

# AT THE MARGINS: CONTINGENCY, PRECARIOUSNESS AND NON-STANDARD WORK

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

Modern life revolves around employment and work is still the fundamental organising concept in society. Not only do we centre much of our lives around work but our place in the labour market determines whether we live in poverty or wealth, or somewhere in between. Increasingly, that place is less predictable and we are becoming more vulnerable to new factors which are typically beyond our control. In the broadest sense, the now timeless and competitive nature of the global market, enhanced by the information age (Management, 2000: 78-79), has had a profound effect on the working lives of millions of people.

Changes to labour markets, however they are conceptualised, are associated with significant changes to the structure and organisation of work. Whereas after the Second World War until the mid-1970s work was organised according to stable, predictable and rational bureaucratic structures, from the 1970's the technological revolution and growing international influences and ownership have made longer-term planning more difficult rendering the standard bureaucratic model almost redundant. Kalleberg and Schmidt (1996: 253-254) comment that organisations are changing from structures built around jobs to work that needs to be done. The outcome, Beck (1992) argues, has been the development of uncertain and insecure forms of lived experience including the emergence of different forms of working arrangements and the growth of other pre-existing forms.

The Labour Market Dynamics Research Programme (LMDRP), funded by the New Zealand Foundation for Research, Science and Technology (FRST), is an interdisciplinary research project designed to explore and explain various dynamics of economic and labour market participation and the changes that are occurring. The first phase of the programme considered how individuals made decisions about access to, and participation in, the labour market, with particular emphasis on the life cycle of the household. This focused on three regions: Hawkes Bay, Waitakere and Tokoroa.<sup>1</sup>

The second phase of the LMDRP shifted to investigating aspects of non-standard work (NSW) in New Zealand.<sup>2</sup> Non-standard work can be briefly defined as work that is no longer characterised by certain features that have been regarded as standard. These include full-time hours, a regular working week, access to non-wage benefits, having the status of an employee, and being located in particular places (see Whatman, 1994; Burgess and Watts, 1999). Interest in non-standard work has been stimulated by its growing prominence in the last two decades of the twentieth century (Mangan, 2000; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 2000; Burgess and Watts, 1999; McCartin and Schellenberg, 1999), and has occurred within the context of many major

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<sup>1</sup> A list of all previous LMDRP publications is provided at the end of this report.

<sup>2</sup> A discussion of, and review of the literature on, non-standard work is presented in Firkin et al. (2002; 2003).

and well documented changes in the structure of labour markets in all industrialised societies (e.g. Crompton et al., 1996; Henson, 1996).

Since non-standard work has always existed, it is probably more accurate to note that the last 20 years has seen an increase in the significance and extent of NSW in industrialised countries (Zeytinoglu, 1999:1). By some estimates, about 25 percent of jobs are in non-traditional employment areas (Management, June 2000) and in a range of possible employment forms that defy traditional career assumptions (Arthur and Rousseau, 1996). In a New Zealand context, Carroll (1999) shows that although separate categories of NSW account for small proportions of the workforce compared to the 43 percent in standard work, collectively, NSW totals more than half of all workers. By acknowledging that he uses a narrow definition of standard work, Carroll (1999) leaves open the possibility that even larger numbers could be classified and counted as non-standard.

Such estimates show that instead of working full-time for a single employer with the assumption of ongoing employment, there is a growing trend towards self-employment, part-time work, irregular and less predictable hours, and less security and continuity of job tenure. Similarly, the reliance on direct employment is decreasing and, instead, labour requirements are outsourced or employees provided by intermediaries. A complex web of relationships and arrangements emerge because of the numerous exchanges among individuals, teams and employers – '[t]he interplay may seem downright chaotic' (Littleton et al., 2000:101).

In order to make sense of such chaos within a New Zealand context, the LMDRP has undertaken a number of research projects. For instance, forthcoming reports will contribute to developing a quantitative picture of NSW in this country based on statistics developed by James Newell (Monitoring and Evaluation Research Associates). A range of other qualitatively orientated research has also been undertaken. This includes studies on three particular groups – accountants (Perera, 2003), midwives (Firkin, 2003) and office temps (Alach and Inkson, 2003). Research currently in progress is examining the experiences of professional migrants. As well, a recent report has presented the experiences of a group of 40 knowledge workers in the greater Auckland area and 20 in the Hawkes Bay (Firkin et al., 2003).

This report will complement, and can be contrasted with, that last study since it offers material from the findings of a qualitative exploration of the experiences of those in NSW in more traditional lower-paid and/or contingent work. Unlike the research on knowledge workers (Firkin et al. 2003), which included all forms of NSW to give us some ideas of the combinations of various forms of employment, our primary concern in this paper is to get a glimpse into the lives of those working in the most precarious, contingent or marginal employment relationships. That is, those working in casual, temporary or fixed-term forms of employment and engaged in work that is at the lower end of the employment categories as defined by Statistics New Zealand in their job categories<sup>3</sup>. In recruiting interviewees, we did not focus on the qualifications of potential participants, but rather on the jobs themselves and the working arrangements. Furthermore, not all those located in these jobs were working this way involuntarily. For many it

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<sup>3</sup> The report on non-standard knowledge workers focused on the following categories: Administrators and Managers, Professionals and Technicians and Associated Professionals. The report of female temporary agency workers interviewed those in clerical positions and this report analyse the experiences of Service and Sales Workers, Trades Workers, Plant and Machine Operators and Elementary Occupations as defined by Statistics New Zealand in the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 1990.

was the most convenient way of earning a living – but because they worked this way by choice does not suggest that the quality of the jobs was always acceptable.

## **1.2 Outline**

Before presenting the research findings, the report begins with an outline, albeit in very broad, brief and selective terms, of the relevant literature, so as to highlight various conceptual and empirical issues pertinent to this study. By way of contextualising this study, a separate section considers non-standard work, the labour relations environment and the role of unions from a New Zealand perspective. An overview of the research process is then presented along with a description of the demographic characteristics of the participants. We then move into a detailed examination of our findings which is divided into various sections. Firstly, we look at the actual working arrangements such as hours of work, remuneration and employment tenure. The quality of the work and working arrangements in terms of autonomy, surveillance, work intensification, health and safety issues and human capacity are then examined. Secondly, other key issues which have emerged as outcomes of non-standard ways of working are outlined. These are insecurity and uncertainty, alienation, networks, immigrants and non-standard work. Finally, we consider quality of life aspects. We end the report with a summary of areas for future research followed by concluding comments.

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## OVERVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Earlier LMDRP reports (Firkin et al., 2002; 2003) have presented an overview of the literature in relation to non-standard work (NSW). While it is not our intention to revisit all that material here, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the central issues. As well, we examine in some detail a number of key ideas more pertinent to this study.

The origins of the model of standard employment are firmly rooted in the 'campaigns of male industrial and white collar unions' (Allan et al., 1998:235) dating from a period in the twentieth century when employment involved a concentration of workers in mass production. Typically this was in manufacturing, in economies which were subjected to national systems of regulation and worker/employer representation. Allan et al. (1998) suggest that this model is specifically a male model that has never really fitted with the working patterns of women. We would add that it has not encompassed those in many forms of primary production and labour (now extended to service sectors), nor significant numbers of Maori and more recently, Pacific peoples.

While it is readily acknowledged that part-time and temporary forms of employment are not novel, what is new is that these working relationships are increasingly replacing full-time and permanent ones (Kalleberg and Schmidt, 1996). This growth is partly reflected in the expanding service economy and increasing employment of women. For instance, the New Zealand 2001 Census showed that 46.9 percent of the workforce were women and this was similar when disaggregated into ethnic groups (Else and Bishop, 2003). Women working in part-time positions<sup>4</sup> comprised 38 percent of the female workforce and 13 percent of male workers were working part-time. While women continue to dominate some forms of temporary and part-time work, Maori and Pacific peoples are disproportionately located in temporary work in some of the primary and services industries. As well, immigrants are found in various forms of non-standard work as a typical entry point to the labour market (see also section 6.2.4. and Firkin 2004/2).

The growth of NSW, including temporary work, has been apparent in Australia and New Zealand over the last two decades. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) refers to 'temporary employment' as an umbrella term 'for all dependent employment of limited duration' (Tucker, 2002: 14). Just as Kalleberg and Schmidt (1996), in relation to contingency, emphasise the nature of the relationship rather than the work or tasks involved, Vosko (2000) adopts a similar focus in relation to temporary employment. She refers to the notion of the temporary employment relationship (TER)<sup>5</sup> which can be thought of as applying to any role or job that is not regular, full-time with an ongoing employer-employee relationship. The temporary nature of some forms of work is another defining feature of those

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<sup>4</sup> Part-time work is defined by Statistics New Zealand as 1 to 29 hours of work per week.

<sup>5</sup> Vosko (2000) distinguishes between the 'standard employment relationship' (SER) and 'temporary employment relationship' (TER).

we interviewed. In relation to the increasing numbers of temporary jobs, concern has been raised that these arrangements may be 'crowding out more stable forms of employment, becoming an additional source of insecurity for workers and increasing labour market dualism between workers finding stable full-time careers and those who fail to do so' (OECD, 2002:127). This is discussed later in the report.

