just 60% of their American counterparts. Having new adventures that are exciting and fun (88%, compared to 71% of US boomers), getting more out of life (87%, compared to 75% of US boomers) and exploring their potential in new and innovative ways (73%, compared to just 62% of US boomers), all feature prominently in their plans.

Table 2: New Zealand and American baby boomers' agreement with statements relating to VITALITY, ranked

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.			
Answer Options	NZ % top 2 boxes	US % top 2 boxes	NZ Response Count

VITALITY

People should try to maintain a youthful spirit about life	98.6%	96.6%	765
I trust my instincts	97.2%	95.2%	757
In the future, older people will be much more active and engaged than older people in the past	94.1%	88.7%	769
I believe that life is a set of endless opportunities no matter what your age	92.3%	87.3%	804
I like knowing what young people are doing and creating	91.7%	87.7%	772
Disagree: There is little for people my age to look forward to besides getting older and coping with old age	91.6%	85.6%	772
There is no reason why young people and older people can't enjoy the same kinds of things	90.7%	92.2%	806
There is no reason that you have to feel less vital and energetic as you get older	89.1%	89.0%	773
Age is a state of mind	89.0%	Not asked	776
Young people can learn a lot from my generation	88.8%	92.6%	780
Disagree: I worry all the time about getting older	88.2%	84.8%	788
I like to discover new ways to use things and teach them to others	85.9%	86.1%	757
Personal enrichment is very important to me	85.8%	81.8%	789
People my age can learn a lot from young people	85.0%	68.5%	768
I enjoy keeping up with new trends and the latest happenings	83.8%	57.2%	761
Disagree: The future belongs to the next generation, my generation won't have much to do with it	83.7%	83.2%	768
Even though there are many things I would like to own, I prefer spending my money on experiences that will enrich my life, like travel, holidays, eating out, etc.	82.2%	65.1%	825
Everybody should be able to do his or her own thing	81.0%	64.7%	773
Disagree: My best years are behind me	79.3%	74.3%	769
I don't take myself too seriously, I laugh at myself all the time	79.3%	80.3%	826
I am always trying to think of something new and different to work toward	75.4%	69.2%	765
To achieve the Kiwi dream, you pretty much have to go your own way and do it on your own terms	75.2%	64.5%	775
I am better off now than my parents were at my age	75.1%	65.1%	767
Disagree: The Kiwi/American dream is more about the things I have than the way I live my life	74.2%	77.9%	799
Disagree: I always try to act my age	73.0%	60.2%	789
I do not see myself as facing any limits whatsoever because of my age	69.7%	56.9%	824
The best years of Baby Boomers are yet to come	69.4%	60.8%	777
I like to seek out and try once in a lifetime experiences	69.0%	59.6%	790
What we are lacking in New Zealand today is a compelling vision for the future	68.3%	72.0%	756
I have never felt trapped by a lack of training	68.2%	56.5%	790
The challenges our society faces in the future are formidable and alarming	66.5%	89.6%	773
The good opportunities I saw as a young person were there for me when I got older	64.6%	53.6%	788
New Zealanders should get used to the idea that our wealth is limited and most of us are not likely to become better off than we are now	64.0%	40.3%	816
Disagree: I'm more concerned with myself than with the world	63.4%	77.3%	787
Disagree: All I want out of life is enough to be comfortable;	62.6%	60.8%	792

more than that is not worth the effort			
I never look back, I always look forward	61.9%	43.3%	764
I like the idea of starting a new career or job if and when I retire	59.3%	58.3%	800
Disagree: Most people will never achieve the Kiwi/American dream	55.9%	46.5%	757
Disagree: Material things like the car I drive and the house I live in are really important to me	53.1%	62.6%	768
Disagree: Aging is inevitable so we just have to get used to slowing down and doing less	45.6%	49.7%	804
Lately, I have had to admit to myself that like it or not I am getting to be an old person	44.5%	38.0%	806
In the future, I intend to focus more on myself and less on others	42.0%	22.7%	772
I am concerned about buying products that express my own style and personality	39.3%	40.5%	794
In the future, I intend to focus less on myself and more on others	38.6%	61.6%	762

Sources: *New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009; US Boomer Dreams Study 2006*

A full table of the 140 agree/disagree statements is available in Appendix D.

Table 3: New Zealand and American baby boomers' agreement with statements relating to attitude to change, and technology adoption, ranked

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.			
Answer Options	NZ % top 2 boxes	US % top 2 boxes	NZ Response Count
Attitude to Change			
I trust my instincts	97.2%	95.2%	757
Whenever life closes in on me, I just pick up and start over	90.7%	66.0%	803
It is important for people to continually challenge the established way of doing things	87.8%	70.1%	771
Periodically, it is fun to change things about myself just for the sake of changing	80.4%	65.7%	772
People who accept things are better off than those who try to change them - disagree	73.4%	87.5%	794
Once I get something established and working in my life, I don't like to change it - Disagree	55.4%	33.6%	801
It is important for me to be seen as someone willing to defy convention	51.7%	35.9%	776
Technology Adoption			
The possibilities afforded to us by technology are only going to continue to grow	97.6%	96.6%	828
I know how to use technology to make my life more interesting and more enjoyable	93.1%	90.2%	793
I like being the first to know about new technologies	52.3%	50.3%	772
Our society has become too dependent on technology and doesn't know how to function	50.3%	72.3%	767

without it

Sources: *New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009*; *US Boomer Dreams Study 2006*
A full table of the 140 agree/disagree statements is available in Appendix D.

Individuality and self-reliance are strong national characteristics that are prevalent in the New Zealand baby boomer character. They almost universally (90%) want to spend their time in future doing the things they've always wanted to do, but may have deferred due to work and family responsibilities. New Zealand baby boomers are 16% more likely to feel this way than American baby boomers. They are also nearly 20% more likely to want to put themselves first more often – individuality expressed as self-focus.

At the core of what makes New Zealand baby boomers distinct from baby boomers from anywhere else is their Vitality (see Table 2, page 42). They are “fizzier” than American baby boomers, passionate and opinionated, fiercely independent in their individuality. They thirst for the new, see endless new horizons before them and no barriers to pursuing them, and are less willing to allow themselves to be reined in. Being kiwis, they will find a way around any obstruction in their pursuit of self-actualisation and the full and complete experience of their lives.

Balancing the youthful hedonism and vitality of New Zealand baby boomers is a strongly adult sense of responsibility, with four key dimensions.

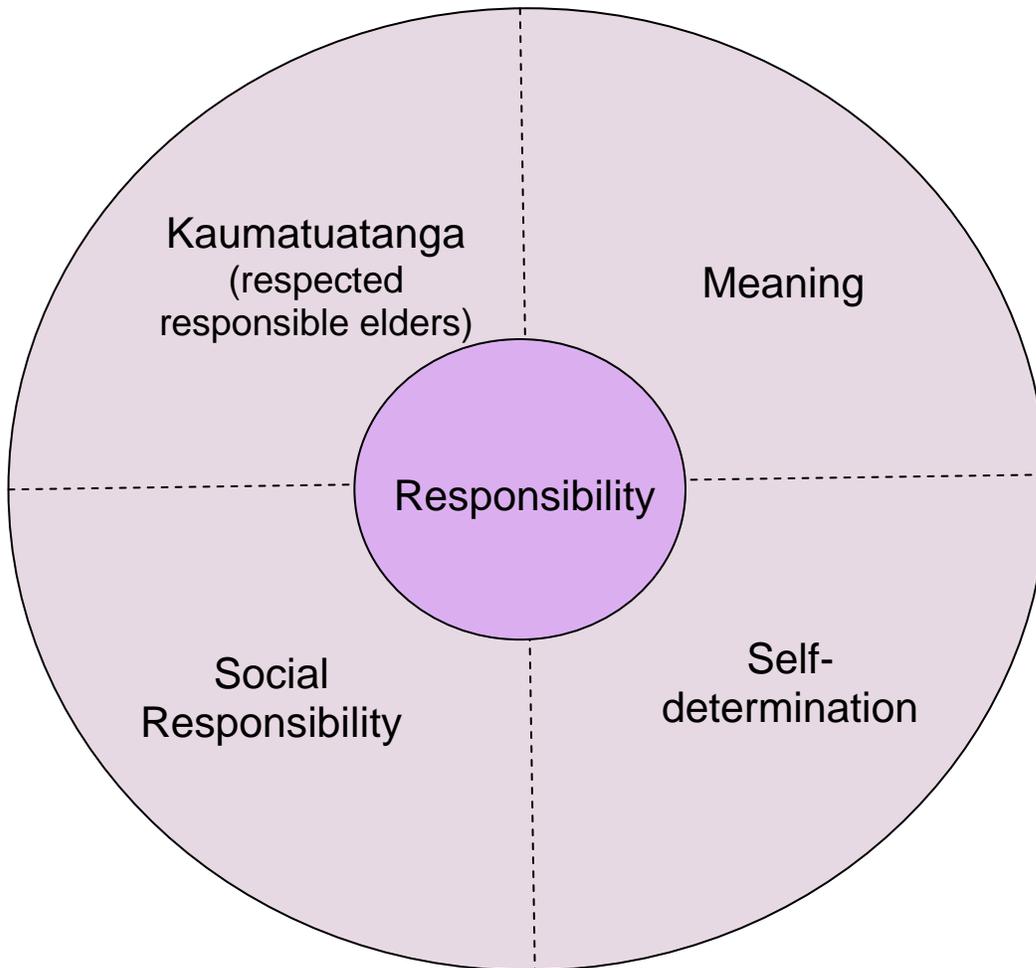


Figure 8: Dimensions of Kiwi Responsibility

Self-determination

New Zealand baby boomers are fiercely self-determined and independent, and have no intention of stepping back and letting the next generation take charge of their lives (84% disagree that the future belongs to the next generation and that their generation will have little to do with it). They have no intention of “sponging” on the young – 87% of them say they expect to pay their own way all their lives.

Table 4: New Zealand and American baby boomers' agreement with statements relating to self-determination, ranked

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.			
Answer Options	NZ % top 2 boxes	US % top 2 boxes	NZ Response Count
Self-determination			
I trust my instincts	97.2%	95.2%	757
Health is the driver to being able to do what you like	94.7%	Not asked	819
I expect to pay my own way all my life	86.9%	Not asked	763
To achieve the Kiwi/American dream, you pretty much have to go your own way and do it on your own terms	75.2%	64.5%	775
I have a plan for my future and I'm on track to achieve it	72.1%	Not asked	827
Disagree: I believe that my health over the next 10 years will restrict my abilities and capabilities	64.5%	59.2%	764

Sources: *New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009*; *US Boomer Dreams Study 2006*
A full table of the 140 agree/disagree statements is available in Appendix D.

While flexible and comfortable with change, they will take control over their future (81%) in larger numbers than their American counterparts (74%). 72% of them have a plan for their future and are on track to achieve it. 76% say they will carve out their own future path. However, they are unlikely to campaign for all baby boomers to be treated the same way; they believe strongly in an individual's right to do their own thing (81%, compared to 65% of US boomers), and they still believe that superannuation should be provided (62% agree) and that healthcare should be a universal right, even if they are not confident the system will be able to provide it (30% agree).

They are more likely to take personal responsibility for their financial wellbeing. While New Zealand baby boomers have ambitious plans to enjoy the next few decades, they are prepared to make sure they are financially secure so that they can fund their lifestyle choices (80%). They also plan to ensure they have enough money to get by, (82%, compared with 72% of US baby boomers), and they are taking responsibility for planning their own retirements (72%, compared to 68% in the US).

Recognising that health is the driver to them being able to do what they like (95% agree), they are taking control of improving their fitness and health (91%).

Social responsibility

Like their American cousins, New Zealand baby boomers believe strongly (94%) that "we are all responsible to leave the world a better place when we leave it". However, the New Zealand sense of social responsibility is more global and

altruistic than occurs in the American profile. This is characterised by Smith & Clurman (2007) as the US baby boomer tendency to champion issues and causes that matter to them personally, with every personal concern framed as a moral issue. New Zealand baby boomers are, on the whole, not moralistic, preferring a more laissez-faire, or “to each his own”, approach to moral issues.

