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2+ ~~Ques.~~ In today's society there is a growing concern that the bright up and coming future of New Zealand has gone soft. What does this really mean? and in actual fact howe they? In this essay i will critically analyse the issue of cotton Wool kids and it's potential impact on New Zealand's society from a range of different perspectives, challenging taken for granted assumptions on this issue and discuss the role of Hegemonic relationships in this issue.

They say ~~the~~ the world was a different place 25 years ago. Children played outside ~~regularly~~ regularly, participating in activities such as bike riding, going to the park or just messing around in the garden. So what has caused this sudden change in the way kids are brought up. One of the biggest changes between now and then is the major advancement of technology. These days instead of wanting to go play at the park they want to play on their

Xbox, playstations, computers etc. This attitude ultimately leads to Inactivity, which is a very dangerous thing with the media forcing onto us the idea of an obesity epidemic. Recent statistics taken in Taranaki show that 46% of kids do not participate in sport. ~~in fact~~ The fact that kids are not being active ~~now~~ as they once were must be alarming for certain groups. For instance the idea of cotton wool kids could damage New Zealand's reputation. Not only will New Zealanders ~~will~~ be perceived as soft but many other issues may arise. ~~One of the~~ The most important of which is trying to control the ~~obesity~~ so called obesity epidemic. The news that New Zealand children are inactive will not please the government as they have taken on a Healthism Perspective on this issue and in doing so abolished the ~~previous~~ two schemes the previous Labour government put in place. They were the push play campaign and banning fatty + ~~the~~

Unhealthy ~~sugar~~ food at secondary schools with the responsibility of New Zealanders staying active with the individual, New Zealand may in fact find themselves with ~~other~~ expanding waistlines. This ultimately affects the economy as well. New Zealand has an aging population with many of the "baby boomers" about to reach the retirement age of 65. This means the government will have to pay more pensions and the health sector will be put under extreme pressure as hospitals will have to deal with increased elderly patients as well as an influx of younger obese/overweight patient that have some of the health problems excess fat can cause such as heart disease + some types of cancer. This inactivity also causes problems for others from a functionalists perspective this is not good as they view society like an organism and therefore if one problem arises in a society it is likely to have a flow on effect to other areas.

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Another vested interest group in particularly the Industry of kids is the fitness industry. This industry thrives on Scammonizing people through the media. They use the media to force through the social construct of body image i.e. Women have to be ~~thin~~ ~~slim~~ ~~and sexy~~ while men have to be tall ~~and~~ and muscular. Those kind of ideals are unrealistic and people who do have these bodies are a small percentage of the population. With children ~~not~~ eating more calories than they burn, the fitness industry ~~of~~ will hope their tactic of making people self conscious, impacting ~~their~~ their mental health negatively will help get more numbers through the door + therefore a more profitable ~~business~~ business.

The final vested interest group I want to talk about is the parents. Is it not right for them to do what they think best for their children? Apparently not according to society. Society views parents as ~~overcontrolling~~ overprotective control freaks, surely they have

as right to protect their children.

However I agree that in some cases it is very much a factor. For example I have a friend who isn't allowed to play football because it is a contact sport. I myself am fortunate and was allowed to play contact sport from a young age as well as being able to ~~have~~ climb trees & play in the mud.

These kind of things are great as they contribute to things such as co-ordination, especially climbing trees as it works both sides of the brain. I do agree that less of this ~~stuff~~ kind of activity is happening today and I find it unfortunate as I see many of the year 9's at my school ~~uncoordinated~~ with very low levels of co-ordination. ~~However~~ When

You talk about parents being over protective I don't think society takes into account factors like, do they live in a safe area.

If this is not the case it is ~~you~~ obviously going to be a natural instinct to not let your kid play outside. An example of this could be Cannons Creek.

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My friend who used to live there said he wouldn't walk with his phone out for fear he might get mugged. situations like this give rise to the idea that parents may actually be justified in being overprotective.

Some assumptions on this issue are that cotton wool kids are soft, they are bad at sport and the economy will suffer with them in the workforce. But in actual fact are all these statements true. Of course they aren't but they are the media forces these ideals onto us in the hope of scaring us the NZ public into change so society will fit into the social construct of what the media wants NZ to be like. The fact they they are saying cotton wool kids are ~~soft~~ bad at sport is rubbish. Today we are seeing more age-group records falling + youth teams performing better on the world stage. For example the New Zealand U-17 Football team were the first NZ football team ~~out~~ of any

age ~~that~~ or gender that made it through to the Knockout stages of the World Cup. This clearly shows that young New Zealanders aren't bad at sport as some will have you believe. Also the assumption New Zealand's economy will suffer as well is untrue as well. If we go back 25 years New Zealand's main economic sector was agricultural which required physical labour. However today the economy is much more based on technology. ~~with these~~ Cotton wool kids are very good at using technology. ~~&~~ and with computers becoming an integral part of how the workforce is run this can only be an advantage to the economy.

(For example this is the first generation that can ~~use~~ use technology better than their parents)

Finally this essay will talk about hegemonic relationships. A hegemonic relationship is defined as a relationship in which the ruling group dominates.

Hegemonic relationships ~~in~~ in today's society are the relationship between ~~the~~ the government & the

NZ Public, what will be the relationship between the media & the NZ Public can be considered as Hegemonic ones as well. In both of these relationships the minority has the power of the majority. As a result of this these minority groups influence people's ideas and feelings towards things. The idea of cotton wool kids has come through this relationship as the two minority groups try to shape New Zealand into it's ~~new~~ social construction of how NZ society should be.

(This leads to the assumptions on these issues as mentioned before.)

I do believe that "cotton wool kids" do exist but in my opinion the idea that they are completely useless and a bad thing has come about through Vested interest groups looking out ^{for} through their own skin, the assumptions created by these Vested interested groups and how hegemonic relationships especially if the minority are a vested interest

group have influenced our ideas on this issue. New Zealand need to be aware to these relationships and not let them influence their ideas as much as they do now. Maybe then we will see if cotton wool kids is really a big issue

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