Within the OECD, temporary employment has grown in most member nations over the last 20 years. However, this varies country by country. For example, in Spain, one out of every three jobs is temporary, whereas in Luxembourg and the USA, fewer than one in twenty are temporary (OECD, 2002:130). According to Burchell (2002:62), the main reason for this is that in the USA, permanent workers have so little protection that employers can dismiss them easily whereas in Spain, for example, there is such strong protection from dismissals and redundancy that employers avoid employing people permanently. This has been cited as one of the reasons why employers in New Zealand, are increasingly employing staff on temporary, fixed-term or casual contracts. While this reduces compliance costs, employment opportunities are negatively affected as businesses choose to outsource their staffing needs (Garner, 2003). Because there are no statistics collected on temporary employment in New Zealand it is difficult to quantify and the one study that gathered some information is a study on employment relationships in Australia, South Africa and New Zealand (Allan et al., 2001), which found that non-standard employment represented important features of the contemporary workplace and found that almost 90 percent of workplaces in New Zealand have permanent full-time employees (Allan et al., 2001:745). However, the survey was conducted in 1995 and it has been suggested that further surveys would be useful in determining the extent of the growth of non-standard employment in New Zealand (Brosnan and Walsh, 1997). As well as a lack of data, there seems to be considerable confusion around the principles of best practice by which the processes of engaging temporary employees are managed (where these have been considered at all).

Within the expansion of alternative working arrangements, it is significant that, according to Owens (2001), of all forms of 'atypical' employment, it has been casual work that has predominated. Notions of contingency and precariousness, which are discussed shortly, are implicit in the International Labour Organisation's definition of casual workers as those having no implicit or explicit contract of ongoing employment. Supporting Owens' contention, there is evidence that casual work has accounted for most of the job growth over the last decade. For instance, in Australia a quarter of all workers and a third of women in the workforce are employed casually. Between 1990 and 1999, 71 percent of employment growth was casual (Watts, 2001:137). Two important points need to be made regarding the growth in casual work. Firstly, while agreeing that net employment growth in the 1990s in Australia has been in casual jobs, Campbell (1999) goes on to suggest that if casuals were being used solely to meet the demands of short-term irregular work, they would only comprise about two percent of the workforce. Secondly, Owens (2001:119) submits that an even more striking characteristic of casual employment is the length of time casuals have worked for the same employer and that it is the 'long-term' casual who poses most difficulties and a challenge for policy.

A final important trend in relation to non-standard work and worth noting at this point is the growth in temporary help agencies, where people are employed by an agency or contract company to work for end-user companies which utilise temporary or contract staff for as long as required and then terminate the contract with the agency. This allows for flexibility and firms do not have to advertise, select and recruit individuals and accrue costs associated with permanent employees (Alach and Inkson, 2003). The temp is legally employed by the agency

which then invoices client companies for the hours the temp worked. Because agencies do not have to give their employees any guarantees of ongoing employment, many register with a number of agencies to ensure that they have enough work. Some of those we interviewed were employed in these types of 'triangular' arrangements.

For employers, there are many benefits to using temporary help agencies for staffing needs. This system allows for a consistent supply of workers, employers are not responsible for paying wages and benefits and the hiring and firing of employees is simplified. Workers are selected, tested and placed by the agency. As the use of temporary agency and contract-company workers increases, the issues around co-employment are becoming more problematic. At a regulatory level, the triangular relationship between the agency, worker and contracted employer can be unclear because of the absence of specific policy and labour laws in this area. Moreover, temporary workers can earn lower wages and receive fewer benefits because of the agency charges and the low levels of social protection (Fudge and Vosko, 2001). Unlike in New Zealand, various countries in Europe have developed policies to regulate temporary help work (Germany, France, Spain, Norway, Finland are some examples). Worker protection is mandated and the responsibility for workers is allocated to the agency and client firm (Fudge and Vosko, 2001). For example, in Germany, agencies are responsible for the training of workers. Furthermore, in Quebec, it is illegal for employers to discriminate against part-time workers with respect to remuneration and annual leave and this is to discourage employers from employing part-timers in order to lower their labour costs (Fudge and Vosko, 2001: 339).

The use of temporary help agencies has become an increasingly common means of employing people both in New Zealand and elsewhere and there is no better example than the temporary recruitment agency Manpower which is the largest employer in the USA. Moreover, recruitment in the USA through temporary agencies accounted for one-fifth of all new jobs created since 1985 (Alach and Inkson, 2003). According to Alach and Inkson (2003), in New Zealand, the Recruitment Services and Consulting Association (RSCA) members employ 8,000 people on any given day. This does not account for those companies not affiliated to the RSCA and independent contractors. At the time of the research there was an advertisement for a labour hire company airing on a local radio station (NewsTalkZB) advising employers how much money the engagement of temporary staff could save them.

Many sectors in New Zealand rely heavily on the employment of temporary staff employed either directly or through temporary help agencies such as cleaning services, nurses and teacher's aides. The multiple and confusing employment relationships can be perplexing for temporary staff. In an in-depth case study of a leading high technology company, 45 interviews were conducted with employees and Smith (1998) found that a few participants were unable to specify who their employer was. Moreover, temps are often unaware of their eligibility with regard to certain benefits and lacked access to independent advice on their entitlements (Alach and Inkson, 2003).

In New Zealand, this relationship has become problematic (personal communication, Service and Food Workers Union (SFWU), 2003). Anderson (2001) too asserts that the ERA, while it provides a list of employment relationships to which the good faith bargaining obligation applies, does not, given current employment practices, encompass all of the significant relationships that exist in the workplace. Anderson suggests that the most obvious is when employees are employed by a labour hire company but technically are de facto employees of the company that benefits from their work. In many instances, the employer is not the one making the employment decisions, thus leaving loopholes 'for employer avoidance of good faith

obligations' (Anderson, 2001:3). The SFWU too suggested that problems arise in co-employment. An example of this relates to supervision. Often, employees have no direct relations with the client companies and this brings with it a series of problems. Workers are employed almost like permanent employees but should the client company sever the relationship with the contracting company, employment is terminated without redundancy. Although the quality of the work is the responsibility of the contract company, sometimes the client companies get involved. Workers feel deeply insecure and highly marginalised. This does suggest that those employed by intermediaries are, or can be, in a somewhat ambiguous employment position, with complicated lines of responsibility. Moreover, when the quality of the work is in question, it might have nothing to do with the contract company employee but rather because, for example, contract companies have cut back their hours, cut back their cleaning equipment, put too much water in their liquids etc. This is exacerbated by the situation where companies employ temporary workers from agencies as well as directly themselves.

On the one hand, employers might want to avoid the responsibility of the cleaning services and hiring workers directly, but on the other hand, they want a role in supervising and having a say which workers should be on the job. As the union official suggested:

In other words they want their cake and eat it too and that's just wrong. Either they are employed by this contract, a contract that takes responsibility for the quality of the work or they are not employed by them. So that is another system where although the workers are not casual, they are deeply insecure, they are a highly marginalised work force.

A young man working as a cleaner commenting on supervision reflected that:

It certainly made me be more of a perfectionist in that area, knowing it was being checked up and it wasn't just up to the owner of the house to do an inspection, it was the big boss coming down.

Whilst part-time, casual, temporary and other non-standard ways of working may suit some people (e.g. women with domestic commitments might prefer the flexibility of non-standard work while still allowing them to stay connected to the labour force – see Spoonley et al., 2002), there is evidence to suggest that many of these working arrangements, especially if they are involuntary, can have a negative impact on future employment prospects (see also Campbell, 1999; Richardson and Miller-Lewis, 2002). For example, temporary work tends to channel workers into lower skilled roles with few opportunities to become better skilled, full-time workers or to invest in training and education. This has implications for life-time options and earnings and provides challenges to the conventional understanding of employment relationships and legislative frameworks. The remainder of this section moves from discussing types and incidence of NSW to considering some of the characteristics and effects of working in alternative arrangements for the groups we are focusing on. The features considered are labour market segmentation, flexibility, precariousness and contingency.

## **2.2 Labour Market Segmentation**

There was a time when dual labour market (or segmentation) theory was unpopular in sociological literature and among labour economists (Dickens and Lang, 1998). Interestingly, this was during a period when the labour market was fragmenting at a rapid pace (Kalleberg, 2001) and employment relationships were becoming increasingly precarious. This was the case in New Zealand with the deregulation of the labour market and the introduction of the Employment Contracts Act (1991) (see section 3.1. and also Rossiter and McMorran, 2003). However, we believe it is difficult to disregard the sizeable literature on how changing labour

markets are becoming (in the context of the greater mobility of international capital), increasingly polarised between the core of highly skilled and well-remunerated jobs on the one hand and a periphery of casualised or temporary work relationships on the other. Like many commentators (see for example Dean and Shah, 2002; Kalleberg, 2001), Beck (1992) in his analysis of the risk society accentuates the impact of labour market segmentation on employment experiences. Along with these commentators, we see merit in the notion that labour market segmentation (LMS) is still a useful way of partially explaining inequalities in the labour market and primarily the inequality in job opportunities and earnings.

According to this approach, employers tend to offer more advantageous employment terms and conditions to 'core' employees to attract and retain them (O'Reilly and Bothfeld, 2002). Conversely, inferior conditions that are associated with less permanent or precarious employment are offered to those in the so-called secondary labour market. That is, many employers are combining a 'highly' attached, well-trained, core workforce with jobs linked to opportunity and promotion (Deeks and Rasmussen, 2002) with a growing number of peripheral, low-attachment employees (Klare, 2002:17) who are vulnerable to cycles of employment, underemployment and unemployment. This is true for all levels in organisations. Furthermore, commentators suggest that workers have difficulty in moving out of the secondary labour market with a range of barriers impeding such movement. These can include the nature of the job as well as employee characteristics such as gender, ethnicity, age, skill, education and so on. The employment policies of employers can also be critical. In the accommodation industry, Whatman et al. (1999) found that increasingly staff were employed casually and that contract provisions were sometimes 'bent or ignored'. Wiley (1990 cited in Mangan, 2000) describes this:

Quite often, of course, this sort of work, and the people who are involved in it, are treated as a separate population of employees, with different jobs, different pay structures, little overlap and no chance of promotion

We found evidence of this in our research – see, for example, section 6.2.2 on alienation and insider/outsider relationships.