Table 5: New Zealand and American baby boomers' agreement with statements relating to responsibility, ranked

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.			
Answer Options	NZ % top 2 boxes	US % top 2 boxes	NZ Response Count
RESPONSIBILITY			
I trust my instincts	97.2%	95.2%	757
People have a responsibility to leave the world a better place to live	94.1%	94.2%	768
Without passion and zeal by individual people, important social problems won't ever get solved	93.5%	90.2%	825
We are all responsible to leave the world a better place when we leave it	93.4%	93.8%	761
The actions of a single individual can make a big difference in life	92.9%	94.8%	802
I feel the need to not live beyond my means	89.0%	80.3%	803
I like to keep up with politics and public issues	88.1%	92.2%	758
We can solve the social problems we face today if everybody would just do their one small part to help	85.3%	85.3%	774
Businesses have a social responsibility to their employees and to the community	84.7%	88.9%	802
I think it is important for all of us to look for ways in which we can get involved and improve society	83.7%	93.7%	816
The future belongs to the next generation, my generation won't have much to do with it - Disagree	83.7%	83.2%	768
I am very passionate about the causes I care about	82.2%	94.8%	776
In every situation, I have a very clear sense of the right and the wrong thing to do	82.0%	80.6%	807
People should be entitled to the best medical care as a social right	79.0%	69.3%	780
I feel a responsibility to help others out and support the common good	79.0%	89.9%	787
Many of the best things about life today were pioneered and made possible by the actions and contributions of the Baby Boomer generation	78.7%	68.2%	827
If I'm doing something I love it doesn't matter if I get paid for it	77.3%	not asked	777
People should be entitled to a secure retirement as a social right	74.2%	64.3%	819
Disagree: Many of the social problems facing us today are rooted in the mistakes or failures of baby boomers	72.2%	51.4%	755
I feel that I have achieved the right balance of time in	67.3%	58.2%	768

my life for all the things that are important to me			
Unless the media embraces a social problem, it will never get the money and attention it needs to get solved	66.2%	63.6%	760
After my children have left home, I will have more time and energy in the years ahead to do something important	61.4%	47.7%	753
Economic well-being in this country is unfairly distributed	58.1%	61.3%	763
Our charities, faith-based organisations and families should be playing a greater role in creating stronger communities and to help people in need	57.4%	84.1%	756
The best way to get social problems solved is to work through non-governmental organisations that have dedicated budgets and a single purpose	55.1%	61.4%	801
I feel that my personal values and point of view are shared by most New Zealanders today	53.8%	59.0%	797
I feel the need for something more meaningful to work toward in my life	48.6%	59.5%	806
I often feel that something is missing from my life	39.6%	46.8%	765

Sources: *New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009*; *US Boomer Dreams Study 2006*

A full table of the 140 agree/disagree statements is available in Appendix D.

New Zealand baby boomers almost universally champion the obligation of responsibility over the assertion of personal rights (90%, compared with 60% of US baby boomers).

As a result, New Zealand baby boomers are much less likely to get involved in politics (just 18% compared to 63% of American boomers) or social causes that matter to them personally (57% compared to 66% of American boomers). They are more likely to be interested in environmental issues (60% compared to 50% in the US); and in working to make the community a better place (70%, compared to 64% of Americans); and giving more time (56%) or money (42%) to charity.

Eighty-five percent believe businesses have a social responsibility to their employees and to the community, and they are likely to impose this view on business even more in the future, backed by the weight of their considerable purchasing power.

New Zealand is a more egalitarian and secular society than the USA. There is well-established New Zealand research in the areas of social equity, women's rights and religion, so these areas were largely excluded from the New Zealand study. Those questions that were retained confirm known existing views. For example, just 14% of New Zealanders plan to focus their time in the future on sharing their religious beliefs with others, or agree that they look to religion as a source of comfort, compared to nearly half (46% and 52% respectively) of Americans. The prevailing perception of New Zealand as already egalitarian is reflected in measurements of interest in working to fix the inequities of society

(just a third of New Zealanders, compared to half of all Americans; and championing human rights in society (just 32% of New Zealanders, compared to 45% of Americans).

Meaning

Work provides meaning for New Zealand baby boomers, which is a major reason for them electing to remain in the workforce past 65. They will not yield their capacity to achieve meaning through work.

More than 80% agree that work is an important part of who they are; 83% say it is important to their self-esteem. But “work” does not necessarily mean the same as “job”. Baby boomers see purposeful endeavour as “work” and a “job” as a set of tasks.

Almost all New Zealand baby boomers (95%) agree that they have been able to make a meaningful contribution in their job, higher than their American colleagues at 91%. Most of them (85%) expect to get pleasure from their work and nearly 60% disagree that the only reason they work is for the money, while three-quarters are unwilling to work at a boring job even if the pay is good. This generational expectation that their jobs will provide meaning separates the baby boomer cohort from predecessor cohorts, which were more inclined to view a job as an economic necessity and a duty.

Despite universally agreeing they have made a meaningful contribution to work, only two-thirds of New Zealand baby boomers agree that they have been as successful as desired, and 40% feel something is still missing from their life, suggesting a gap in personal fulfillment that may well lead to an increased search for meaning.

Three-quarters of New Zealand baby boomers agree that if they are doing something they love, it doesn't matter whether they get paid for it, while nearly two-thirds (66%) agree that they don't have to have a job to feel good about themselves. This suggests they can separate the two and do not necessarily need to be tied to the workplace to meet their “meaning” needs. This is good news for the voluntary sector, which can tap into the New Zealand baby boomer thirst for purposeful endeavour, even without the money to pay them. Provided community organisations can deliver the opportunities to learn, grow and enhance the need baby boomers have to continue to matter, they will attract a large pool of talented and experienced volunteers.

The search for meaning will drive half of New Zealand baby boomers to seek to redefine the purpose of their lives, and in the search, perhaps work on solving their perceived problem that New Zealand is lacking a compelling vision of the future (68% agree).

In the future, New Zealand baby boomers plan to spend their time and energy on getting more out of life (82%, compared to 72% of US boomers); exploring their potential (73%, compared to 62% of US boomers); and exploring the world and within themselves to find and enhance their sense of meaning.

A deep sense of meaning and purpose adds to the New Zealand baby boomer desire for personal enrichment, prevalent in the Vitality character dimension.

Kaumatuatanga – respected, responsible elders

The Maori concept of kaumatuatanga establishes a respected place for older people, affording them status, with an expectation that they will add to the standing, or mana, of the community or society they represent. This is a distinctly adult world view, involving a responsibility to nurture and protect younger adults and children, recognise and foster youth potential, help to resolve community disputes, as well as carry the culture and maintain the traditions and integrity of society (Durie, 2001).

New Zealand baby boomers have a strong sense of tradition and values, grounded in a deeply held belief in what is right and wrong.

They report that they are sick and tired of hearing people disrespect New Zealand values (63% agree); they respect the past (70% agree it is important to learn from the past and to do things in a proven way); and they feel a responsibility to help others out and support the common good (80%).

New Zealand baby boomers make good mentors. Two-thirds of them intend to become involved in mentoring and helping young people; nearly all (89%) believe young people can learn a lot from their generation and, most promisingly, that they can learn a lot from young people (85% agree). They use their ingenuity to discover new ways to use things and enjoy teaching them to others. They are intensely interested in what young people are doing and creating (92% agree) and, youthful in spirit themselves, easily identify with the young (more than 90% agree that there is no reason why young people and older people can't enjoy the same things).

Nearly 81% of New Zealand baby boomers who have children intend to help them financially.

Almost all New Zealand baby boomers disagree that the future belongs to the next generation and that they won't have much to do with it (84% disagree). They are preparing for a future in which older people will be much more active and engaged than older people in the past (94% agree).

At the core of what defines the depth of the New Zealand baby boomer character is responsibility. New Zealand baby boomers have a strong moral compass,

without being burdened by a moralistic attitude that would see their values imposed on others. They differ from their counterparts in other parts of the world with their broader social view over self-interest and it is this more altruistic (iwi, hapu, whanau, self), inter-generational view that resonates with the Maori concept of kaumatuatanga.

Table 6: New Zealand and American baby boomers' agreement with statements relating to Kaumatuatanga (the place of respected, responsible elders), ranked

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

Answer Options	NZ % top 2 boxes	US % top 2 boxes	NZ Response Count
I trust my instincts	97.2%	95.2%	757
People have a responsibility to leave the world a better place to live	94.1%	94.2%	768
Without passion and zeal by individual people, important social problems won't ever get solved	93.5%	90.2%	825
We are all responsible to leave the world a better place when we leave it	93.4%	93.8%	761
The actions of a single individual can make a big difference in life	92.9%	94.8%	802
There is too much concern with rights and not enough with responsibilities	89.7%	59.7%	825
We can solve the social problems we face today if everybody would just do their one small part to help	85.3%	85.3%	774
I think it is important for all of us to look for ways in which we can get involved and improve society	83.7%	93.7%	816
Disagree: The future belongs to the next generation, my generation won't have much to do with it	83.7%	83.2%	768
In every situation, I have a very clear sense of the right and the wrong thing to do	82.0%	80.6%	807
I feel a responsibility to help others out and support the common good	79.0%	89.9%	787
If I'm doing something I love it doesn't matter if I get paid for it	77.3%	Not asked	777
Disagree: The Kiwi/American dream is more about the things I have than the way I live my life	74.2%	77.9%	799
It is important to learn from the past and to do things in a proven way	69.9%	83.0%	755
What we are lacking in New Zealand today is a compelling vision for the future	68.3%	72.0%	756
I feel a growing need to share important occasions with others	63.3%	67.0%	818
Our charities, faith-based organisations and families should be playing a greater role in creating stronger communities and to help people in need	57.4%	84.1%	756
I have a strong connection with the community where I live	55.5%	59.4%	818
I feel the need for something more meaningful to work toward in my life	48.8%	59.5%	806

Sources: New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009; US Boomer Dreams Study 2006

A table of all of the 140 agree/disagree statements is available in Appendix D. To reduce question bias, a number of statements were expressed in the negative; they appear at the bottom of the table in Appendix D but are commonly reversed in this report to provide greater meaning.

The next 5-10 years – what’s important

In the New Zealand Boomer Dreams 2009 Study, New Zealand baby boomers were asked to use a seven-point scale to show how likely they were to focus their energies and invest their time over the next five to ten years, based on 65 different life choices. They were also given an option to choose other life focus preferences, but there were no significant issues missed off the original list, beyond a desire to focus on their relationship with their partner.

The preservation of their vitality ranked very highly with New Zealand baby boomers, whose top-ranking choice was improving their fitness and health (91%). This choice was introduced in the New Zealand study and was not asked in the US study, following focus group comments that they saw good health as the key to being able to enjoy everything else life had to offer.

New Zealand boomers’ top ten list of indulgences is:

Improving your fitness and health	91%**
Doing things you’ve always wanted to do	90%*
Reading more books	89%*
Having new adventures that are exciting and fun	88%*
Enjoying more leisure activities	88%**
Getting more out of life	87%*
Learning a new skill or hobby	84%*
Making new friends	83%*
Having enough money to get by	82%
Travelling and seeing the world	81%
Taking more control over your future	81%*

* appears on both top ten lists

** not asked in US study

In contrast, the top ranking life focus choices for American baby boomers were:

Spending more time with family	77%
Reading more books	76%
Getting more out of life	75%
Taking more control over your future	74%
Doing things you've always wanted to do	73%

Having enough money to get by	72%
Learning a new skill or hobby	71%
Having new adventures that are exciting and fun	71%
Planning your retirement	68%
Making new friends	67%
Saving for/spending money on your grandchildren	67%

The proportions of New Zealand baby boomers ranking the same choices was 14% higher across the Top 10 range.

A list of all future focus choices and compared responses is available in Appendix E.

New Zealand baby boomers and work

Work provides meaning for New Zealand baby boomers. They universally (95%) feel they have been able to make a meaningful contribution in their job; 83% say work is important to their self-esteem and that it keeps them young (83%). For the vast majority of New Zealand baby boomers, work is an important part of who they are (80%). But they expect to have more than a job. Unlike their predecessor cohorts, they expect to get pleasure, satisfaction and fulfillment from their work (85% agree), and they want to continue to have opportunities to grow, learn and develop (78% agree).

They differentiate between meaningful work (which they value) and jobs. Two-thirds say they don't need to have a job to feel good about themselves, yet they universally enjoy meaningful work. Three-quarters of New Zealand baby boomers say they would *not* be willing to work at a boring job even if the money were good, compared to 63% of US baby boomers.

Whether they work for others or for themselves, two-thirds of New Zealand baby boomers will focus their energies and invest their time in the next 5-10 years on excelling at their job.

