

[CFP for an edited anthology: "Childfree across the Disciplines: Academic and Activist Perspectives on NOT Choosing Children"](#)

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Type:

Call for Papers

Date:

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Location:

New Zealand

Subject Fields:

Communication, Cultural History / Studies, Humanities, Psychology, Sociology

Call for Chapter Proposals for Anthology

Title:

Childfree across the Disciplines: Academic and Activist Perspectives on Not Choosing Children

Editor:

Davinia Thornley (University of Otago, Aotearoa New Zealand)

Recently, Childfree people (Cfers) have been foregrounded in mainstream media. More than 7% of Western women choose to remain childfree (Cf) and this figure is increasing (Krupka, 2016). Being Cf challenges a “particular hetero-gendered order of which the procreation imperative is a central component “(Morison et al., 2015), occupying an uneasy position in relation to—simultaneously—traditional academic ideologies and prevalent social norms. After all, “if a woman is not a mother, the patriarchal social order is in danger” (Avivi, 2017).

This collection intends to engage with (mis)perceptions about Cfers: in media representations, in economic theory, in demographic models, in historical documents and historiographic models, and in legal texts, to name but a few of the areas of academic praxis that the Cf life impacts on—and is impacted by. It unequivocally takes a stance supporting the subversive potential of the Cf choice, particularly the “sense of continual potential in who or what [a person] could be” (Doyle et al., in press). It also seeks to delineate how Cfers factor (or not) into both previous and future academic literatures. To this end, I am interested in submissions from academics and activists in various disciplines and movements about the Cf life: its implications, its challenges, its conversations, and its agency—all in relation to its inevitableness in the 21st century.

Following are suggestions for prospective chapters; please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional themes/ideas and would like to discuss these further:

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GENDER STUDIES/THEORY

- Addressing the failure of feminist theory to account for Cfers' place in, and contributions to, progressive feminism(s), while meeting the challenge to "develop theory that does not recreate a maternal essence" (Hird & Abshoff, 2000).
- The role of Cf men in the Cf movement: where are they? What does it mean to be a male Cf academic?

MEDIA/COMMUNICATION

- Talking back to the 'elephant in the room': Cfers as selfish, immature, unnatural, materialistic.
- Varying representations of Cfers in the media (Carmichael & Whittaker, 2007), literature, and pop psychology.
- The role of the internet/social media in providing '(un)safe spaces' for Cf people?

ORGANISATIONAL/MANAGEMENT THEORY

- The academic structure models and, indeed, often rewards a Cf lifestyle. Are Cfers drawn to such workplaces and, if so, why?
- On (not) being a Cf "career woman/man": finding alternate pathways for our lives (Devers & Saugeres, 2014).

BIOLOGY

- Reproductive planning and birth control in Cfer family units.
- Theorizing modernity via the "separation of sexuality from the exigencies of reproduction" (Hall, 2003).

AREA STUDIES

- Cfness as a Western privilege: "Just over 40% of pregnancies worldwide are unplanned and many of those are unwanted...the choice to limit fertility is very much still an ideal rather than a reality for many women" (Krupka, 2016).

EDUCATIONAL THEORY

- Cfers and mentoring/teaching/policy-making/activism.

ECONOMIC THEORY

- The impact(s) of risk (Lupton, 1999a: 59-85 & 1999b; Jackson & Scott, 1999: 86-107; Wallerstein, 2000; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2000: 70) and/or rational decision-making vis-a-vis exchange theory on the Cf choice (Seccombe, 1991). What is the balance? Is balance even possible?
- The Idiocracy Debate: Satoshi Kanazawa's claim of increased intelligence for Cfers and the impact of their choice to remain Cf on the future average intelligence of populations in

advanced industrial nations (2014).

CRITICAL CULTURAL STUDIES

- Raced/classed/heteronormative/gendered experiences of Cfness e.g. enforced and voluntary sterilization; (in)equality in the treatment of Cf women and men and between Cf women and Cf men; Cf 'others' and their struggles for biological sovereignty; the role of white privilege in Cfness (Kelly, 2009; Settle & Brumley, 2014).
- Mobilizing a Cf movement: factors that hamper, findings that help.

HISTORY

- Cavassing the broad social changes that have precipitated the rise of Childfreedom.
- Naming and claiming International Childfree Day: its history, ideologies, advocates and detractors, role, and social/political/demographic impact.

PSYCHOLOGY

- The role(s) of friends, support groups, and "chosen" families—both positive and negative—in Cfers' lives.
- The positive impact of Cfness on marital satisfaction (Twenge et al., 2003).

DEMOGRAPHICS/POLITICAL SCIENCE

- Redefining "family": The growing Cf demographic and its impact on traditional academic definitions, as well as commonsense understandings, of family.
- Voter consciousness among Cf groups.
- Aging as a Cfer in a childed world.

SOCIOLOGY

- Structural/cultural constraints and opportunity costs for both Cf academics and members of the general public, including but not limited to: pronatalist discourses (Koropeckyj-Cox & Pendell, 2007); "matrigyno-idolatry" (Meyers, 2002); "mandatory motherhood" (Russo, 1976); and parents' sense of distributive justice or "their convictions that the rewards of their choice offset the sacrifices and that marriage and children are the best route to personal happiness" (Veevers, 1972).
- The importance and/or usefulness (or not) of the following concepts for Cfers:
 1. reproductive individualism, or internally referential reproduction i.e. "childbearing/rearing [choices] that primarily express the reflexive creation of individual identity" (Hall 1993)
 2. Anthony Giddens' "pure relationship(s)" (1992; Jamieson 1999).

Proposal guidelines:

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Seeking essays of 5000-6000 words, inclusive of references

Proposals should contain the following:

- o Contributors' contact information (name, title, affiliation, email)
- o Chapter title
- o Chapter abstract of 250-500 words that illustrate the chapter's
 - a) topic/subject matter
 - b) methodological approach
 - c) conclusions/argument

Proposals are due *April 1, 2019*

Proposals or questions: please email Davinia Thornley (davinia.thornley@otago.ac.nz)

Contact Info:

Dr. Davinia Thornley

Dept. of Media, Film and Communications

University of Otago, New Zealand

Contact Email:

davinia.thornley@otago.ac.nz