The Australian Council of Social Services (ACOSS) Report (2003: 113) has moved beyond the description of a dual labour market by arguing that such a model is no longer appropriate for the emerging Australian labour market. Instead, it is argued in the Report that work is now being rationed to create a four-tier employment hierarchy comprising:

- A growing minority of highly skilled workers with secure full-time jobs;
- A diminishing group of workers with middle order skills in permanent employment but whose jobs are vulnerable to down turns;
- A growing group of low-skilled workers who are segregated into more precarious and part-time jobs and face periods of unemployment or underemployment; and
- People who rely primarily on social security payments for lengthy periods of time.

The last two groups face high risks of poverty. This closely approximates Atkinson's model we have reproduced in Figure 1. The analysis of the interviews that follow suggests that many of the 30 men and women who participated in our study are part of the growing secondary labour market described earlier and captured in Atkinson's conceptualisation of the changing context of the employment relationship diagram (Figure 1, page 18). They are the peripheral group comprising short-term, casual and temporary employees who are substitutable and therefore less secure. The section of the report examining factors impacting on job quality highlights

many of these observations and is where many of our interviewees are located in the secondary area or periphery of the labour market.

### **2.3 Flexibility**

Perhaps the two most common reasons for the rapid growth in non-standard ways of working are cost effectiveness and the numerical flexibility sought by employers. According to Beck (1992), a key outcome of these shifts has been labour markets, and hence organisations, becoming increasingly flexible. Organisations generally seek to achieve numerical labour market flexibility by maintaining non-standard work arrangements to cope with changes in demand as well as reducing labour costs. Labour market flexibility takes many forms (Atkinson, 1984)<sup>6</sup>. Easton (1997: 173-174) has defined five types of flexible work practices:

- External numerical flexibility – where the number of employees is adjusted according to employers' needs;
- Externalisation – where part of the work is subcontracted out;
- Internal numerical flexibility – working hours are adjusted to the needs of the company but the number of employees stays the same;
- Functional flexibility – workers' jobs are modified according to needs; and
- Wage flexibility – labour costs and therefore wages are adjusted.

For the purposes of this analysis, we will focus on internal and external numerical flexibility and so-called flexible labour contracts, be they temporary, casual or fixed-term.

### **2.4 Contingency**

Many people engaged in alternative working arrangements can be described as contingent workers because of the expected duration of the contract. Freedman (1985, cited in Polivka, 1996), who coined the term 'contingent' work, defines this as employment relations that are transitory and conditional. Contingent employment therefore refers to the nature of the relationship and not necessarily the task performed (Kalleberg and Schmidt, 1996: 254). For Polivka (1996) contingent work is any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment and one in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a non-systematic manner (see Marler et al., 2002).

Pranschke (1996) argues that contingent workers are commonly used as a means of controlling workforce size, achieving labour force flexibility, decreasing administrative and wage expenses, decreasing employee benefit costs and minimising legal liability. All these reasons apply to the growth of flexible staffing in New Zealand. Carre (1992) uses the term 'contingent' employment to include employment both in the temp industry as well as a direct employment relationship which can either be on-call or short-term employment. According to Barker and Christensen (1998), contingent work constitutes one of the most controversial labour issues because there is a notion that American workers have become 'disposable', particularly as the largest employer in America is now Manpower, the temporary help agency with more than

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<sup>6</sup> See Figure 1 for a useful representation of Atkinson's flexible firm in Lewis et al. (2003)

600,000 employees (Cappelli et al., 1997). Many of those we interviewed could be considered contingent workers within the broad consensus that emerges from these various definitions.

## 2.5 Precariousness

In a similar vein, precariousness is often used as a defining feature when describing NSW. For instance, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (1999) uses the notion of precarious workers to refer to workers not receiving certain benefits such as leave entitlements. In a New Zealand context, Tucker (2002) views precarious employment as that which is low quality and encompasses a variety of factors that might put workers at risk of injury, illness and/or poverty from low wages, low job security, limited control over workplace conditions, little protection from health and safety risks in the workplace and less opportunity for training and career progression. Making these assertions, Tucker (2002) sought to find a definition of 'precarious employment' that would be relevant to New Zealand and developed various indicators that might help identify some of the characteristics of 'precariousness':

- Job can be terminated with little or no prior warning
- Uncertain hours of work subject to change
- Irregular, uncertain earnings
- Job functions can be changed at will of the employer
- No assumptions of ongoing employment can be made
- In practice, there is no protection against discrimination, sexual harassment and unacceptable working practices
- Job is low income or below the minimum wage
- No access to standard employment benefits
- Little or no opportunity for education and training
- Due to tasks performed, the job could be unhealthy or dangerous.

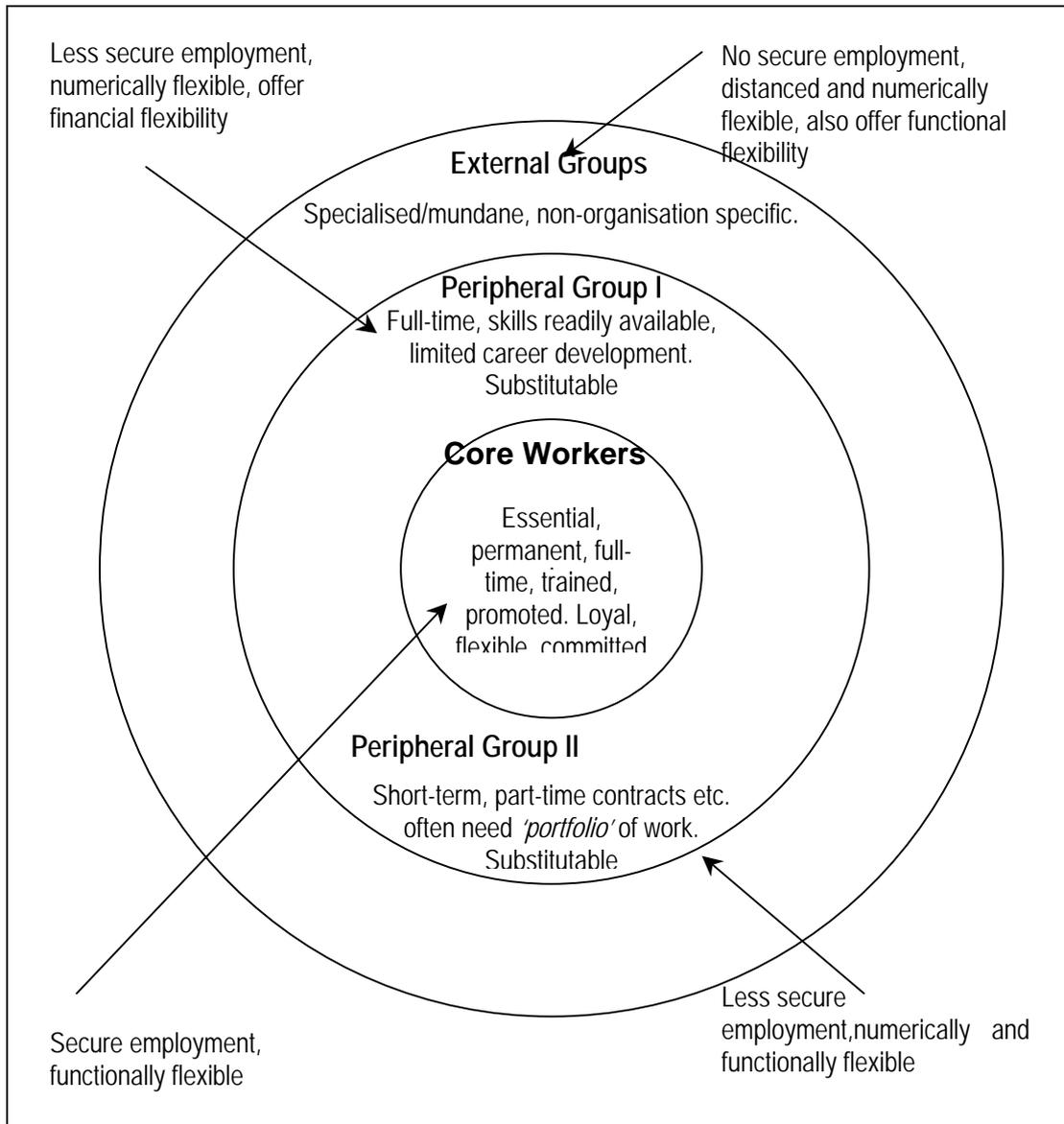
These are all issues explored in the interviews with our research participants and examined later in this report.

Tucker (2002:4) suggests that the so-called 'lower-end' of the non-standard continuum consists of temporary and fixed-term workers who are more likely to be in precarious employment than those at the 'higher end'<sup>7</sup>. As non-standard employment might be the choice of the worker concerned, for Tucker (2002:6) it is 'the interaction of the nature of jobs and worker preferences' that determine what constitutes precarious employment (Tucker, 2002: 6). This was refuted in our study. Although many workers had chosen to work in non-standard ways, some of the working conditions were unacceptable so choice should not be linked to whether employment should be seen as precarious or not. As one of our participants observed, he had chosen his job because many aspects suited him but the pay was so poor that it affected other aspects of his life negatively. Thus, whilst acknowledging that an understanding of work from the employee's perspective is vital, we see precariousness as a feature of the job or work.

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<sup>7</sup> Generally, it has been found (see Firkin et al., 2002, 2003) that those self-employed or permanent part-time workers are more likely to enjoy good incomes and some stability whereas the most precarious workers are likely to be engaged in temporary or casual work. It must be stressed that not all NSW is precarious. Firkin's (2003) study on midwives, shows quite the contrary.