The core vitality of New Zealand baby boomers will continue to make them valuable, productive contributors in the workplace – if employers can keep them there. 30% plan to start a new career; 38% say they will be running their own business, 21% will start one. 60% say they like the idea of starting a new career or job if and when they retire. Huber & Skidmore (2003), seeing similar trends overseas, described this as the “elderpreneur” phenomenon.

New Zealand baby boomers, after all, see endless opportunities before them and have very low resistance to change. They are risk takers and they back themselves (97% trust their own instincts). They are currently at the height of

their productivity; retain youthful, vigorous approach to work, and exhibit a great capacity to continue to learn.

Table 7: New Zealand and American baby boomers' agreement with statements reflecting attitudes that matter in the workplace, ranked

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.

Answer Options	NZ % top 2 boxes	US % top 2 boxes	Response Count
Attitudes that count in the workplace			
I trust my instincts	97.2%	95.2%	757
I have been able to make a meaningful contribution in my job	95.2%	90.8%	763
Disagree: At this stage of my life I should not have to learn new skills	89.7%	-	768
Young people can learn a lot from my generation	88.8%	92.6%	780
I keep an eye out for new things to try or to learn	87.9%	87.3%	818
It is important for people to continually challenge the established way of doing things	87.8%	70.1%	771
I like to discover new ways to use things and teach them to others	85.9%	86.1%	757
People my age can learn a lot from young people	85.0%	68.5%	768
Disagree: I don't expect to get much pleasure from my work; work is just what you do to earn a living	84.7%	76.8%	823
Businesses have a social responsibility to their employees and to the community	84.7%	88.9%	802
Work is important to my self-esteem	83.0%	-	766
Working keeps you young	82.5%	-	812
In every situation, I have a very clear sense of the right and the wrong thing to do	82.0%	80.6%	807
My work is an important part of who I am	80.2%	-	763
I would rather have too much to do and risk being stressed than too little and be bored	79.6%	65.3%	818
I am continuing to grow in my work	78.3%	-	788
If I'm doing something I love it doesn't matter if I get paid for it	77.3%	-	777
Disagree: Even when there is a new and better way to do things, I prefer to stick with what I know as long as it's working for me	76.2%	63.5%	803
I am always trying to think of something new and different to work toward	75.4%	69.2%	765
Disagree: I'd be willing to work at a boring job as long as the pay is good	73.3%	62.8%	791
It is important to learn from the past and to do things in a proven way	69.9%	83.0%	755
I have never felt trapped by a lack of training	68.2%	56.5%	790
My job has left me enough free time to pursue my outside interests	67.6%	62.3%	788
I feel that I have achieved the right balance of time in my life for all the things that are important to me	67.3%	58.2%	768
My job has offered me security	66.3%	57.4%	787
I have been able to be as successful as I desired	65.8%	49.7%	765
I don't need to have a job to feel good about myself	65.7%	-	758
Hard work always pays off	65.2%	65.0%	791
I am sick and tired of hearing people disrespect New Zealand values	63.4%	69.0%	756
If I just work hard enough, I eventually will achieve what I want	62.8%	62.8%	812
Disagree: All I want out of life is enough to be comfortable; more than that is not worth the effort	62.6%	60.8%	792
I like the idea of starting a new career or job if and when I retire	59.3%	58.3%	800
Disagree: The only reason I continue to work is because I need the	58.9%	-	764

money			
I have begun to slow down and do things at a less hurried pace	53.1%	68.7%	817
I feel the need for something more meaningful to work toward in my life	48.8%	59.5%	806
Once I get something established and working in my life, I don't like to change it	44.6%	66.4%	801

Sources: *New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009*; *US Boomer Dreams Study 2006*

They are not slowing down. Eighty percent of New Zealand baby boomers say they would rather have too much to do and risk being stressed than too little and be bored; just half agree they have begun to slow down somewhat and two-thirds disagree with the statement, “All I want out of life is enough to be comfortable, more than that is not worth the effort”. They believe that hard work yields results (65%).

They do exhibit some characteristics commonly associated with more experienced workers, however. They have a strong moral core (82% have a clear sense of right and wrong) and support respect for New Zealand values (63%). Two-thirds agree their jobs have offered them security.

New Zealand Baby Boomers are hungry for information. They almost universally thirst to learn new skills (90%) and try to keep an eye out for new things to try and learn (88%).

They may not have been born into the computer age, but their willingness to adopt and enjoy new technology is universal – 98% agree with the statement, “the possibilities afforded us by technology are only going to continue to grow”. More significantly, 93% agree that they know how to use it to make their lives more interesting and enjoyable. This characteristic is prevalent in baby boomers but not in the generational cohorts before them. It is counter-intuitive to the traditional view that “old people” are overwhelmed by how much information is now available to them, and suggests that baby boomers are prepared to use technology to help them gather the information they need. Half of all New Zealand baby boomers say they like being the first to know about new technologies (a characteristic of innovators and early adopters) and they are, in general, 20% less likely than their American counterparts to lament that society has become too dependent on technology.

New Zealand baby boomers are well educated and experienced. Their vitality and adventurousness mean that they are constantly discovering new and better ways to do things and they are willing to teach them to others (86% agree).

They are good at teaching others and not so arrogant as to assume they have all the answers. They acknowledge the importance of learning from the past and doing things in a proven way (70% agree), but bring their characteristic sense of challenge into play against established and entrenched ways of doing things (88% say it's important to continually challenge established ways of doing

things). Three-quarters of New Zealand baby boomers say they are not interested in sticking to the “tried and true” if there is a new and better way of doing things.

As well as agreeing in large numbers that younger people have a lot to learn from their generation (89%, 4% less than US baby boomers), they also feel they have a lot to learn from younger people (85% agree, compared to just 68% of US baby boomers). They don't see any reason why young people and older people can't enjoy the same things (91% agree) and 92% say they like knowing what young people are doing and creating. This augers well for integration in the workplace and for succession planning.

New Zealand baby boomers have high expectations of employers too; 85% feel that businesses have a social responsibility to their employees and the community.

Ideal Work Environment

In 2007 the Association of American Retired People (AARP) (Groeneman, 2008) conducted research into what the ideal workplace should look like for Americans aged 45 to 74 who were currently working or looking for work.

While the AARP's study surveyed workers in the decade older than baby boomers as well as baby boomers themselves, and the New Zealand study included non-workers (but only of baby boomer age), comparisons can still be made between the American and New Zealand populations.

Notably, the top four most essential or important workplace benefits are the same in both populations, with “a chance to use your skills and talents” ranked as the single most important thing by almost 98% of New Zealand baby boomers and 91% of American workers. New Zealand workplaces that tap into this overwhelming need among baby boomers to utilise their skills and talents will both retain such workers and benefit from the loyalty and appreciation they are likely to receive as a result of responding to the need.

A friendly work environment, the chance to do something worthwhile and the need to feel respected by co-workers also rank consistently highly among New Zealanders and American older workers, with 92-98% of respondents valuing them. These findings are not unexpected when the characteristic need of baby boomers to pursue meaning and relevance are considered.

The need to feel respected by the boss ranked as “essential” for 52% of New Zealand respondents and “essential” or “important” for 91.3% of them, compared to 75% of American respondents. While its overall New Zealand ranking was a fifth, it was the second most essential workplace aspect for many respondents, making it important to most baby boomers but an essential deal-breaker for

some. This finding may provide guidance for New Zealand employers struggling with “brain drain” coming from the top; it may also provide some insight into a growing tendency among some New Zealand baby boomers to leave their employers and start their own businesses.

Breeding a culture of respect from managers and between co-workers could be one of the most important challenges facing the workplace over the next 20-40 years.

Table 8: Ideal workplace

Respondents asked: If you could choose your ideal working environment, how important or unimportant would the following things be?			
Answer Options	% Essential or Important New Zealand	% Essential AARP US	NZ Response Count
Chance to use your skills and talents	97.6%	91.0%	839
A friendly work environment	97.6%	88.0%	840
Feeling respected by your co-workers	92.7%	80.0%	839
The chance to do something worthwhile	92.6%	86.0%	839
Feeling respected by your boss	91.3%	75.0%	837
The opportunity to learn something new	89.1%	75.0%	836
Flexible hours	87.9%	74.0%	842
Chance to pursue something you've always wanted to do	86.4%	68.0%	840
Chance to pass on your knowledge to others	84.8%	not asked	841
Competitive pay	82.0%	76.0%	837
A short commute	77.3%	70.0%	836
Work allowing you to help others	74.9%	77.0%	838
On-the-job training	71.8%	56.0%	838
Opportunity for part-time work	69.3%	38.0%	836
Opportunity for extended unpaid time off	60.3%	not asked	837
Ability to work from home	58.6%	34.0%	840
Company pension benefits	51.6%	69.0%	835
Company paid healthcare insurance	50.1%	74.0%	832
Extra paid holidays	50.1%	79.0%	836
Sex, ethnic and racial diversity	48.6%	48.0%	838

Sources: *New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009* and *AARP Staying Ahead of the Curve Survey 2007* (Groeneman, 2008)

Notes:

The AARP study surveyed 1,500 45-74 year olds in the US in 2007; the New Zealand study surveyed 1,162 45-64 year olds in NZ in 2009.

Some questions were altered slightly to align with NZ employment conditions; two extra choices were included in the NZ study (arising out of local focus group input) and the US 401(k) choice was omitted from the NZ study.

All choices were randomised to reduce recency and latency bias.

The AARP survey question, “which of the following things, if any, are absolutely essential parts of your ideal job?”, varied from the New Zealand survey question, “If you could choose your ideal working environment, how important or unimportant would the following things be?”. The reason for this is that New Zealanders may be culturally reluctant to choose the classification “absolutely essential”, so a four-point scale rank was introduced and the top two included in the results.

Concerns

Contrary to popular advice, New Zealand baby boomers do not intend to spend the next five to ten years worrying whether they will have enough money to get by.

While 80% aspire to be financially secure at a level that will fund their desired lifestyle, the focus of their energies over the next decade will be on maintaining their vitality. And New Zealand baby boomers overwhelmingly see health as their key to that vitality.

Health is the number one issue that worries New Zealand baby boomers

The number one issue for New Zealand baby boomers going forward is the preservation of their health and vitality. It is the single biggest issue that worries more than two thirds of New Zealand baby boomers. This finding supports earlier research by the EEO Trust (McGregor, 2006) that found half (49%) of retired respondents to its survey cited health as the most important factor that had caused their retirement. More than 91% of New Zealand baby boomers are likely to make health their priority over the next 5-10 years and almost 80% say they are concerned about trying to stay in shape. They universally (95%) agree that health is the driver to being able to do what they want and that in the future, older people will be much more active and engaged than older people in the past (94%). Baby boomers do not see any reason why they should have to feel less vital and energetic as they get older (89%).

Getting sick and frail, losing their mental sharpness, losing their ability to live independently and being short of energy and vitality are the things they worry about most.

Yet nearly 70% of them do not feel confident the New Zealand health and social welfare system will be able to support them as they age.

Apart from wanting to have enough money to get by on (61%), financial concerns do not rank highly for more than half of New Zealand baby boomers. This is with the exception of a high ranking for the concern, “external factors you can’t plan

for eroding your savings” (65% of New Zealand baby boomers are concerned), which is a direct response to the effects of the 2009 financial crisis on finance company savings.

Table 9 Concerns of New Zealand baby boomers

Getting sick and frail	69%
Not being mentally sharp	67%
Being able to live independently	66%
External factors you can't plan for eroding your savings	65%
Being short of energy and vitality	64%
Having enough money to get by on	61%
No longer being able to live life to the fullest	60%
Being in charge of your affairs	59%
Having sufficient health-care insurance coverage	51%
Being treated as an old person	47%
Being stuck doing the same old things every day	43%
Being bored with your life	42%
Not being current on what's going on	40%
Not being taken seriously	40%
Living somewhere that is not vibrant and exciting	40%
Having enough to do and keep busy	39%
Not being able to live in your current home	38%
Being relegated to the sidelines	37%
Not having the opportunity to be in charge of something	29%
Finding a community of other people to be with	28%
Being taken advantage of in some scam	28%
Not being involved in social causes	20%

Source: New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009, n = 754
“How concerned are you about each of the following?” 7 point scale.

American baby boomers also worry about their health, but their concerns are tempered by their greater worry (at 70%, the greatest worry reported in either list) of how they are going to pay for it. New Zealand baby boomers’ concerns remain cushioned by the social welfare system, despite their lack of confidence in it.