Figure 1. The Changing Nature of the Employment Relationship:



Source: Atkinson's flexible firm (1984, cited in Lewis et al., 2003)

## 2.6 Some Concluding Comments (and a Caveat)

When we began our research, we referred to some of the roles that participants were engaged in as 'low-skilled' and low-paid. We have subsequently reviewed our labels and after an analysis of the interviews, we feel cannot refer to the participants as 'low-skilled'. One thing that we became aware of very early in our research was that there is no job, regardless of how low the rates of pay are, that can be described as truly unskilled. The level of (or lack of) education cannot automatically be linked to the responsibility and proficiency required for the job. Employers might employ people with no specific skills, for very low pay, yet the jobs require enormous discipline and care. In her book 'Nickel and Dimed' (2001), Barbara Ehrenreich, describes how she worked 'undercover' as an unskilled worker in restaurants, Walmart etc. only to discover that no job was truly 'unskilled'. She reflects that:

Whatever the accomplishments in the rest of my life, in the low-wage world of work I was a person of average ability – capable of learning the job and also capable of screwing up...It's not just the work that has to be learned in each situation. Each job presents a self-contained social world, with its own personalities, hierarchy, customs and standards. (Ehrenreich, 2001: 194, 195).<sup>8</sup>

We must conclude, therefore, that skill levels are relative rather than absolute, and that they alone are insufficient to categorise work.

The employment circumstances of our participants for this report encompass various types of NSW. However, no one term or concept captures the circumstances of the group as a whole. We are left with having to resort to a more generic approach to describing their 'non-standard' ways of working, such as Lane et al. (2001:4) provide. They define 'alternative working arrangements' as including casual, temporary, fixed-term, contract company and temporary agency employment as well as independent contractors. These all refer to the relationship between workers and their employers. Similarly, no single approach adequately captures the experiences of the participants employed in these various alternative working arrangements. We must resort, therefore, to simply acknowledging that most could be characterised as engaged in contingent, precarious or marginal employment.

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<sup>8</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich (2001) holds a PhD in Biology and is an accomplished author and journalist.

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## CONTEXTS

By way of developing some sense of the contexts in which our research took place, this section discusses three areas of interest. Firstly, a short overview of the nature of NSW in New Zealand is provided. This examines the sorts of work where alternative employment arrangements have been most prominent and considers shifts in the proportions of the workforce engaged in NSW. A lack of data on such issues makes this section necessarily brief and tentative. The next section considers the local employment relations environment over recent years and its impact on the growth and management of NSW. Finally, some discussion is undertaken regarding the role and responses of unions in relation to the expansion of alternative working arrangements.

### 3.1 Non-Standard Work in New Zealand – A Brief Portrait

In New Zealand, low-wage jobs are prevalent in the service industry and the types of work they entail broadly replicate the sorts of activities women used to do in the home – child care, elder care, non-qualified nursing care, cleaning and hospitality (Richardson and Miller-Lewis, 2002:68). Equivalent, so-called male jobs, are truck driving and labouring. However, as we will see, men in our study worked in the sorts of jobs previously done almost exclusively by women such as care giving, cleaning and teacher's aid.

The growth in these roles can be clearly seen if we highlight changes in employee numbers over the ten-year period between 1991 and 2001 of some of the occupations identified by Richardson and Miller-Lewis. Table 1 presents some data canvassing changes in that period for certain occupations. Although employment in all occupations only increased by 23 percent in New Zealand between 1991 and 2001, dramatic increases are evident in care giving roles (220 percent) and checkout operators (135 percent) – both occupations commonly staffed by casual and temporary employees.

**Table 1: Percentage Change in Employment: Caregivers, Checkout Operators and Cleaners**

	1991	2001	% change
Caregivers	10,998	35,172	220
Checkout Operators	5,115	12,036	135
Cleaners	24,942	32,721	31
All Occupations	1,400,400	1,727,271	23

Source: personal communication James Newell (MERA)

Despite a lack of specific data relating to temporary, casual and fixed-term work in New Zealand, it is useful to try and identify movements within some categories of non-standard work. Table 2 presents data for this purpose. To do so we need to define non-standard work in its narrowest sense as employment that is not permanent and full-time (Brosnan and Walsh, 1996) – full-time being 40 hours per week (although we have extended this to 50 hours a week) for a single employer. Even this should be considered with caution as it is possible to work full-time hours as a temporary or casual employee. Within the limits and problems of such a definition, those in ‘standard work’ are captured in the first category of Table 2 (identified as those who are employed on a wage or salary for between 30 and 50 hours a week and not a multiple job holder).

**Table 2: Percentage Change in Employment Status (standard and non-standard workers) 1991 to 2001**

Category	% Change 1991 to 2001
Employed on a wage or salary for between 30 and 50 hours and not a multiple job holder	+0.48
Employed on a wage or salary for between 30 and 50 hours for first job and a multiple job holder	+22
Employed on a wage or salary for 50 hours or more or MJH employed for 50 hours or more for first job	+55
Employed part-time on a wage or salary and not a multiple job holder	+54
Employed part-time on a wage or salary and a multiple job holder	+40
Full-time self employed with employees and multiple job holder	+42
Full-time self employed with employees and not a multiple job holder	-14
Part-time self employed with employees and multiple job holder	-25
Part-time self employed with employees and not a multiple job holder	-60
Full-time self employed without employees and a multiple job holder	+328
Full-time self employed without employees and not a multiple job holder	+46
Part-time self employed without employees and a multiple job holder	+1218
Part-time self employed without employees and not a multiple job holder	+380

Source: Personal communication with James Newell (2003) MERA

Some interesting observations can be made from Table 2. In the 10 years between 1991 and 2001, there has been almost no change in the number of people employed on a full-time basis and not a multiple job-holder (0.48 percent) which confirms many of the commentaries on the changing nature of work and the increase in the incidence of non-standard work arrangements. It is possible that there may be internal changes to the make-up of this category not detected by these data and that indicate an even greater incidence of NSW. Another significant finding is the percentage change in the number of people working as multiple job-holders or wage and salary earners working 50 hours or more. It has increased by 41 percent in the decade. In the same period, part-time employment has increased by 35 percent and self-employed people without employees and not a multiple job-holder by 32 percent. Those self-employed with employees has fallen sharply by -132 percent (for a commentary on why this might be so see Firkin et al., 2003). (See Appendix one – Table 3 - for the actual number of people in different types of employment).

### 3.2 The New Zealand Labour Relations Environment

Major changes took place in the political economy of New Zealand during the twentieth century with a shift in policy from welfarism that had become firmly established in the post World War II period to neo-liberalism in the 1980s. Neo-liberal reforms were characterised by deregulation, decentralisation and the promotion of the 'free market'. When the National Party came to power in 1990, it extended the Labour Government's policy structure and continued with the deregulation of the labour relations framework to allow for maximum employment flexibility. The Employment Contracts Act (ECA) 1991 heralded the end of centralisation and exclusive rights of representation. Both employers and employees had freedom of association. Supporters of the Act within the business community, and particularly the Business Roundtable, felt that this would facilitate economic growth and increase employment, whereas the many detractors (see for example, Kelsey, 1997), highlighted the mounting vulnerability of workers in non-standard employment. At the same time, trade union membership declined from a level of 43.5 percent in 1985 to 17 percent in 1999 (Crawford et al., 2000).

Recently, the ECA has been replaced by the Employment Relations Act (ERA) 2000 which represents a deliberate shift by the Labour Government from the pure contractual approach which underpinned the ECA. As such, the ERA is more prescriptive and seeks to regulate the employment relationship on the basis of ensuring a greater degree of fairness or balance in the employer-employee relationship (Rossiter and McMorran, 2003). The ERA deals with the inherent inequality of bargaining power in employment relationships, but whether or not this has changed the behaviour of employers and employees is debatable. Unless there are employee challenges to employment relationships through either the Employment Authority or Court there are no enforcement procedures. Thus, the question remains whether the regulation of alternative working arrangements will lead to any change in the nature of these relationships (Rossiter and McMorran, 2003).

One of the most important issues related to the area of regulation and temporary employment is the traditional arrangement for distributing employer-related benefits based on continuous service with one employer (Fudge and Vosko, 2001). Yet, tying employment-related benefits to a single employer has a negative impact on, for example, multiple job-holders, temporary workers and own-account self-employed working for a number of different companies. This is well illustrated in New Zealand by the introduction of the Paid Parental Leave Scheme. To be eligible for this (at the time of writing the report)<sup>9</sup>, an employee is required to be in paid employment with a single employer for 10 or more hours per week for a year before the due birth or adoption date (EEO Trust, 2001). This clearly discriminates against self-employed women and their partners who will not qualify, as well as all those working in contingent jobs on a casual basis for multiple employers. This discrimination has been recognised and in a speech to the PSA, Margaret Wilson, Minister of Labour, submitted that the Paid Parental Leave Scheme would be comprehensively reviewed to include the possibility of extending eligibility to the self-employed and those employees who have had more than one employer in the preceding 12 months (Margaret Wilson's mailing list, 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2003a).

The move from traditional work to NSW has seen the power relationship between employer and employee shift to favour the former (Mangan, 2000). Those in the latter group who are at the lower end of the non-standard work spectrum will have reduced/limited bargaining power

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<sup>9</sup> The Prime Minister has announced ([www.beehive.govt.nz](http://www.beehive.govt.nz), 8.03.04) that the eligibility and duration of paid parental leave is to be extended from 12 to 14 weeks, phased in over two years from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2004 if parents have been in the same job for 6 months.

and have little to bargain with as the nature of the jobs are low-skilled, requiring few qualifications and skills that are generally perceived to be widely available. Workers are pressurised to work flexibly at the behest of employers. This might suit some, but for others it has a negative impact on their lives and the interaction with their families. A compounding issue is that many engaged in alternative ways of working are not unionised. It is to the issue of worker representation that we now turn.

### **3.3 Trade Unions: Representing Non-Standard Workers**

The introduction of the ECA (1991), the prevalence of individual contracts and the resultant decline in union density has had some influence on the relationships between employers and employees. Any imbalance of power can exacerbate feelings of powerlessness and insecurity because 'insecurity is perpetuated by structures of power in our society' (Vail et al., 1999:5). Insecurity as an outcome of this way of working is discussed more fully in section 6.2. Power is usefully described as being 'the strategy of one individual or group may be to limit the choices or strategic opportunities of others' (Jordan et al., 1992:18). Employers frequently define choices open to workers, although this varies. Many of the so-called highly-skilled knowledge workers we interviewed (Firkin et al., 2002; 2003) had the bargaining power to determine their desired employment outcomes. This was less possible for the low-paid contingent workers taking part in this research.

Some, like Stone (2001:614), suggest that the decline in union density can be attributed to the growth in boundaryless workplaces that are also non-union workplaces. In 1991, when the ECA came into being, union density in New Zealand was about 41.5 percent. By December 1999, this had declined to 17 percent (Crawford et al., 2000) but rose slightly to 21.7 percent in 2002 (May et al., 2002). This is a cause for concern as unions have historically been instrumental in addressing injustices in the workplace and have played an important role in industrial democracy and democratic self-management. Workplace change can exacerbate income inequality and unions are the only significant organisations that can redress such issues. Since the introduction of the ECA, an increasing number of New Zealand workers, therefore, are negotiating contracts of employment on an individual basis. Spence (2003) reflects that an entire generation who grew up in post-Rogernomics New Zealand have entered the workforce with no idea of what unionism is about. Many of these people work in a sector such as hospitality where the deunionisation has reached almost 100 percent.

Because much of the union role in the more permanent employment relationship was based on narrowly defined bargaining units and seniority systems which are displaced by the 'boundaryless' career, a new model of unionism and a new legal structure is needed to support an increasingly diverse set of employment relations and conditions. Employee representation is still an important balancing feature of the workplace. The change from the ECA to the ERA, in which bargaining in good faith is encouraged along with the reintroduction of collective bargaining, might help to preserve the role of unions and make their tasks easier, although the levels of density might never reach those prior to 1991.

Matt McCarten, formally of the Alliance Party represents a union, Unite<sup>10</sup>, formed in 1994 by Alliance supporters, says that his activity 'owes a lot to the first stirrings of organised labour of

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<sup>10</sup> Unite's membership clause states that 'Membership of the union is open to any worker, whether employed, self-employed or unemployed: casual or part-time; forced or slave labour (including prison and work-fare), suffering

the 19<sup>th</sup> Century' (Wong, 2003). McCarten aims to recruit a working class that includes shift workers, cleaners, kitchen hands, waiters, service station attendants etc. Many earn less or no more than the minimum rate of \$8.50 per hour (at the time of interview). The minimum wage has risen to \$9.00 per hour for adults in February 2004). Written contracts are rare and job security is non-existent. McCarten claims that there are about 400,000 New Zealanders who get less than \$10 per hour (Spence, 2003). It is alleged that casual workers have had their work terminated because they belonged to this union ([www.union.org.nz](http://www.union.org.nz), 2003). In a recent case at a strip club in Auckland, cleaners claim to have been told by management that if they signed up with the union, their services would be terminated. Although this is clearly a breach of their employment rights, the imbalance of power is evident. Furthermore, it transpired that these workers had worked public holidays and had never received holiday pay or time in lieu. A similar comment was made by one of our research participants working in security and as a driver. She was commenting about her daughter who had been dismissed when the company she had been working for had lost a contract with a large employer:

But this is where the problem lies, employers are allowed to shove you out the door without any pay out, without any holidays, without anything. They are allowed to shove you straight out that door. Any reason they like is good enough, oh, we are scaling down or we are not going to do that job for those people so we don't need you. My daughter found with her job with the C factory in...oh, we have lost the contract, we don't need you. But hang on a minute, surely the good workers should be contacted as soon as they have got new contracts. They had other contracts...But they don't. But as far as I am concerned the drawbacks are just that sheer fact that the employer has the ability to just change his mind and mop the floor with you in seconds. It is just, thank you for coming, nice to see you, see you later. You have got no recourse, there is no recourse anywhere, not even through the Employment Tribunal. (Female driver)

Rossiter and McMorran (2003) state that it is often assumed that by being classed as a casual worker the employer can terminate the contract at will and this is why the use of casual staff is becoming an increasingly attractive option in New Zealand. Employers can capitalise on the ignorance of casual and temporary employees. But simply defining the employment relationship as casual does not exempt employers from the 'jurisdiction of the employment legislation or requirements to terminate the employment fairly and in accordance with common law tests' (Rossiter and McMorran, 2003:4).

The union movement has long been opposed to the widespread casualisation of New Zealand's workforce. From one union's perspective, flexibility in the labour market benefits employers' demands but to the cost of the needs of employees.

One of the other difficulties is that employers have become so used to making these decisions on their own, they don't consult and they don't go through a genuine process of managing change with the workers involvement.

Traditionally, however, most casual employees did not belong to unions. In the future, unions are likely to concentrate increasingly on recruiting casual employees. As one union representative spoken with suggested, representing casual workers is difficult but the union has insisted on blanket coverage for certain conditions of employment. There is still no equity but those represented by a union are more likely to receive enhanced benefits than those casuals representing themselves.

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from an illness, accident or disability; caring for family members; or in unpaid or voluntary work'. In short – anyone not responsible for hiring staff (Wong, 2003).

Having provided a short overview of the context within which our research took place, we now describe the research process with a methodological and sample overview.

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## THE RESEARCH PROCESS

### 4.1 Methodological Overview

The broad objectives underpinning our research into non-standard work are:

- to examine the significance of changing working arrangements;
- to explore the individual participants' perceptions and experiences in working this way; and
- to identify the implications that changing working patterns have for households, education and training as well as on regional, local and national policy.

In keeping with these goals and following other research (for example, Firkin et al, 2002, 2003; Alach and Inkson, 2003, Firkin, 2003), this study is a qualitative investigation undertaken to inform our understanding of the changing world of work as experienced by those whose working relationships are characterised by a lack of expectations of continued employment, workload fluctuations, demand for flexibility, changing employment relationships and alternative worksites (such as homework).

Once again, as researchers we set out to identify workers who fitted neatly into compartments we had envisaged. As in our previous study on knowledge workers (Firkin et al. 2003), this was not achieved. People are engaged in a myriad of non-standard ways of working and often combine permanent employment with casual or temporary arrangements. Furthermore, some of those in our sample who were engaged in so-called 'lower-skilled', lower-paid, non-standard jobs were well qualified people who were employed this way for varying reasons.

Consequently, we interviewed 32 men and women from a range of backgrounds and in an array of alternative working arrangements. During the analysis, it was decided to exclude two as they did not in any way fit the criteria we had set. One participant was primarily out of employment because she was on ACC and was intermittently employed at the time of the interview as a way of returning to work. The other was involved in early childhood education in an advisory capacity and thus not primarily engaged in low-paid NSW.

As in our previous studies (Firkin et al., 2003; Alach and Inkson, 2003; Perera, 2003; Firkin, 2003), a qualitative methodological approach was used to describe and analyse the experiences of individuals who share alternative ways of working. This qualitative methodology is not representative and we cannot generalise – rather we focus on the validity and meaningfulness of information gathered within a particular context. According to Tolich and Davidson (1999), whereas the strength in quantitative research is its reliability, the strength of qualitative research is validity.

The interview is the most widely applied technique for conducting systematic social enquiry and the in-depth interview provided us with the greatest opportunity to discover what informants had experienced in their working lives. An interview guide was used to ensure that similar themes were covered in each interview. The following broad areas were contained in that guide:

demographics, household and work profiles; circumstances surrounding transitions from one form of employment/unemployment to another; experiential questions around casual, temporary, shift or working in multiple jobs; an assessment of current working relationships in terms of advantages and disadvantages; institutional structures impacting on ways of working; future expectations and the impact on families. As qualitative studies emphasise the phenomenological view that reality is in the perception of the individuals interviewed, not all thematic areas were necessarily covered in each interview and the researchers endeavoured to treat interviews as free-flowing conversations.

In addition, participants were asked to complete a short questionnaire asking them to relate their experiences of working in a non-standard way. Likert scales were used to summarise the assessment of participants' experiences and allow for a comparison of experiences between different groups of people engaged in alternative working arrangements. We acknowledge that, given the sample selection and composition of each group, such comparisons are of descriptive value, but are interesting none-the-less. The areas covered in this way relate to flexibility (in terms of time and where work was done), autonomy, surveillance, intensification of work, medium- and long-term employability, relationships with the employer, and the impact on the quality of family life.

Participants were identified in various ways. Some were known to members of the research team and others volunteered after articles appeared in the local press seeking expressions of interest in participating in the research. Before the interviews started, participants were given an information sheet outlining the aims of the study and detailing their right to refuse to answer questions and withdraw from the study at any time prior to the start of the analysis. Participants then signed a consent form and every effort was made to ensure confidentiality and to protect the identity of the participants. Most of the interviews were conducted in the homes of individuals at a time most convenient to them. Several people were interviewed in cafés or fast-food outlets and some at Massey University. Interviews were recorded with the consent of participants and transcribed in their entirety.<sup>11</sup> Ethics approval for the research was obtained from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, Albany.