A full table of what worries baby boomers is shown in Appendix F.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Answering the research questions

Are New Zealand baby boomers the same as baby boomers overseas? Can American (in particular) research be used as a proxy in the absence of New Zealand research?

They are not. New Zealand baby boomers are similar to their American counterparts in some ways, but differ significantly in some key areas. The differences are sufficient to conclude that it is ill-advised and misleading to use American research as a proxy in New Zealand, even at the broad brushstroke social research level of the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study.

New Zealand and American baby boomers share a number of the same traits, but not quite to the same degree, and the values that back up these traits are different.

Table 10: Baby boomer values and traits, ranked

New Zealand traits ranking (in order of % respondents identifying with)	US traits ranking (in order of % respondents identifying with)
Learning to live with lines	Integrity
Integrity	Learning to live with lines
Individuality	Individuality
Friends with the same values as you	Hungry for information
Following your own instincts	Simplifying
Comfortable with change	Following your own instincts
Looking forward to the future	Friends with the same values as you
Hungry for information	Comfortable with change
Looking for answers	Leader
Doing something completely new	Getting a knee replacement
Simplifying	Idealistic
Special	Looking for answers
Leader	Paring down
Finding ways to get more	Standing out
Adjusting to the future as it unfolds	Challenge authority
Challenge authority	Doing something completely new
Idealistic	Looking forward to the future
Paring down	Content with what you have
Content with what you have	Special
Creative satisfaction	Creative satisfaction
Getting a knee replacement	Laid back
Time with your friends	Adjusting to the future as it unfolds
Laid back	Following your heart
Standing out	Time with your friends
Following your heart	Finding ways to get more

Source: NZ Boomer Dreams Study 2009; US Boomer Dreams Study 2006.

A list of the full 25 polarised value sets and the comparative results are available in Appendix C.

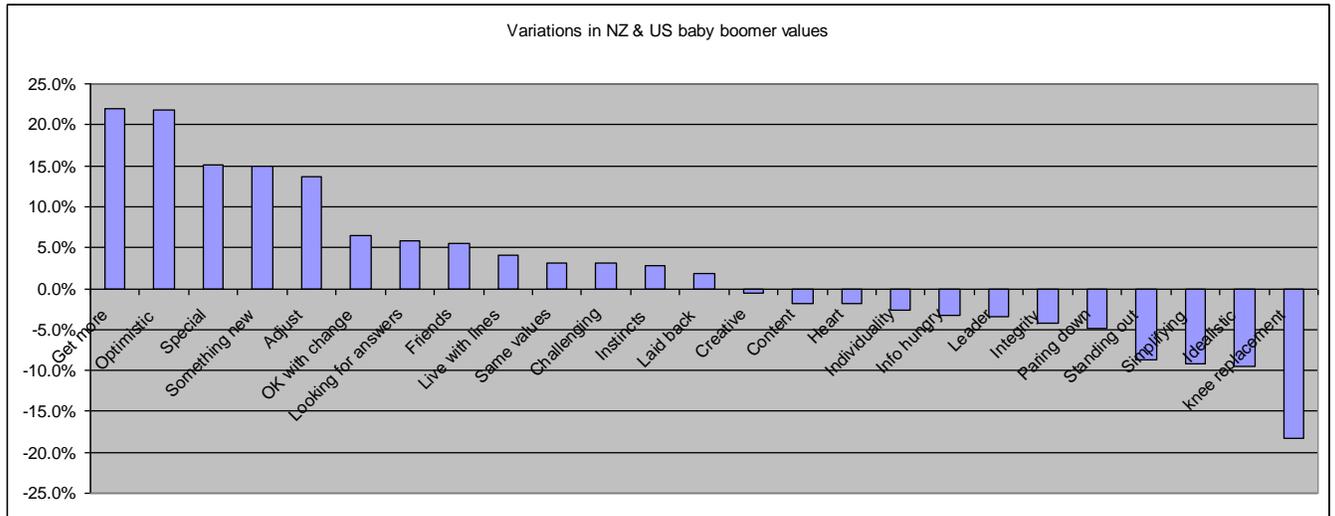


Table 11: Variations in New Zealand and American baby boomer values

Variations in NZ and US baby boomer values

	NZ all%	US all %	Variation
Finding ways to get more	65.4%	43.4%	22.0%
Looking forward to the future	81.3%	59.5%	21.8%
Special	72.8%	57.7%	15.1%
Doing something completely new	75.2%	60.2%	15.0%
Adjusting to the future as it unfolds	64.9%	51.3%	13.6%
Comfortable with change	83.1%	76.7%	6.4%
Looking for answers	76.3%	70.4%	5.9%
Time with your friends	53.4%	47.9%	5.5%
Learning to live with lines	97.8%	93.7%	4.1%
Challenge authority	64.1%	61.0%	3.1%
Friends with the same values as you	83.4%	80.3%	3.1%
Following your own instincts	83.2%	80.4%	2.8%
Laid back	53.3%	51.5%	1.8%
Creative satisfaction	54.5%	55.1%	-0.6%
Content with what you have	57.0%	58.8%	-1.8%
Following your heart	49.2%	51.0%	-1.8%
Individuality	86.0%	88.7%	-2.7%
Hungry for information	80.8%	84.0%	-3.2%
Leader	71.6%	75.1%	-3.5%
Integrity	89.8%	94.0%	-4.2%
Paring down	60.8%	65.7%	-4.9%
Standing out	52.6%	61.3%	-8.7%
Simplifying	72.9%	82.1%	-9.2%
Idealistic	62.0%	71.5%	-9.5%
Getting a knee replacement	54.3%	72.6%	-18.3%

New Zealanders are more passionate about their lifestyle choices, with their top ten focus choices being preferred by more than 80% of respondents, compared to the US top ten which were preferred by 67 to 77% of their respondents. New Zealand baby boomers tend to exhibit a more youthful and vigorous profile than their American counterparts, with more focus on outgoing adventurousness and less on fighting for social causes.

In the mid-range of differences (where there is 5-20% variance between the preferences of the two populations), New Zealand boomers invariably opt for adventurous lifestyle choices over social cause choices.

New Zealand baby boomers are more than 20% more likely to play sport, enjoy life's luxuries and travel the world than American boomers. They are over 20% less likely to get involved in politics, share their religious beliefs with others or spend more time or money on grandchildren.

Huber & Skidmore (2003) identified two distinctive characteristics among UK baby boomers, individualism and liberalism.

Smith & Clurman (2007) identified similar characteristics of youthfulness (immortality) and morality, with the youthfulness characteristic dominant.

New Zealand baby boomers exhibit a similar youthful character aspect, also dominant, but not in the same way as the American profile. What makes New Zealand baby boomers distinct from baby boomers from anywhere else is their Vitality. They are "fizzier" than both American and British baby boomers, passionate and opinionated, fiercely independent in their individuality. They are less likely to break the rules and more likely to simply assume the rules don't apply to them; fitness is an important dimension of their vital character, and they pursue novelty as part of a wider quest for adventure, rather than as a separate dimension. The self-focused aspects of personal enrichment enhance their vitality, and the rugged individuality that is part of the broader New Zealand character is interpreted within the baby boomer life experience.



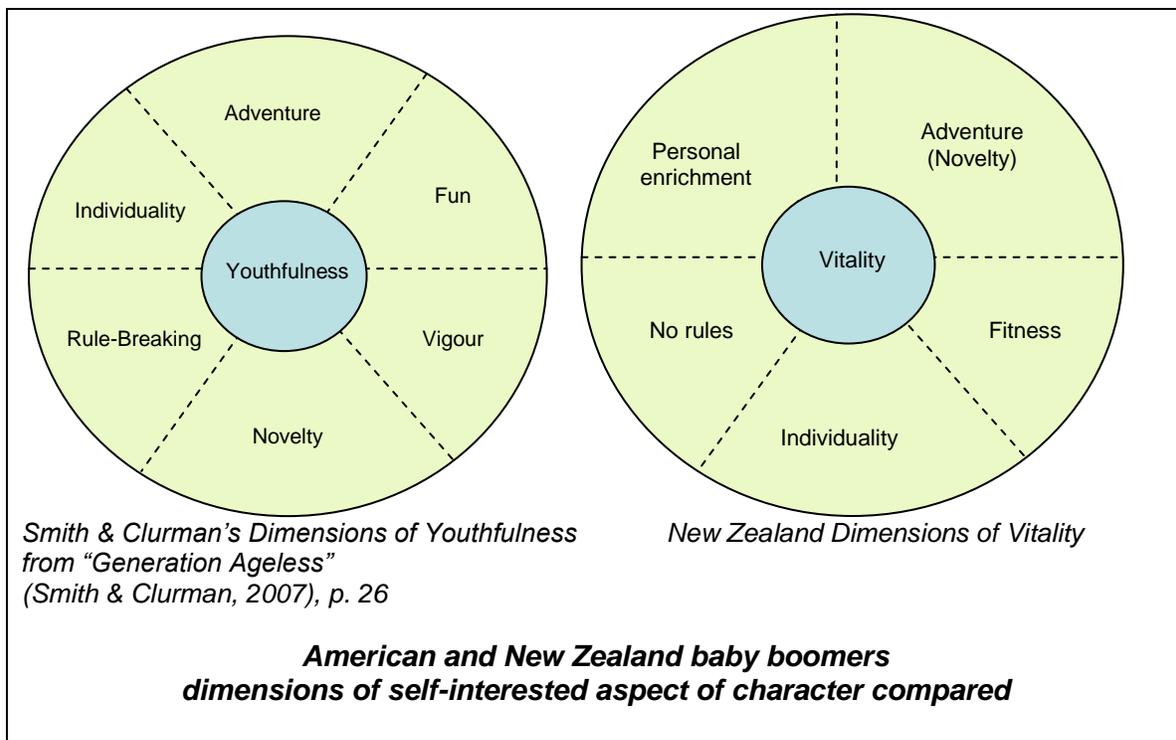


Figure 9: American and New Zealand baby boomer dimensions of self-interested aspect of character, compared

Smith & Clurman's second baby boomer character aspect of morality is not present in the New Zealand population in the way that it is in the USA.

New Zealand is an egalitarian, secular society with broad liberal views and a live-and-let-live pragmatism about moral issues. That said, New Zealand baby boomers have a strong sense of right and wrong, and of their responsibility to take care of themselves, their families and their wider community. They are less "comfortably righteous" in their sense of purpose than their American counterparts, but they do search for meaning.

Balancing the youthful hedonism and vitality of New Zealand baby boomers is a strongly adult sense of responsibility, rather than morality. It has four key dimensions, some of which are similar to American characteristics, but sufficiently different to distinguish a separate and independent New Zealand baby boomer character.



New Zealand baby boomers
Dimensions of Responsibility

Having established that the New Zealand baby boomer character is different from the American character and different again (although little comparative data is available) from British baby boomers, the question arises as to whether that matters and the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 finds that it does; New Zealand baby boomers respond to their surroundings, dream different dreams and worry about different things – indeed, they worry less about different things - than baby boomers elsewhere.

Aside from a current high level of concern about finance company collapses eroding their savings, New Zealand baby boomers' top concern is health. This information is comparable to the findings of the Health, Work and Retirement Study (Allpass, 2008).

While American baby boomers also worry about their health, more than 70% of them worry more about how they're going to pay for it (health insurance). This difference is almost certainly due to the differences in state-funded healthcare in the two countries and raises questions about the relationship between the self-reliance New Zealand baby boomers feel, and the sense of security they gain from having a state safety net of core social services. There may be a relationship between the willingness of New Zealand baby boomers to take risks and be adventuresome and ingenious, and their peculiarly resilient optimism; and the security of knowing that safety net is there. Removing it by creating barriers to eligibility (such as means testing or raising the age of entitlement) could have unintended adverse consequences; steps should be taken to explore this apparent correlation prior to such actions being considered.

Overall, what worries New Zealand baby boomers and what worries American baby boomers differ somewhat. While an analysis of the variations in concern-responses between the two populations shows a large outlier for “Not being current on what’s going on”, with New Zealand baby boomers 31% more likely to

rate this as a worry, it is still only thirteenth on the list for New Zealanders, concerning just 40% of them. In all other respects, the comparison shows the New Zealand baby boomers worry more than American baby boomers, but not significantly overall.