The 30 participants whose interviews form the data of this study were eventually chosen because they represented people working in a variety of non-standard ways in roles that were seen to be low-paid and working in alternative and/or contingent working relationships. Participants worked casually, on a fixed-term basis, few had permanent jobs but supplemented their incomes by engaging in one or more casual jobs, one was a permanently employed shift-worker, and many had more than one job. It should be added, however, that a couple of participants combined 'knowledge' work with casual or temporary employment as a strategy to supplement their income. Five participants spoke openly about being 'paid under the table' and at least six received a partial benefit from Work and Income New Zealand.

In addition to the 30 participants, we interviewed two union officials representing industry sectors that are highly casualised.

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<sup>11</sup> In all quotations from the interviews, '...' denotes the omission of a word, sentence or paragraph from the quote.

## 4.2 Sample Overview

This section provides an overview of the 30 participants, of whom 18 were female and 12 male. They were spread around the Auckland region (see Table 4). Because of the variation and lack of permanency in work arrangements and locations for most participants, we portray residence which, as in our previous research (see Firkin et al. 2002, 2003), remains an important feature of the analysis. Ages ranged from 20 to 61 with the majority being clustered in the 20-29 bracket (33 percent) followed by those aged between 30-39 (27 percent) (Table 5). Just over half the sample identified themselves as European New Zealander/Pakeha or Kiwis, 17 percent as Maori and 13 percent as Pacific peoples (Table 6).

Twenty-seven percent were married or in de facto relationships, two-thirds were single and, of these, 30 percent were divorced or separated and one person was widowed. Half the sample had children living at home, 13 percent had adult children and over one-third had no children. Twenty-seven percent were single parents with children still living at home.

Eight respondents (27 percent) were solo parents looking after dependent children and one of these still had adult children dependent on her. A further 9 (30 percent) were married or in relationships with dependent children although in two cases, these children were not living permanently with the respondents but were spending time with them. Eleven (37 percent) respondents were single with no responsibility to children.

Table 4. Breakdown of Participants' Places of Residence

Locality	Number	Percent
North*	8	27
West	4	13
South	8	27
Central	10	33

\* North includes the North Shore and Rodney District.

Table 5. Breakdown of Participants' Age Groups

Age Group	Number	Percent
20-29	10	33
30-39	8	27
40-49	5	17
50-59	5	17
Over 60	2	7

**Table 6: Ethnic identification**

Ethnicity	Number *	Percent
Pakeha/New Zealander/European/Kiwi	17	53
Maori	5	16
Niuen	3	9
Cook Island Maori	1	3
Fijian Indian	1	3
Other (includes Swiss, American, South African, Irish/Scottish)	4	13
Not answered	1	3

\* The number exceeds 30 as some respondents identified with more than one ethnic group

**Table 7: Marital Status**

	Number	Percent
Married	7	23
De Facto	2	7
Divorced/Separated	6	20
Widowed	1	3
Single	13	43
Not reported	1	3

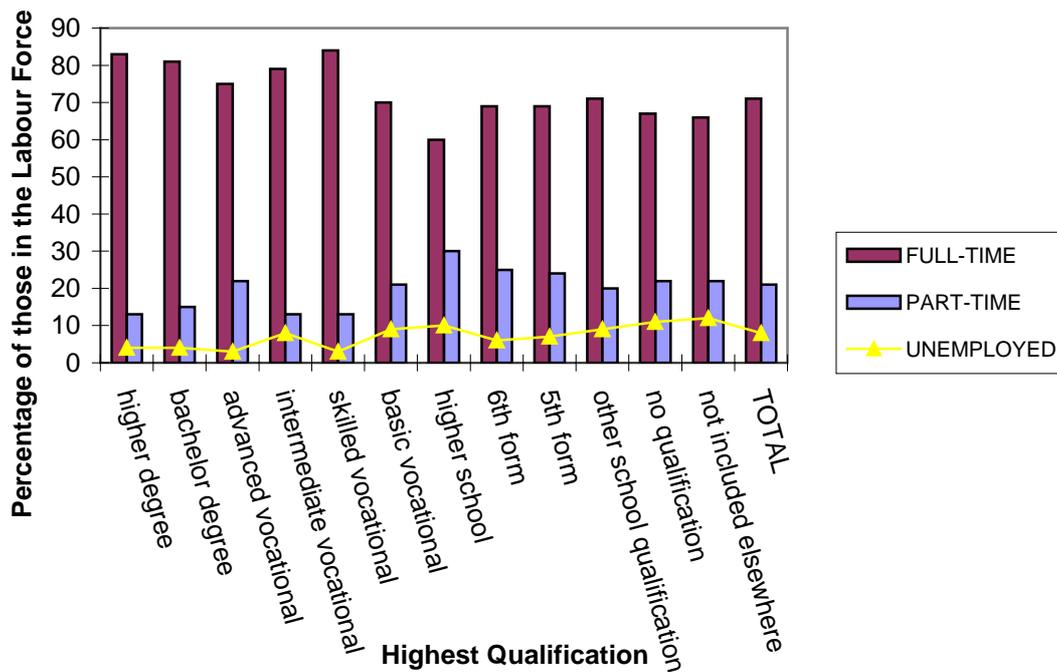
In terms of education, over half the respondents had school qualifications only. Of these, five had not gained school qualifications, one had 6<sup>th</sup> Form Certificate, five had written Bursary and six did not qualify the level of schooling attained. If we make the assumption (based on what we learnt in the interviews) that those who did not speak about their qualifications (4) only had school qualifications, then seventy percent had school qualifications only. Seventeen percent had some form of trade or professional qualification and 13 percent a university degree. We have not included certificates, partially completed courses or WINZ courses as these are difficult to categorise.

**Table 8: Education**

Qualifications	Number	Percent
School:		
Not specified	6	20
School C and below	5	17
6 <sup>th</sup> Form Certificate	1	3
Bursary	5	17
Trade/Professional	5	17
University	4	13

It is interesting to refer to data from the 2001 Census comparing qualifications and labour force status. As shown in Figure 1, those with the lowest rates of unemployment and in part-time employment have technical and higher vocational skills followed by higher degrees. Those with no qualifications have the highest unemployment rates.

Figure 1: Highest Qualification by Labour Force Status and Sex



Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Census for usual population aged 15 years and over.

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## WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

### 5.1 Introduction

There is a vast body of literature that examines the various outcomes of non-standard working arrangements. For instance, Tucker (2002) has written a comprehensive literature review on precarious non-standard employment. A number of these issues have been considered at various points thus far in this report. In this section and the next, we turn to the specific task of reporting the findings of our research. Though any efforts to break up a discussion around themes and topics will always be somewhat arbitrary and problematic, we have necessarily imposed a loose framework on what follows. Section six addresses some general issues around alternative working arrangements, some of which revolve around the interaction of people's alternative working arrangements with their day-to-day lives. The present section is more focused on the work and working arrangements they are involved in. It has two broad themes. Firstly, the nature of the work that the people we interviewed were engaged in is explored. The discussion begins with people's entry into alternative working arrangements, then considers the types of jobs and ways of working they are engaged in. Hours of work and remuneration and entitlements are then examined. A final section explores job tenure and security and issues related to efforts by people to move out of NSW.

The second theme focuses on the quality of their work and working arrangements. Job quality is one of the most important dimensions when examining alternative working arrangements. All sorts of issues impact on quality such as irregular, erratic and unsocial working hours, job tenure, lack of benefits, alienation, and general insecurity. The European Commission (<http://europa.eu.int>) has suggested that 'jobs ought to be intrinsically satisfying, compatible with a person's skills and abilities, and provide appropriate levels of income'. However, one participant pertinently suggested that:

One is not in business for that spiritual satisfaction, one is in business for that bottom line on the balance sheet. (Male on permanent shift work)

In 1995, the Honourable Steve Maharey, commenting as Labour's employment spokesperson on the increase of non-standard work, talked of 'McJobs'. He expressed concern at the quality of these jobs which are low-waged, low-skilled, casual or part-time (Smith, 1995). In this section we will examine features of the job that specifically impacted on participants and their families in a negative or positive way and determined the overall quality of a job. It is difficult to compartmentalise responses into advantages and disadvantages as mutually exclusive categories because ambivalence was common. For instance, flexibility might be desired but the uncertainty that accompanied that flexibility was a concern for many as the resulting economic insecurity did not allow for any significant long-term planning. The question of job quality is canvassed in terms of work-life balance, autonomy, surveillance and self-discipline, intensification, health and safety, and human capacity issues.

If there is one enduring and persistent theme that runs throughout all the findings, it is the sense of ambivalence that permeated most of the interviews. This usually arose because each positive or negative aspect or event could be countered or balanced by something of the opposite quality. Since we highlight numerous instances of ambivalence in what follows, our intentions at this point are to signal its presence and prominence rather than engage in a prolonged discussion or provide a number of illustrations

## **5.2 The Nature of Work and Working Arrangements**

### **5.2.1 The Entry Into Alternative Arrangements**

Like the other groups engaged in alternative ways of working that we have interviewed, the participants in this study were a very diverse group. In terms of their working background, for instance, two-thirds of our sample had worked in some form of standard employment before undertaking multiple forms of work and/or engaging in work that is shift-based, casual, fixed-term or temporary. The shift into these forms of work for all those interviewed was for a variety of reasons. One person offered the bleakest portrayal of such circumstances:

Most of us are working there because it is a job and nothing else was on the horizon and because we are the bungled, the botched, the broken and the foreign, we are against the wall to some extent. (Male on permanent shift work)

However, just because they might be in the most precarious jobs does not necessarily mean, as the above quote implies, that they do these jobs involuntarily.