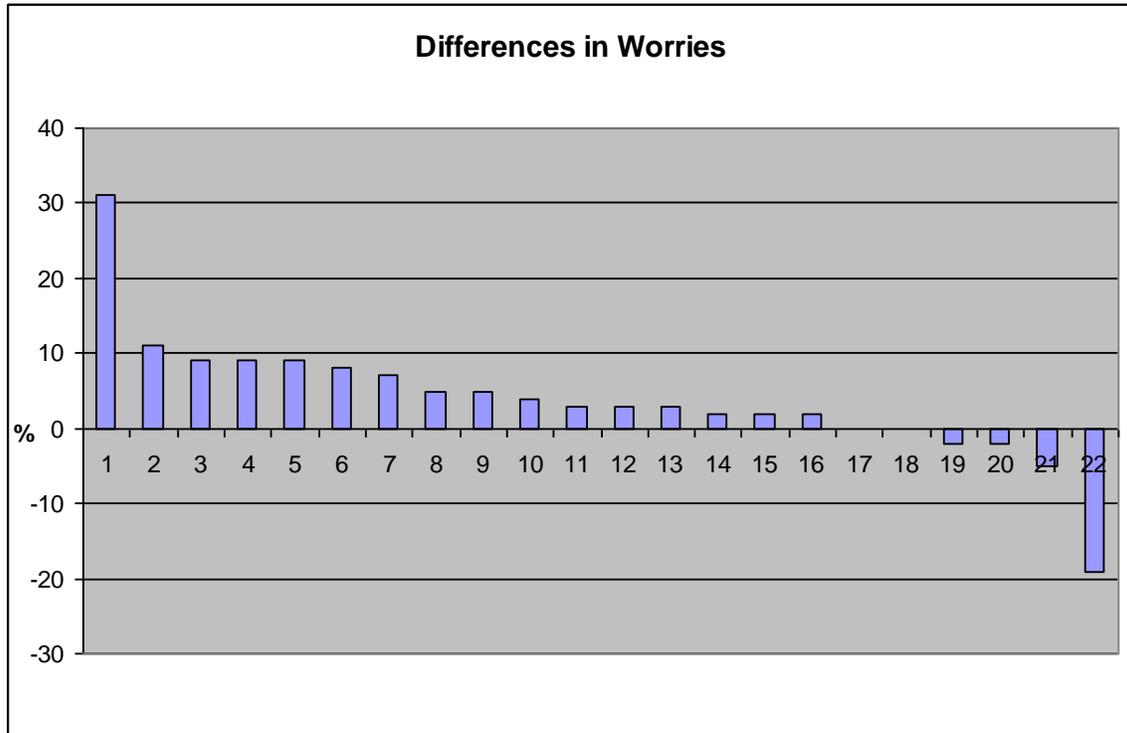


Table 12: Variations in what worries New Zealand and American baby boomers

Key	
1	Not being current on what's going on Living somewhere that is not vibrant and exciting
2	Being stuck doing the same old things every day
3	Being treated as an old person
4	Being in charge of your affairs No longer being able to live life to the fullest
5	Being bored with your life
6	Having enough to do and keep busy
7	Being short of energy and vitality
8	Not being mentally sharp
9	Not being able to live independently
10	Being relegated to the sidelines Not having the opportunity to be in charge of something
11	Getting sick and frail
12	Not being taken seriously
13	Finding a community of other people to be with
14	External factors you can't plan for eroding your savings
15	Being taken advantage of in some scam
16	Not being able to live in your current home
17	Having enough money to get by on
18	Not being involved in social causes
19	Having sufficient health-care insurance coverage
20	
21	
22	

Understanding the baby boomer character is key to interpreting their behaviour and predicting what they might do next; one thing is already known and that is

that whatever they do, it will not be what they generation before them has done. One of the key findings of the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 is that it will also not be the same as American baby boomers.

New Zealand baby boomers are vital, energetic, up with the play and highly engaged with life. They have experience, confidence, and boundless optimism that is resilient even in the face of adversity. They have no intention of acting their age and no intention of settling down to a quiet retirement. They enjoy the good things in life – in fact, they want to enjoy more of them – and they are prepared to put in the work to pay for them. Their high level of engagement extends socially and they are likely to be involved in all areas of both the paid and unpaid economies; it will be impossible to legislate them into defined behaviours or areas of the community, because of their individualism and conviction that the rules simply don't apply to them. With great ingenuity, they will find a way around any barrier in their pursuit of adventure and meaning. They will shoulder their responsibilities, to themselves, within their families, and in the broader social context.

“Will New Zealand baby boomers retire gracefully at 65 to do charitable works?”

No, they will not, and yes, they will. They will, in very large numbers, not retire. But they will do charitable works.

They won't retire because they don't feel old, they are full of youthful spirit and not at all ready to remove themselves from the mainstream, from mattering and from making a difference, or from enjoying the fruits of their labours.

It is not part of the New Zealand baby boomer character to give up and do nothing for 30-40 years. The vitality that is an essential part of their character drives them to greater adventurousness, fitness, and personal enlightenment. They are prepared to take responsibility for themselves and their families, and assume roles or responsibility in the wider community, paid or unpaid.

Meaningful work matters to them, and New Zealand baby boomers find meaning and purpose in their jobs, which they will not yield. However, they will use their ingenuity to find ways around the rules and conventions of the traditional workplace to get the balance of work, adventure, personal enrichment and fitness they want. In numbers as large as the baby boomer cohort possesses, what begins as ingenious ways around the rules will quickly become accepted workplace convention.

They are self-determined and will seek opportunities to learn new things within the workplace and in the community, and a new wave of “elderpreneurs” will emerge; indeed it is arguable that this phenomenon has already begun to emerge.

The core vitality of New Zealand baby boomers will continue to make them valuable, productive contributors in the workplace – if employers can keep them there. 30% plan to start a new career; 38% say they will be running their own business, 21% will start one.

New Zealand baby boomers, after all, see endless opportunities before them and have very low resistance to change. They are risk takers and they back themselves. They are currently at the height of their productivity, retain youthful, vigorous approach to work, and exhibit a great capacity to continue to learn; unless the workplace engages and continues to challenge them, they will move on to new career adventures.

Whether they work for others or for themselves, two-thirds of New Zealand baby boomers will focus their energies and invest their time in the next 5-10 years on excelling at their job and at passing on their skills to others. Their desire to engage in meaningful work for many more years *as well as* pursue their other life adventures and responsibilities will balance well with the need to retain their expertise in the workplace while still making room for the generations behind them to progress. The lack of barriers New Zealand baby boomers see between themselves and younger people will enable them to integrate and share their skills.

The sense among New Zealand baby boomers that they distinguish meaningful work from the workplace will inform the wave of research currently underway in New Zealand (Allpass, 2008; McPherson, 2008), which is revealing *what* new workplace trends are beginning to emerge and asking questions about *why* they are emerging. They are emerging because baby boomers are starting to find ingenious ways around the current conventions of the workplace; with the force of a million baby boomers behind it, this trend will explode into the mainstream over the next 10-20 years.

New Zealand baby boomers are hungry for new experiences, adventures, and learning. This characteristic is prevalent in baby boomers but not in the generational cohorts before them. It is counter-intuitive to the traditional view that “old people” are overwhelmed by how much information is now available to them, and suggests that baby boomers are prepared to use technology to help them gather the information they need. The challenge to business is to throw off their historically-based preconceptions of how they believe baby boomers should behave as workers, because baby boomers will not act their age; neither will older baby boomers exhibit the conservatism of their American counterparts, making proxy assumptions unreliable.

The global wave of baby boomers is likely to see a push for different benefits in the work environment.

Jobs to attract baby boomers will offer less stress, lots of social connection, more flexible working hours and conditions, and a chance to learn – these things are more highly valued than money. New Zealand baby boomers, like their American counterparts, are looking for jobs with a mission that offers them opportunities to continue to grow.

Implications for social policy planning

New Zealand baby boomers are not retiring. They are fizzing with renewed vigour, working hard to fund their lifestyle choices, keeping themselves fit and planning for an active later life, rather than an infirm, sedentary one. They universally do not want the retirement their parents had and they see no reason why they should accept it. Nor do they intend to.

They are planning to start or run businesses, keep working where they are, keep up with technology and use it to work smarter; and they are in large numbers going to move to get more out of life and make the world a better place to live, for all New Zealanders. Public policy needs to be flexible and open-minded in order to foster this vital ingenuity and harness the resulting productivity benefit (which can be used to fund the social safety net baby boomers see as their right and responsibility). Maintaining rule-driven bureaucracies will only foster rule-avoidance.

Unlike their American counterparts, who worry about health but are not actively planning a solution, New Zealand baby boomers are taking control of their health prospects and are less likely to become the health burden projected by traditional economic models and that are currently being tracked in the Health, Work and Retirement Study (Allpass, 2008). New Zealand baby boomers see maintaining their health and fitness as an essential driver enabling them to fulfill all of their plans for a vibrant and affluent future. There is an opportunity to develop health policy that empowers and incentivises them to keep themselves fit so they can stay productive and pursue their dreams.

The voluntary sector is significant and likely to rise in significance over the next 40 years. Baby boomers are prepared to do their part in this sector with both time and money, but a large influx of support may overwhelm the sector at the beginning and it may require some structural assistance to assimilate baby boomer contributors.

There is no point in making public policy rules about how members of this generation should behave once they turn 65, or of continuing to fiddle with economic indicators within the constraints of the traditional economic model. This is akin to placing a ladder against the wrong wall –energy can be expended on scaling the wall, but achieve nothing because the real change is going on elsewhere.

The inflexibility of the elderly dependency ratio to cope with new definitions of work for those over 65 makes it defunct. Changing the age of entitlement to 67 or another number is likewise not going to make a difference.

New Zealand baby boomers are notorious for shrugging off rules – because they view rules as simply not applying to them – and finding an ingenious way around to get what they want. Economists and social planners can calculate projected retirement rates, social burden ratios and rest home bed requirements as much as they like, but it would be a mistake to start building rest homes just yet, because New Zealand baby boomers have no intention of filling them.

They will tell policy planners what they want, if they are asked, provided the contextual framework for seeking their feedback is based on them and not the generation before them. After all, all baby boomers see themselves as special, and New Zealand baby boomers see themselves as more special than most.

Not only do New Zealand baby boomers have no intention of becoming a drain on the workforce, but they will continue to add their prodigious productivity to the nation's coffers. Not only will they not leave a hole in the workforce, they will focus on enhancing their skills to fill the gaps created by changes of work style. Baby boomers are a highly productive generation, well educated, experienced and ingenious; harnessing and channelling their productivity and thirst for intellectual, emotional and physical adventure presents a far greater challenge for social policy planners than counting the pension pennies they may not need.

The challenge for public policy development is how best to structure a framework that will allow New Zealand baby boomers to be self-sufficient and self-responsible, while remembering that, as with all attitudinal research that talks about majorities, there will still be people who want a traditional retirement lifestyle, even if not as many as feared.

“If they do not, then what?”

What are New Zealand baby boomers' future intentions relating to voluntary participation in community activities and social causes?

Three-quarters of New Zealand baby boomers agree that if they are doing something they love, it doesn't matter whether they get paid for it, while nearly two-thirds agree that they don't have to have a job to feel good about themselves. This suggests they distinguish between the two and do not necessarily need to be tied to the workplace to meet their “meaning” needs. This is good news for the voluntary sector, which can tap into the New Zealand baby boomer thirst for purposeful endeavour, even without the money to pay them. Provided community organisations can deliver the opportunities to learn, grow

and enhance the need baby boomers have to continue to matter, they will attract a large pool of talented and experienced volunteers.

Implications for the voluntary sector

Conventional wisdom suggests that if baby boomers do not retire in the traditional sense, they will have less time available to contribute to volunteering.

Maire Dwyer (2006) theorised that increased labour force participation by middle-aged women might reduce the supply of volunteers, due to more baby boomer women participating in the workforce than their predecessors, but that a greater capacity of “larger, healthier and better educated young-olds” might boost the skills and energy of the volunteer populations. The findings of the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 support that view.

The strong sense of responsibility felt by New Zealand baby boomers and their attitudes to vitality and work life balance mean that they will have time and energy that they are willing to contribute, and perhaps more significantly, high levels of expertise.

New Zealand baby boomers almost universally champion the obligation of responsibility over the assertion of personal rights. As a result, they are much less likely to get involved in politics or social causes that matter to them personally, and more likely to be interested in environmental issues (60%); in working to make the community a better place (70%); and giving more time (56%) or money (42%) to charity.

The next 40 years will present challenges and opportunities for the voluntary sector. They can expect an influx of committed baby boomer volunteers, but they should expect those volunteers to be as demanding, challenging and disruptive to the established way of doing things as this study has revealed in the New Zealand baby boomer character.