Indeed, there were numerous reasons why people were working in this insecure, and generally poorly remunerated way. On the one hand, circumstances forced many into casual or temporary employment yet, on the other hand, this way of working was chosen because of the flexibility it offered. This was particularly true for women with childcare responsibilities (see section 6.2). In addition, casual or temporary jobs were also seen as a way for some mothers to find other adult company and to 'get out of the house'. This woman aptly described why she was working on a casual basis:

But I'd still like to come into the office so I didn't get any grey matter that would go rusty or mouldy and they understood that, so they've given me the freedom to be an adult with them and my brain to work on the adult things, but also to be family orientated as well. They've given me that freedom and choice as well. Yes, I do want to be with adults but also I want to be with my baby. I want to balance it. They're happy with that and so am I. (Female clerical worker)

One single mother working in a market research company suggested that the only reason she was working was to save for a car and because of the people she was working with. Interestingly enough, while some participants wanted the interaction of an office environment provided, several preferred not to be exposed to office politics or 'personal agendas'. One man working as a caregiver suggested that he would not choose permanent employment in this industry because:

The problem with going full-time or part-time is it really restricts you to being in one house and like I said, the bitchiness really gets to me. That's what's really put me off going part-time or fulltime.

Furthermore, for some of the participants, working this way was stimulating and rewarding and they enjoyed the challenges the working arrangements offered.

By far the highest number of participants were working this way because these jobs generally required no qualifications (although several required a fairly high-level of skills and responsibility (see section 6.3.):

Would I be cleaning and looking after someone's child if...I've chosen to do that, but I made that choice because...was I forced into it...I guess through choices that I've made that this is my life and so I haven't had a tremendous amount of school education or training so...it's a hard question actually...so that my choices have been limited through the structure of my life. I've had to choose work that I've had training for, like caring for children and cleaning houses, but they've been my choice as well, but I am doing those because I need the money, not because I've a passion for cleaning. (Female in cleaning, childcare and other activities)

One woman commented that she entered NSW as she was not 'technologically trained for the new office work'.

For some, the jobs offering low-paid and so-called 'low-skilled' employment, were forms of employment which were easy to find. For others, it was the only way to get any work – about a third of the sample did not choose to work this way but were desperate for a job. One man doing shift work aptly suggested that it was a 'ready market for the desperate'. Five people had been retrenched (17 percent) – this is the comment made by one man working as a gardener:

I don't think I was prepared because the redundancy took me by surprise. I wasn't expecting to be made redundant. I adapted quite quickly, it was...apart from the lower income, which I was able to adjust to, the rest of it fitted in quite nicely.

Biding time before going to university or studying and working this way were factors mentioned by several. In another instance, a woman working full-time supplemented her income by doing two different casual jobs, one in entertainment and another in security. As in our previous study, it was also mentioned as a way of getting off the benefit. Two of our sample were immigrants using non-standard work as a means of earning money and several left permanent work because of illness, or as one man suggested, were 'health refugees'.

I knew about the hours when I started...sheer bloody desperation for a job, getting a wage coming through the house...Basically I'm a health refugee. A lot of my off-siders at work are ...from overseas. I have an Egyptian workmate who is a Coptic Christian, this is not easy when he's not in his country. I have a few other workmates who've spent time behind barbed wire in various places for various reasons. I don't ask them too much about it, but I know it has happened. We're all rebuilding at a price, the hours. (Male shiftworker)

The profile of one woman working in clerical roles is a good example of the way several of our participants entered this contingent working arrangement. She entered into the NSW hours mostly for financial reasons and because she did not feel technologically trained enough for the new office work which often needed computer proficiency. Furthermore, she could not spend large amounts of time working with computers because of eyesight problems. Non-standard employment was also a choice partly because it meant she could spend more time with her grandson whom she lives with. The participant has been in telemarketing for seven years because it was the only job advertised in the newspaper that did not need qualifications or past experience. In addition, she found additional work demonstrating at supermarkets because it fitted in with the other jobs she held – her third job is in advertising (calling companies to place advertisements in magazines). Both telemarketing and advertising had slow patches during the year which were unpredictable, so she had to have a variety of jobs that also left her available for the telemarketing work for various telemarketing companies.

Table 9 describes the occupational categories<sup>12</sup> informants had worked in prior to entering alternative employment relationships and the roles they held at the time of the interview.

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<sup>12</sup> Occupations as defined by Statistics New Zealand in the New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations 1990.

Because many of the 30 participants held multiple jobs, it is difficult to say what occupational changes have occurred over time in at least one of their jobs, but we can suggest that most were working in occupations lower in the job hierarchy than their previous roles. Whereas seven people were previously in technical and associated professional roles, this had dropped to only three in current roles and even in those cases was combined with low-paid casual work. Administrative roles stayed the same and the remaining jobs lower in the hierarchy increased.

In closing this section, it is worth noting that several of those we interviewed were not prepared for this way of working and did not understand the subtle differences between casual, part-time and temporary work. As one participant so aptly described it:

I didn't understand it. I heard casual work and I thought...it just meant part-time work to me, I didn't realise that it was different. I didn't realise that I wouldn't have a job to turn up to everyday. It scared the shit out of me really, it was really, really, really scary and it wasn't until a few weeks down the track that I realised that it can work as long as you sell yourself blah, blah, blah. (Male caregiver)

**Table 9: Occupations Pre- and Post- Current Working Arrangements**

	Previous Role/Pre-Transition		Current Roles/Post-Transition	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Technicians & Associated Professionals	7	23	3	7
Administrative and Clerical incl. market research	9	30	9	21
Truck Driver	1	3	1	2
Sales and Service			3	7
Hospitality	3	10	4	9
Personal Services incl. care giving, teachers aide	2	7	6	14
Security			2	5
Entertainment			4	9
Elementary incl. labouring, cleaning, gardening	7	23	11	26
Missing	1	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>42*</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Because several of the 30 participants held multiple jobs, the total for current roles is more than 30

### 5.2.2 Ways of Working and Types of Jobs

Fourteen people (47 percent) worked in more than one job with a myriad of combinations used as strategies for earning money. For example, one woman combined permanent employment with two casual roles, while another person was self-employed and working casually for a separate employer in the same field of business. Others had 'permanent' casual positions with regular shifts and worked for temp-help agencies. The majority of people had a variety of casual jobs. Around 80 percent of those interviewed were the main income earners although six of these did receive some form of partial benefit to supplement their incomes.

Low-wage contingent jobs are generally concentrated in certain occupations and this is similar across most countries. These include: retail, hospitality, personal services and business services (Richardson and Miller-Lewis, 2002). Referring back to Table 9, we see how this matches with the types of work that our participants were engaged in.

### 5.2.3 Hours of Work

While in a later section, we examine the flexibility offered by alternative ways of working, this discussion is focused on the hours worked and how these are organised. As was found in a study conducted by the National Distribution Union (1996), many workers are required to work flexible hours but have little choice in the matter.<sup>13</sup> In such cases, flexibility is more orientated around the employer and tensions are increased. For instance, the study by the National Distribution Union found that those classified as 'permanent part-timers' were often treated as casuals and rostered on different shifts on different days from week to week. Such confusing arrangements were evident among our sample. One young man, working as a cleaner, maintained that on an average week, he worked on a permanent basis for 20 hours and 40-50 hours as a casual employee, but was satisfied with this working arrangement. It seems that the legal provisions around hours worked by casual employees is fraught with confusion. This is the case in terms of minimum hours worked per shift, rostered shift-work and termination.

This is well illustrated by a case heard by the Employment Court. It involved a woman who was employed as a casual bartender but worked on a regular basis for a set number of hours. She was then told, without warning, that her services were to be terminated. After taking out a personal grievance case against her employer, the court ruled that she was a part-time employee because of the features of permanence and regularity, rather than her being a worker on an as-required basis (Rossiter and McMorran, 2003). In response to this ruling, it was observed that employers cannot simply label an employment relationship as one thing when, in reality, it is something different (Slade, 1998).

The number of hours worked by our interviewees varied considerably given the myriad of working relationships the participants were engaged in. Over half of the respondents worked unpredictable hours that were determined by the employers' needs. For example, in some instances, participants knew when their shifts started but had no idea when they would finish. This was particularly the case in the hospitality industry. Working hours could also be broken up as in split shifts. According to one man we interviewed, working as a casual for a large New Zealand company, shifts were split each day so he might be working for four hours in the morning and three in the afternoon. He had been working for this way for two years.

In addition to any legal ambiguity surrounding their employment, the problems encountered by interviewees in this study ranged from working too many hours, difficult shift work, too few hours and split shifts. Casuals were often expected to work at Christmas, Easter and when people were free. Reflecting on hours and employers' ways of getting around employing people permanently, a union official commented that:

In the age care industry there is quite a big pool of casual work and the age care industry in my experience is that on the whole companies try to ensure that all workers are employed for less than 40 hours. Many people in age care are on 37.5 hours and that is to make sure that they never get tied in to having to give these people regular 40-hour shifts.

Many of those interviewed wanted to work more hours. This is similar to a study undertaken by the Service Workers Union which, in a membership survey, found that 30 percent of the

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<sup>13</sup> This research was carried out in relation to the Employment Contracts Act (1991) but evidence suggests that the Employment Relations Act (2001) has done little to change working conditions for casual employees.

workforce wanted increased hours, not less (personal communication, 2003). This is just one example cited and similar to several stories we heard during our interviews:

So other workers end up having to...they work 40 hours and because an agreement will say that after 40 hours it has to be open to pay overtime, they'll do a separate contract in another department, this is in accommodation - hotels, they'll work 40 hours in banqueting and then they'll get another 16 or 24 hours through the bar because if they want to make the money, the wages aren't high enough to bring them anything, so they have to do those extra contracts and you try to put a fence around it to say if people are going to work excessive hours there should be a penalty because then the employer will think twice about working people excessive hours but the problem is, if the wages aren't enough to sustain a family they will find other ways of getting the money. The security industry is the same, 12 hour days.