Dwyer (2006) posits that there will also be increased demand for volunteers to organise activities geared to the healthier, better educated baby boomers in search of leisure adventures. The findings of the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 support that view and suggest it will be other baby boomers who will fill these roles.

The good news is that while disruption is uncomfortable, it will breathe fresh life and new vigour into the voluntary sector.

This is the age when kaumatuatanga (the role and place of the respected, responsible elder generation) will come to the fore. Visionary service sector leaders can start planning to harness the potential of this new generation of volunteer workers, mentors and leaders.

The other significant implication for the voluntary sector is the need to recognise the fiercely independent and self-reliant streak in New Zealand baby boomers. Accustomed to forging their own path and taking responsibility for themselves all of their lives, they are less likely than their predecessor generation to ask for help when they need it, or accept help when it is offered. Social services providing assistance to the aged will need to develop strategies to connect with the ageing character of this ageless generation when they finally have to accept that life is no longer a set of endless opportunities, at least for them (and currently 92% of them are not prepared to entertain that notion).

Rather than planning for the provision of services to the elderly from 65 to 85, services in the voluntary sector for the aged should plan for their clients to come to them later and perhaps for shorter periods of time, premised on the idea that New Zealand baby boomers will keep themselves healthy for as long as possible, followed by a more rapid decline, rather than a lengthy period of inactivity and a long decline into old age.

Boomers, their children and grandchildren

Thirty-eight percent of NZ baby boomers surveyed were empty-nesters (couples whose children had left home) and 36% had children still living at home.

Of the 36% who said they had children at home, almost 60% (59.4%) of those households were comprised of older children (15 and over).

As a result of younger baby boomers delaying parenthood and an increase in divorce and second families, 3.6% of the children of New Zealand baby boomers are still pre-school age and 37% of boomers' children are still at primary or secondary school.

Boomers' babies continue to live in traditional households (88.9%) and can look forward to the ongoing financial support of their parents (80.8%, compared with 52.7% of US boomers).

Unlike the US, where 80% of boomer parents report they would like to focus more of their time and energy on their grandchildren, New Zealand baby boomer parents are no more likely than average boomers to want to be more involved than they currently are. It is not clear whether New Zealand boomers (45.6% less likely than US boomer parents to plan to spend more time with grandchildren) feel they already do spend sufficient time, whether New Zealand boomer grandparents are less involved than their American counterparts, or whether New Zealand baby boomer families have not yet progressed to grandparentage to the same levels as in the US. Younger New Zealand boomers are 6.2% more likely than their elders to have future plans for their grandchildren, but given the number of them with children still at home, having grandchildren may be a future aspiration rather than a current reality. In contrast, the aspiration to spend more time with family (children and grandchildren not differentiated) rated 5.9% higher among New Zealand boomer respondents than their American counterparts. This suggests the New Zealand baby boomer population isn't finished with its children yet, and has yet to move on to grandchildren.

There is no conclusive evidence from the study to explain the disparity between US and New Zealand boomer grandparents' devotion to future family generations, but the implications for business may mean an expected burgeoning of intergenerational entertainment industries (matinee theatre outings, shared holidays, indulgent toy purchasing) may not be replicated here. Businesses working in this area may find value in exploring this aspect of New Zealand boomer dreams in more depth.

Chapter 6: Conclusions

New Zealand baby boomers have a distinct Antipodean character that differentiates them from other baby boomer populations, particular the American population. This finding is important because of the tendency of New Zealand planners to use plentiful American research as a proxy for New Zealand, given the dearth of social research available locally. The two populations are similar; they were after all forged in the same climate of sustained economic plenty and experienced largely the same social milestones. However, the New Zealand character is inherently different from the American character, and these differences have caused New Zealand baby boomers to react to their environment in different ways.

New Zealand baby boomers are notably “fizzier” and more physically vital and emotionally energetic than American baby boomers. They have a more outwardly focused social conscience and are less likely to pursue personal social causes to the same extent as their American counterparts. They also exhibit a greater degree of resilient optimism that has not been dented even by the 2009 economic recession that has hit their age group particularly hard.

The use of American research as proxy may explain why some policy planners, employers and recruiters (McPherson, 2008) have less favourable attitudes to New Zealand baby boomers. The American profile is more conservative, older in its attitudes, with segments that are relatively more entrenched in traditional models of pre-retirement than the New Zealand profile. The New Zealand profile is younger, more vibrant, more adventurous and searching – more like younger New Zealanders than older ones.

However both populations have much in common. Neither has any intention of retiring; both are gearing up to reinvent their lives and the concept of work (of which “job” is just a part), to their greater satisfaction. Both are on a never-ending search for meaning and self-actualisation; both want to enjoy every moment of the rest of their lives to the fullest, on their own terms; and both want to leave the world a better place when they die. But New Zealand baby boomers will do all of those things more proactively and with greater ingenuity.

The key finding of the US Boomer Dreams Study 2006 was that American baby boomers are in no mood to slow down - they want to stay involved, continue to indulge themselves and pursue their passions. They intend to remain at the centre of economic productivity and they don't see the relevance of traditional concepts of retirement – after all, the rules don't apply to them today any more than they ever did.

The New Zealand baby boomer study found a unique New Zealand character, but with the same intentions.

The implications for business, Government and the voluntary sector are significant. The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 is an attitudinal marker study. Further and more pinpointed research is required to fully understand the shape and nature of the changes New Zealand baby boomers will create around them; the challenge will be, as it has always been with baby boomers, to minimise the disruption caused by their wake.

The “golden years” ideal of retirement required that older people be willing to step back and let the next generation take charge, and the next generation be able to generate enough income to pay the cost of their elders’ retirement. The conclusion of this study is that the older people in question refuse to view themselves as “old”, are entirely unwilling to step back, are not prepared to let the next generation take charge and are not relying on the next generation to generate the income required to keep their elders in the style of elder-leisure they demand. They have no intention of “sponging” on the young and expect to pay their own way all their lives.

The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 addressed all of the research questions.

“Will New Zealand baby boomers retire gracefully at 65 to do charitable works?”
The hypothesis of this study was that, in large but not necessarily universal numbers, they will not, and the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 has provided evidence to support this hypothesis. New Zealand baby boomers will not retire gracefully; they are not the retiring sort.

The traditional economic contextual framework that assumes baby boomers will behave largely like the generation before them and according to a historical view of retired people is inaccurate, inadequate and unhelpful. The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 supports the view that the traditional economic model is far from the reality baby boomers intend for themselves.

Since the principal hypothesis (will they retire?) is found to be valid, a further question has arisen: “If they do not, then what?”

The hypothesis of this study was that New Zealand baby boomers would change the traditional work-life balance to enable them to “have it all” – fulfilling, meaningful work, continued affluence and leisure time to pursue their interests in family, travel and lifestyle preferences. This hypothesis is well supported by the research findings.

The second part of the principal hypothesis - will they do charitable works? – raised the question:

What are New Zealand baby boomers’ future intentions relating to voluntary participation in community activities and social causes?

New Zealand baby boomers are responsible and they will do charitable works. They do want to leave the world a better place. The answer to this question is of interest to New Zealand's large (and expected to grow) voluntary sector, with implications for staffing, talent pool, costs and potential users of services in this sector. Changes in this sector pose consequent changes to the Government's social planning and the provision of core social services.

This study answers the proxy question, "Are New Zealand baby boomers the same as baby boomers overseas, particularly in the USA (where research data is plentiful)?"

The hypothesis of this study was that New Zealand baby boomers are aligned with US boomers in their shared experiences of the formative events that united baby boomers as a generational cohort, such as a common sustained period of unbridled economic growth leading to the development of a culture of affluence. However, it was posited that there may well be cultural differences that separate the different populations. This was found to be the case, and should influence how much and in what ways we can continue to use overseas research as a proxy for predicting New Zealand baby boomer behaviour. This hypothesis was tested through the use of a comparative study; the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 being substantially comparable to the US Boomer Dreams Study 2006.

The summary finding is that New Zealand baby boomers are not the same as their American counterparts. They are similar in many respects, but they should be viewed independently or risk disadvantaging them and planning for the wrong outcomes.

Can American (in particular) research be used as a proxy in the absence of New Zealand research?

No, it should not. Failure to date to develop local attitudinal research in this area demonstrates either intellectual laziness or bureaucratic complacency and, in either case, a lack of foresight. The baby boomers have had a marked impact on New Zealand society across every life stage they have been through, yet planners have consistently failed to plan for the disruption their passing causes; if we do not want to end up in prefabricated rest homes and dying in prefabricated cemeteries, we need to predict with greater insight what boomers will do next.

Limitations of the study

This study measures the aspirations and stated intentions of New Zealand-resident baby boomers who have access to the internet. It does not purport to represent their actual behaviours. It presents a possible picture of how the target population would like to think their future will transpire, but does not measure any potential gaps between those desires and likely actual behaviour.

Excluded from the study are New Zealand baby boomers who do not currently have internet access, who form 11.4% of the baby boomer population. This study cannot be weighted to represent non-internet users as there are too many unknown characteristics likely to affect responses (for example, the impact of income level on both internet use and retirement choices).

Maori are underrepresented in the study in numbers too small to weight and, as with non-internet users; there are too many unknown characteristics likely to affect responses (for example, the impact of cultural perspectives and priorities on retirement choices).

Excluded from the study are the views of non-resident New Zealanders, who are currently estimated to number in the hundreds of thousands – there is no research into whether any of these citizens intend returning to their country of birth after they have enjoyed careers in other countries, and what their further work/life intentions might be if they do.

Excluded from the study are the views of other New Zealanders who were not born between 1946 and 1964. There is no measurement of whether the views of New Zealand baby boomers are different from the views of the whole population, or whether they are the prevailing social views of the day, and widely shared. There is research evidence that the views of baby boomers differ from those of predecessor generations in New Zealand and there is overseas research evidence to support the view that the behaviour of baby boomers generally differs from the rest of the population, however.

Excluded from the survey are the reactions of other sectors of the population to the stated intentions of baby boomers. While many boomers say they do not want to retire in the historic meaning of that word, younger generations of workers may react adversely to any perception of older workers staying in high paying jobs or “cherry picking” the most interesting projects. There is already some intergenerational conflict developing, as evidenced by books such as “Please just f* off: it’s our turn now” (Pluto Press, 2006) by 25-year-old Australian, Heath Ryan.

Opportunities for further research

The outlook for Generation Y

Much has been written about the emerging new workforce, sometimes referred to as Generation Y.

Generation Y are the children of boomers and are the next generational cohort expected to impact on social structure (Generation X, like the Silent Generation, is a small population with indistinct social impact).

This study is not about Generation Y, but some observations can be made about how boomer intentions might impact on them.

The first significant finding is that New Zealand baby boomers have no intention of becoming a financial burden on them – they're off the hook. Sadly, behind this finding is a realisation that Boomers intend the projected gap in workforce skills to be filled from their ranks, reducing the opportunity for Gen Y to springboard up into the gap without the same levels of experience or skills. This prospect has already raised resentment among some Gen Y authors, promoting "generational warfare" (Ryan, 2006) and leading to boomer bashing. However, the sheer size and force of the boomer generation is likely to see a paradigm shift in workforce and job design, with work/life balance becoming the norm in time for Gen Ys to enjoy the benefits of this work style throughout their careers.

The second significant finding is that baby boomer parents have no intention of abandoning their Gen Y offspring, and remain fiercely committed to their children's success. Boomer parents keep their older children at home with them, with nearly 60% of boomer family households containing offspring over the age of 15. These offspring can also look forward to continued financial support from their parents, with 81% of New Zealand boomer parents intent on stepping up with their wallets, compared to just 53% of American boomers.

Maori participation in the Baby Boom

Statistics New Zealand (1995b) reports that Maori did not participate in the post-war population boom of the 1940s and 1950s, because they were already on a steady and steep population growth path. There is also some question about whether Maori participated on the post-war period of economic plenty enjoyed by other sectors of the New Zealand community.

The Health, Work and Retirement Study (Allpass, 2008) is tracking Maori and Pacifica people and a comparative attitudinal study would inform those research findings with some insights into the motivations and intentions of these two important sectors.

Maori were underrepresented in the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study (4.1% participation, compared to a population of 13%), and there were not enough survey respondents to compare this segment with the main sample. The survey could not be weighted to more closely represent the Maori population, because there were too many unknown characteristics that may have influenced Maori responses. Any weighting assumptions could not have taken into account the

peculiar social, cultural and economic profile of Maori respondents, making any subsequent conclusions unreliable.

There is an opportunity to launch a comparative Boomer Dreams Study among Maori, to answer the research question:

Are Maori the same as other New Zealand Boomers? How do their responses to a Boomer Dreams survey compare with non-Maori New Zealand baby boomers?

While internet penetration is high among Maori (78%), the low response rate for the online New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study suggests it may not be the best way to deliver a Maori Boomer Dreams survey as it has no face-to-face or peer component to add cultural appeal.

Marketing Research

The baby boomer cohort is too large and diverse for the New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study to be directly applicable in marketing; however this study serves as a broad brushstroke social research indicator that can be used to inform more targeted marketing research. The traditional economic model of planning for the future of baby boomers suffered from the classic downfall of placing its research ladder against the wrong wall; while much of the research was robust, working in a flawed contextual framework meant that it was misleading and inaccurate. The New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009 provides a behavioural contextual framework for further, more targeted research.

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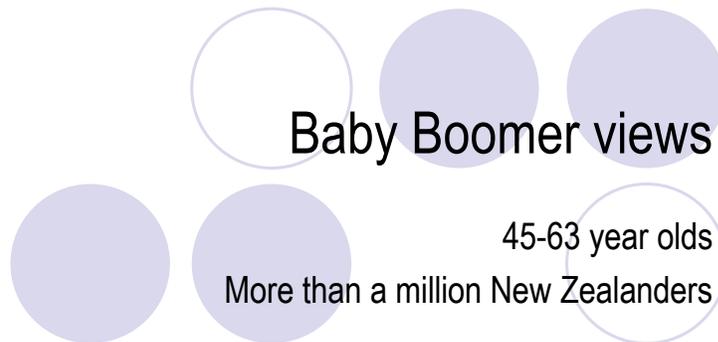
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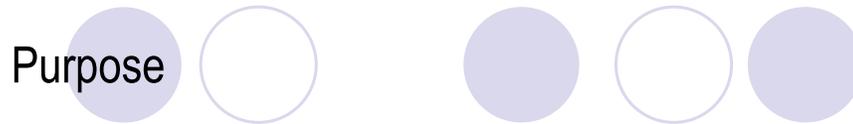
Appendices

Appendix A - Focus group discussion points



- Purpose
- Ethics
- Ground rules
- Discussion
- Questions
- Wrap

Purpose

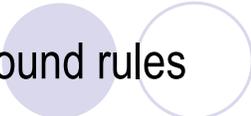


- MBA research project
- Baby Boomers' dreams
- What will happen when we turn 65

Confidentiality and Ethics



- MBA research project – Massey University
 - This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.
 - If you have concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Research Ethics), telephone 06-350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz



Ground rules

- 
- Keep focused
 - Maintain momentum
 - Allow the views of all to be heard
 - It's not a debate
 - All opinions matter
 - There is no 'right' answer
 - Complete the questions

- 
- 
- Thinking about what's going to happen over the coming few years ...
 - The first of the Baby Boomers are turning 64, coming up to retirement age

What do you want to be doing when you're
65?



What's important to you?



What are you likely to spend your
energy and time on?



What worries you?



Will some people get left behind?



How old is old?



- Let's turn briefly now to voluntary work in the community ...

Do Baby Boomers do
more – or less
than other generations?



What do you
currently do in the community?



What do you think
the future holds for
voluntary organisations?

Appendix B - Copy of survey questionnaire

The survey questionnaire is available to view
at www.boomerdreams.co.nz.

Appendix C - 25 Polarised Value Sets - NZ v US Compared

	NZ all%	US all %
Integrity	89.8%	94.0%
Success	10.2%	6.0%
	100.0%	100.0%
Learning to live with lines	97.8%	93.7%
Getting plastic surgery to get rid of the lines	2.2%	6.3%
	100.0%	100.0%
Simplifying	72.9%	82.1%
Packing more in	27.1%	17.9%
	100.0%	100.0%
Following your own instincts	83.2%	80.4%
Listening to experts	16.8%	19.6%
	100.0%	100.0%
Laid back	53.3%	51.5%
Earnest	46.7%	48.5%
	100.0%	100.0%
Adjusting to the future as it unfolds	64.9%	51.3%
Taking care of the future	35.1%	48.7%
	100.0%	100.0%
Friends with the same values as you	83.4%	80.3%
Friends who have different values from you	16.6%	19.7%
	100.0%	100.0%
Comfortable with change	83.1%	76.7%
Not comfortable with change	16.9%	23.3%
	100.0%	100.0%
Creative satisfaction	54.5%	55.1%
Financial satisfaction	45.5%	44.9%
	100.0%	100.0%
Time with your friends	53.4%	47.9%
Time with yourself	46.6%	52.1%
	100.0%	100.0%
Idealistic	62.0%	71.5%
Cynical	38.0%	28.5%
	100.0%	100.0%
Looking for answers	76.3%	70.4%
Knowing the answers	23.7%	29.6%
	100.0%	100.0%
Hungry for information	80.8%	84.0%
Overwhelmed by information	19.2%	16.0%
	100.0%	100.0%
Individuality	86.0%	88.7%

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Conformity	14.0%	11.3%
	100.0%	100.0%
Leader	71.6%	75.1%
Follower	28.4%	24.9%
	100.0%	100.0%
Getting a knee replacement	54.3%	72.6%
Getting a scooter to get around	45.7%	27.4%
	100.0%	100.0%
Special	72.8%	57.7%
Average	27.2%	42.3%
	100.0%	100.0%
Making do with less	34.6%	56.6%
Finding ways to get more	65.4%	43.4%
	100.0%	100.0%
Challenge authority	64.1%	61.0%
Accept authority	35.9%	39.0%
	100.0%	100.0%
Doing something completely new	75.2%	60.2%
Settling down to a routine	24.8%	39.8%
	100.0%	100.0%
Following your heart	49.2%	51.0%
Following your head	50.8%	49.0%
	100.0%	100.0%
Paring down	60.8%	65.7%
Accumulating more	39.2%	34.3%
	100.0%	100.0%
Standing out	52.6%	61.3%
Fitting in	47.4%	38.7%
	100.0%	100.0%
Looking forward to the future	81.3%	59.5%
Worried about the future	18.7%	40.5%
	100.0%	100.0%
Content with what you have	57.0%	58.8%
Driven to achieve more	43.0%	41.2%
	100.0%	100.0%

Appendix D – 140 agree/disagree attitudinal statements, NZ and US compared. Note bottom-ranked choices significant when reversed.

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.				
Answer Options	NZ total top 2 choices	NZ % top 2 choices	US % top 2 choices	NZ Response Count
People should try to maintain a youthful spirit about life	754	98.6%	96.6%	765
The possibilities afforded to us by technology are only going to continue to grow	808	97.6%	96.6%	828
I trust my instincts	736	97.2%	95.2%	757
I have been able to make a meaningful contribution in my job	726	95.2%	90.8%	763
Health is the driver to being able to do what you like	776	94.7%	N/A	819
In the future, older people will be much more active and engaged than older people in the past	724	94.1%	88.7%	769
People have a responsibility to leave the world a better place to live	723	94.1%	94.2%	768
Without passion and zeal by individual people, important social problems won't ever get solved	771	93.5%	90.2%	825
We are all responsible to leave the world a better place when we leave it	711	93.4%	93.8%	761
I know how to use technology to make my life more interesting and more enjoyable	738	93.1%	90.2%	793
The actions of a single individual can make a big difference in life	745	92.9%	94.8%	802
I believe that life is a set of endless opportunities no matter what your age	742	92.3%	87.3%	804
I like knowing what young people are doing and creating	708	91.7%	87.7%	772
There is no reason why young people and older people can't enjoy the same kinds of things	731	90.7%	92.2%	806
Whenever life closes in on me, I just pick up and start over	728	90.7%	66.0%	803
There is too much concern with rights and not enough with responsibilities	740	89.7%	59.7%	825
There is no reason that you have to feel less vital and energetic as you get older	689	89.1%	89.0%	773
Age is a state of mind	691	89.0%	N/A	776
I feel the need to not live beyond my means	715	89.0%	80.3%	803
Young people can learn a lot from my generation	693	88.8%	92.6%	780
I like to keep up with politics and public issues	668	88.1%	92.2%	758
I keep an eye out for new things to try or to learn	719	87.9%	87.3%	818
It is important for people to continually challenge the established way of doing things	677	87.8%	70.1%	771
I expect to pay my own way all my life	663	86.9%	N/A	763

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.				
Answer Options	NZ total top 2 choices	NZ % top 2 choices	US % top 2 choices	NZ Response Count
I like to discover new ways to use things and teach them to others	650	85.9%	86.1%	757
Personal enrichment is very important to me	677	85.8%	81.8%	789
We can solve the social problems we face today if everybody would just do their one small part to help	660	85.3%	85.3%	774
People my age can learn a lot from young people	653	85.0%	68.5%	768
Businesses have a social responsibility to their employees and to the community	679	84.7%	88.9%	802
I enjoy keeping up with new trends and the latest happenings	638	83.8%	57.2%	761
I think it is important for all of us to look for ways in which we can get involved and improve society	683	83.7%	93.7%	816
Work is important to my self-esteem	636	83.0%	N/A	766
Working keeps you young	670	82.5%	N/A	812
I am very passionate about the causes I care about	638	82.2%	94.8%	776
Even though there are many things I would like to own, I prefer spending my money on experiences that will enrich my life, like travel, holidays, eating out, etc.	678	82.2%	65.1%	825
In every situation, I have a very clear sense of the right and the wrong thing to do	662	82.0%	80.6%	807
I enjoy keeping up with new trends and the latest happenings	653	81.2%	57.2%	804
Everybody should be able to do his or her own thing	626	81.0%	64.7%	773
Periodically, it is fun to change things about myself just for the sake of changing	621	80.4%	65.7%	772
My work is an important part of who I am	612	80.2%	N/A	763
People should be entitled to the best medical care as a social right	623	79.9%	69.3%	780
I am concerned about trying to stay in shape	624	79.8%	80.0%	782
I would rather have too much to do and risk being stressed than too little and be bored	651	79.6%	65.3%	818
I don't take myself too seriously, I laugh at myself all the time	655	79.3%	80.3%	826
I feel a responsibility to help others out and support the common good	622	79.0%	89.9%	787
Many of the best things about life today were pioneered and made possible by the actions and contributions of the Baby Boomer generation	651	78.7%	68.2%	827
I am continuing to grow in my work	617	78.3%	N/A	788
If I'm doing something I love it doesn't matter if I get paid for it	601	77.3%	N/A	777
Government isn't the best answer for most of the problems we face	585	76.9%	80.5%	761

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.				
Answer Options	NZ total top 2 choices	NZ % top 2 choices	US % top 2 choices	NZ Response Count
I am always trying to think of something new and different to work toward	577	75.4%	69.2%	765
To achieve the Kiwi dream, you pretty much have to go your own way and do it on your own terms	583	75.2%	64.5%	775
I am better off now than my parents were at my age	576	75.1%	65.1%	767
Lots of things we take for granted wouldn't be possible without government policies and guarantees	598	74.7%	52.4%	801
People should be entitled to a secure retirement as a social right	608	74.2%	64.3%	819
I have a plan for my future and I'm on track to achieve it	596	72.1%	N/A	827
It is important to learn from the past and to do things in a proven way	528	69.9%	83.0%	755
I do not see myself as facing any limits whatsoever because of my age	574	69.7%	56.9%	824
The best years of Baby Boomers are yet to come	539	69.4%	60.8%	777
No matter how hard I try, I never seem to have enough time to do everything I need to do	537	69.1%	65.6%	777
I like to seek out and try once in a lifetime experiences	545	69.0%	59.6%	790
What we are lacking in New Zealand today is a compelling vision for the future	516	68.3%	72.0%	756
I have never felt trapped by a lack of training	539	68.2%	56.5%	790
My job has left me enough free time to pursue my outside interests	533	67.6%	62.3%	788
I feel that I have achieved the right balance of time in my life for all the things that are important to me	517	67.3%	58.2%	768
The challenges our society faces in the future are formidable and alarming	514	66.5%	89.6%	773
My job has offered me security	522	66.3%	57.4%	787
Unless the media embraces a social problem, it will never get the money and attention it needs to get solved	503	66.2%	63.6%	760
I have been able to be as successful as I desired	503	65.8%	49.7%	765
I don't need to have a job to feel good about myself	498	65.7%	N/A	758
Hard work always pays off	516	65.2%	65.0%	791
The good opportunities I saw as a young person were there for me when I got older	509	64.6%	53.6%	788
We will all need to start making more sacrifices today in order for the future to be okay	491	64.0%	73.6%	767
New Zealanders should get used to the idea that our wealth is limited and most of us are not likely to become better off than we are now	522	64.0%	40.3%	816

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.				
Answer Options	NZ total top 2 choices	NZ % top 2 choices	US % top 2 choices	NZ Response Count
I am sick and tired of hearing people disrespect New Zealand values	479	63.4%	69.0%	756
I feel a growing need to share important occasions with others	518	63.3%	67.0%	818
If I just work hard enough, I eventually will achieve what I want	510	62.8%	62.8%	812
I've paid taxes and earned my superannuation and I expect the future workforce to provide it	517	62.5%	N/A	827
I never look back, I always look forward	473	61.9%	43.3%	764
I don't want to be reminded that I am getting older	471	61.9%	47.5%	761
After my children have left home, I will have more time and energy in the years ahead to do something important	462	61.4%	47.7%	753
Government is far too involved in our personal lives	474	61.1%	81.8%	776
I like the idea of starting a new career or job if and when I retire	474	59.3%	58.3%	800
No matter what, duty always comes before pleasure	467	58.6%	73.4%	797
I like to compete - it makes me perform better and whatever I can get at the end is more rewarding	455	58.3%	53.6%	780
Economic well-being in this country is unfairly distributed	443	58.1%	61.3%	763
Our charities, faith-based organisations and families should be playing a greater role in creating stronger communities and to help people in need	434	57.4%	84.1%	756
I have a strong connection with the community where I live	454	55.5%	59.4%	818
Lately, I have had to admit to myself that like it or not I am getting to be an old person	447	55.5%	62.0%	806
The best way to get social problems solved is to work through non-governmental organisations that have dedicated budgets and a single purpose	441	55.1%	61.4%	801
Aging is inevitable so we just have to get used to slowing down and doing less	437	54.4%	50.3%	804
I feel that my personal values and point of view are shared by most New Zealanders today	429	53.8%	59.0%	797
I am interested in spending at least some time in a rural or agricultural living situation	408	53.4%	56.7%	764
I have begun to slow down and do things at a less hurried pace	434	53.1%	68.7%	817
I like being the first to know about new technologies	404	52.3%	50.3%	772
Going online makes me feel more connected to other people	430	52.2%	50.9%	824

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.				
Answer Options	NZ total top 2 choices	NZ % top 2 choices	US % top 2 choices	NZ Response Count
It is important for me to be seen as someone willing to defy convention	401	51.7%	35.9%	776
If I had the chance to start over in life I would do things much differently	413	51.6%	63.7%	800
Our society has become too dependent on technology and doesn't know how to function without it	386	50.3%	72.3%	767
I feel the need for something more meaningful to work toward in my life	393	48.8%	59.5%	806
It is important to me to keep my look current and fashionable	378	48.4%	35.8%	781
Being a good grandparent is my top priority in life	384	47.8%	71.6%	804
Material things like the car I drive and the house I live in are really important to me	360	46.9%	37.4%	768
Working through the system is the best way to get things done in life	349	45.1%	44.7%	773
Once I get something established and working in my life, I don't like to change it	357	44.6%	66.4%	801
I need to find more excitement and sensation in my life	357	44.3%	42.1%	806
Most people will never achieve the Kiwi dream	334	44.1%	53.5%	757
In the future, I intend to focus more on myself and less on others	324	42.0%	22.7%	772
the only reason I continue to work is because I need the money	320	41.9%	N/A	764
The best ideas for solving social problems usually come from those who are older, with more experience	326	41.3%	46.2%	789
I am very concerned about my ability to live independently and on my own in the years ahead	330	40.9%	65.8%	806
Government isn't doing enough to help those at the bottom	328	40.8%	54.4%	804
I often feel that something is missing from my life	303	39.6%	46.8%	765
I am concerned about buying products that express my own style and personality	312	39.3%	40.5%	794
In the future, I intend to focus less on myself and more on others	294	38.6%	61.6%	762
New Zealand society respects older people	309	37.7%	N/A	819
All I want out of life is enough to be comfortable; more than that is not worth the effort	296	37.4%	39.2%	792
I'm more concerned with myself than with the world	288	36.6%	22.7%	787
I believe that my health over the next 10 years will restrict my abilities and capabilities	271	35.5%	40.8%	764
These days I have less and less time for myself	269	34.8%	48.0%	773

Respondents asked to strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement.				
Answer Options	NZ total top 2 choices	NZ % top 2 choices	US % top 2 choices	NZ Response Count
When I was younger, I never thought I would feel as old as I do today	268	34.4%	40.0%	780
It bothers me that advertisers don't care as much about my generation as they did when we were younger	247	32.9%	41.0%	750
I am looking forward to the day when my children are out of the house	224	32.7%	32.4%	686
I am concerned about doing whatever I can to make myself look attractive	250	32.6%	35.1%	766
I am confident the New Zealand health and social welfare system will be able to support me when I retire	255	30.8%	N/A	829
Many of the social problems facing us today are rooted in the mistakes or failures of Baby Boomers	210	27.8%	48.6%	755
I always try to act my age	213	27.0%	39.8%	789
I'd be willing to work at a boring job as long as the pay is good	211	26.7%	37.2%	791
People who accept things are better off than those who try to change them	211	26.6%	12.5%	794
I am more concerned than ever about protecting myself and not taking any risks at all	205	25.9%	29.5%	793
The Kiwi dream is more about the things I have than the way I live my life	206	25.8%	22.1%	799
Even when there is a new and better way to do things, I prefer to stick with what I know as long as it's working for me	191	23.8%	36.5%	803
My best years are behind me	159	20.7%	25.9%	769
I want to do everything I possibly can to look 10 or 15 years younger	135	16.7%	21.2%	806
The future belongs to the next generation, my generation won't have much to do with it	125	16.3%	16.8%	768
I don't expect to get much pleasure from my work; work is just what you do to earn a living	126	15.3%	23.2%	823
More and more, I look to religion as a source of comfort in my life	107	14.0%	52.3%	767
You can usually rely on big institutions to do the right thing	94	12.4%	9.3%	760
I worry all the time about getting older	93	11.8%	15.5%	788
At this stage of my life I should not have to learn new skills	79	10.3%	N/A	768
There is little for people my age to look forward to besides getting older and coping with old age	65	8.4%	14.4%	772

Sources: New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009; US Boomer Dreams Study 2006

N/A = not asked

Appendix E - Future Focus Choices, ranked for New Zealand

Question: How likely are you to focus your energies and invest your time over the next five to ten years on each of the following? (seven point scale)

Answer Options	% NZ top 3 choices	US % top 3 choices	VAR NZ V US	NZ Response Count
Improving your fitness and health	91%	not asked	-	872
Doing things you've always wanted to do	90%	73.5%	16.2%	864
Reading more books	89%	76.3%	13.0%	861
Having new adventures that are exciting and fun	88%	70.7%	17.4%	891
Enjoying more leisure activities	88%	not asked	-	890
Getting more out of life	87%	75.4%	12.1%	846
Learning a new skill or hobby	84%	71.0%	13.4%	845
Making new friends	83%	67.4%	15.1%	858
Having enough money to get by	82%	72.6%	9.2%	856
Taking more control over your future	81%	73.6%	7.7%	893
Travelling and seeing the world	81%	60.3%	20.5%	845
Developing new skills and expertise	80%	64.8%	15.1%	847
Being financially secure to fund your lifestyle choices	80%	not asked	-	849
Spending more time with family	78%	77.2%	0.5%	867
Carving out your own future path	76%	not asked	-	883
Becoming more physically active or more involved in sports	74%	45.4%	28.2%	845
Exploring your potential in new and innovative ways	73%	62.0%	11.1%	865
Enjoying more of life's luxuries more often	72%	48.6%	23.6%	885
Fulfilling your lifelong dreams and ambitions	72%	61.1%	11.1%	855
Planning your retirement	72%	68.1%	3.9%	863
Fighting against feeling old	72%	57.8%	14.2%	870
Working to make your community a better place	70%	64.3%	6.0%	892
Working still, but in a less stressful role	70%	not asked	-	860
Excelling in your job	66%	55.0%	11.3%	845
Playing by fewer rules	66%	48.1%	17.9%	843
Putting yourself first more often	64%	45.0%	19.2%	889
Mentoring and helping young people	63%	60.1%	3.3%	885
Finding something totally different to do in your life	63%	66.0%	-2.6%	890
Unleashing your personal potential	63%	63.1%	-0.3%	854
Buying some of the things you've always wanted	62%	48.2%	13.6%	857
Working part of the year and taking time off for other pursuits	61%	not asked	-	849
Testing yourself in new ways to prove yourself	60%	54.0%	6.1%	855
Working to help protect the environment	60%	50.5%	9.6%	867
Giving in to your impulses more	60%	41.0%	18.6%	862
Helping out your children financially	59%	52.7%	6.0%	843

Being financially secure so you can help out your children	58%	not asked	-	862
Making more money	57%	55.0%	2.0%	888
Getting more involved in social causes that matter to you	57%	66.1%	-9.5%	865
Contributing more time to charity	56%	54.3%	1.6%	859
Forgiving yourself more	55%	66.7%	-11.9%	885
Redefining the purpose of your life	54%	49.4%	4.2%	856
Cutting back on spending, shopping and buying	53%	57.5%	-4.5%	857
Becoming more involved with people and websites on the internet	52%	40.8%	11.5%	857
Moving to a new place to live	52%	47.8%	3.8%	889
Saving for/spending money on your grandchildren	47%	67.4%	-20.1%	854
Finding the real you	47%	43.3%	3.3%	845
Investing in more education	46%	62.8%	-16.6%	844
Doing more writing	46%	44.2%	1.8%	855
Focusing more time and energy on your grandchildren	44%	80.0%	-36.4%	888
Contributing more money to charity	42%	48.6%	-7.0%	868
Avoiding big changes in your life	38%	37.4%	0.5%	839
Creating things online	38%	35.3%	2.3%	856
Running your own business	38%	not asked	-	846
Learning another language	36%	32.2%	4.0%	856
Working to fix the inequities in society	35%	48.9%	-14.1%	844
Settling down to a routine	34%	33.2%	0.4%	867
Getting as disconnected from work as possible	33%	36.1%	-3.5%	867
Working on behalf of human rights in society	32%	44.8%	-12.9%	867
Buying or building the home of your dreams	31%	33.9%	-2.6%	889
Starting a new career	30%	34.1%	-3.6%	843
Having a quiet retirement	27%	42.4%	-15.5%	889
Starting your own business	21%	25.3%	-4.1%	883
Acting your age	20%	32.0%	-12.3%	847
Getting more involved in politics	18%	62.6%	-44.2%	888
Sharing your religious beliefs and convictions with others	14%	46.1%	-31.8%	867

Sources: New Zealand Boomer Dreams Study 2009; US Boomer Dreams Study 2006

Appendix F - Things baby boomers worry about

Thinking about your retirement, could you please indicate how concerned you are about each of the following on a seven point scale, where 7 is "extremely concerned" and 1 is "not at all concerned".

Answer Options	NZ All % Top 3 choices	US % Top 3 choices	Response Count
Getting sick and frail	69%	67%	759
Not being mentally sharp	67%	63%	761
Being able to live independently	66%	63%	758
External factors you can't plan for eroding your savings	65%	Not asked	758
Being short of energy and vitality	64%	59%	756
Having enough money to get by on	61%	64%	762
No longer being able to live life to the fullest	60%	52%	763
Being in charge of your affairs	59%	50%	754
Having sufficient health-care insurance coverage	51%	70%	762
Being treated as an old person	47%	38%	757
Being stuck doing the same old things every day	43%	34%	762
Being bored with your life	42%	35%	759
Not being current on what's going on	40%	9%	761
Not being taken seriously	40%	38%	761
Living somewhere that is not vibrant and exciting	40%	29%	759
Having enough to do and keep busy	39%	34%	756
Not being able to live in your current home	38%	40%	762
Being relegated to the sidelines	37%	34%	763
Not having the opportunity to be in charge of something	29%	26%	758
Finding a community of other people to be with	28%	26%	763
Being taken advantage of in some scam	28%	29%	760
Not being involved in social causes	20%	25%	759