Unpredictable hours as well as 'non-standard' breaks are other aspects of alternative ways of working that many of our sample were familiar with:

The negatives are non-standard breaks. We only get as long as it takes to eat our food and we only get that break when we're not busy. Not knowing exactly what time you're going home is a bit of a hassle sometimes, but then sometimes you go home a lot earlier than you expected, so that is also quite good. (Female in hospitality)

Perhaps the most disconcerting aspect for our participants was the uncertainty in terms of hours worked. This uncertainty could take many forms. As one man put it:

You never know what's happening. Sometimes you can be in work for the whole week, four or five days at a time, six days at a time, working two days a week, god that is nice, but bills aren't part-time. The nice lady at New World isn't going to give you 60 percent off the groceries 'cause you have only worked 40 percent of the week. The nice man at the Power Board is going to turn off your power if you don't pay the bill. (Male working for temporary agency)

Another woman, this time in the hospitality sector, said that although she was guaranteed work for five days a week, that did not always mean 40 hours – the days were set but hours of work varied. She knew when her starting time was – but 'you only know what time you finish when you finish'. A male cleaner we interviewed worked in multiple jobs, one of which varied in terms of hours anywhere 'from dusk till dawn'. For some, uncertainty can persist right up until they may be due to start work. That is, some people were required to ring in to work before shifts started in case there was not enough work for them. As in the case of this woman working in a clerical role, this is difficult as her only means of transport was by bus.

I put my name down for Tuesday and I got rung up Tuesday and told there was no work, I got rung Wednesday and they said to ring in Thursday. Thursday there was no work, Friday there was no work, Saturday there was no work. Monday there was no work. All my shifts last week. Nothing. No explanation. I said to them, is there likely to be work tomorrow, oh, we don't know, you'll have to ring tomorrow. They know there is no work, but we don't get told. I have to ring at 3.30pm because my bus leaves at 4.00pm, so you have to ring at 4.00pm but I can't ring at 4.00pm, so I ring at 3.30pm. The phone gets slammed down in your ear, no there's no work, slam. That's what happens. If there is work and I have got to race around because I found out there was work, you can't ring any earlier, you can't ring any later than 4.00pm. They have the right to cancel you but if you ring up and cancel, then you get looked at twice.

This has implications for short-term planning and issues like child-care. Whilst working as a casual might be more convenient for mothers of young children, the unpredictable nature of the hours could be problematic. The same applied to 'unsocial' hours several of the participants were rostered on. One woman was employed over the weekend in a foreign exchange office. Permanent staff were not expected to work over weekends. That was left to casuals, so the woman we interviewed had a contract to work every weekend for this organisation.

Another extraordinary way in which temporary employment differed was workers having to find people to replace them if they were unable to work due to ill health or wanting to take leave. The following quotes describe this:

I cut down because I knew I was going away and I had to find people to take over the jobs that...my regular jobs that I had to get people to take over while I'm going away. (Female caregiver)

... I didn't get sick leave or anything so if I was sick, I would usually just go in and work anyway. I couldn't really afford to lose a shift's work in money. The way it was organised was the responsibility was on you to find someone to cover your shift as well if possible so...yeah, it wasn't the best. (Male in administration)

Furthermore, staff shortages in certain industries meant that several workers claimed that they worked for more than the maximum permitted hours. In some instances, they had a permanent job and then worked long casual hours to make ends meet. A man working this way commented:

Because I have a casual contract they can call me at any time of the day and sometimes when you're really, really busy they call me all the time and sometimes I have to do double shifts or triple shifts, which isn't really allowed but they still do it...At the moment I'm working at least every day, eight-hour shift. Often with a couple more, so that's seven 8-hour shifts, possibly another one or two. (Male caregiver)

In fact, one man maintained that he was fired because he refused to work the long hours required by the company he was doing contract work for:

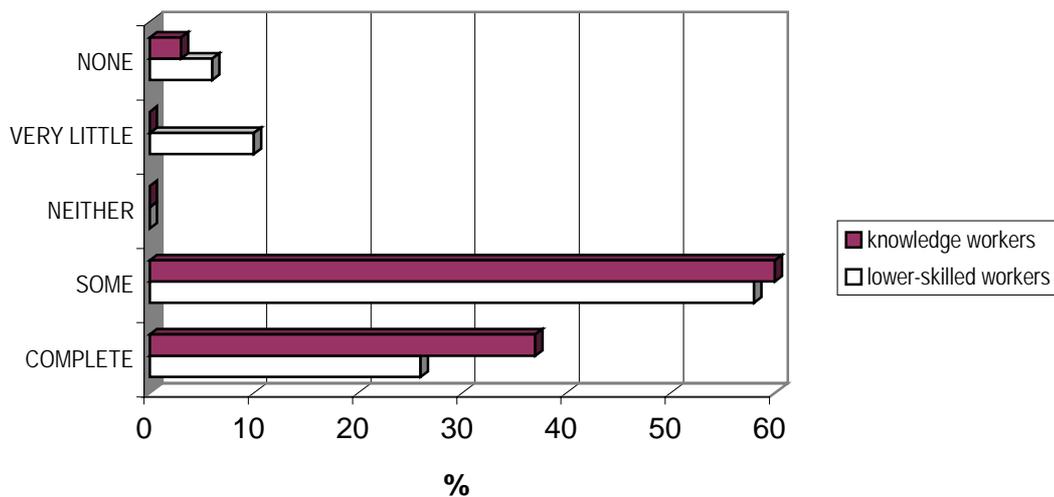
I actually got the sack. It got to a stage where I was working 60-70 hours per week and I had just had enough and I said, nah, I want to work 40 hours and they sacked me for it. (Male driver)

Travelling time between jobs was commented on by four participants suggesting that they were not paid, or paid very little, for the time it took to travel between two jobs on the same day. For example, one caregiver observed that:

I think they give you 50 cents an hour for travelling money. That doesn't cover nothing, absolutely nothing. (Female caregiver working in multiple locations)

In direct contrast with many of the problems experienced over hours of work, the most common advantage of alternative working arrangements was the temporal *flexibility* they offered people, thereby allowing many of our participants some autonomy over the management of their time. Here again, though, a sense of ambivalence about working in alternative employment arrangements was very evident, given the continual tensions between living with ongoing uncertainty and low pay, just to have the flexibility to fit work in with their personal lives. Figure 2 shows the degrees of flexibility experienced by participants in this study and compares these with the results for the 'knowledge' workers. The perceptions of flexibility of time between the different groups did not differ that much, although a slightly higher proportion of knowledge workers enjoyed complete flexibility.

**Figure 2: Degree of Flexibility Over the Hours Worked**



The nature of these tensions and the degree of uncertainty will be explored in greater detail in a later section.

#### 5.2.4 Remuneration and Other Entitlements

Pay rates are one of the prime areas of concern in alternative working arrangements as some employers use temporary workers to reduce their wage costs (duRivage, 1992) and this, in turn, increases the economic vulnerability of those working this way. Many studies (for example, Tilly, 1992; Lane et al., 2001) show that temporary workers earn a lower hourly rate than their full-time counterparts. Tilly (1992) found that in identical occupations and with the same personal characteristics, temporary workers earned an average of 10-15 percent less per hour and Segal and Sullivan (1998, in Lane, 2001) found a 15-20 percent wage differential.

Evidence of these disparities can be found in New Zealand. For instance, TAB Phonebet operators worked to rule in a campaign to win pay parity for casual employees. SFWU National Secretary, Darien Fenton, described a two-tier employment system in the TAB's Phonebet service where staff labelled 'non-core' doing the same job as their colleagues, were paid \$1.41 an hour less than 'core' workers. Fenton commented that the TAB had earlier agreed to a union demand to close the gap between the two categories, but management had failed to agree to a timetable to make the changes (NewsTalkZB, 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2002). Another New Zealand example was described in a report prepared for the Ministry of Women's Affairs (Else and Bishop, 2003) where it was found that average hourly earnings are lower for part-time workers than for full-time workers although this has been attributed to differences in age, education and parental status. Table 10 gives a breakdown of the average hourly rates in June 2001, for full- and part-time workers, and by gender.

Table 10: Average Hourly Rates: June 2003

	Full-time \$	Part-time \$
Male	18.18	14.88
Female	15.66	13.74

Source: Else and Bishop, 2003

Richardson and Miller-Lewis (2002:68) observe that there is evidence that some companies do operate on a high turnover, low-wage policy, discouraging both the companies and the employees from investing skills in these jobs. As well, they continue, workers who move jobs regularly are forced to accept lower wages in their replacement job. Several participants in an industry with apparently high rates of staff turnover, with low rates of pay, working unacceptably long shifts and in certain instances receiving no appropriate training, were an example of this. This is what one woman had to say:

You get \$10.00 per hour and then you take tax out of that, so that's \$8.00 an hour...when I was working for A and then for B, then you get secondary tax, and I was working for C as well, so you are getting secondary tax, if you're not earning enough money, all those little jobs, you're not earning enough money, but you're getting taxed so heavily on that little bit that you are earning. You think, why am I doing this? (Female caregiver)

She believed that turnover in the industry was so high because of the poor rates of pay.

Furthermore, there were indications that pay did not reflect the levels of skill or responsibility required for the job. The community caregivers we interviewed provide an example of this. They had responsibilities requiring medical knowledge, yet not all of them received training and several had minimal supervision:

There was no training; I was chucked straight into it. I don't think I should have. I think that I should have had at least some of the training. Some of the stuff that I did, I would have thought you would have to be a nurse to do...yeah, there was no training at all, it was up to you, if you were the right person for the job you would stick it out. (Male caregiver)

Yeah, because in most cases you are working physically quite hard. You're working physically hard and you've got quite a lot of responsibility, especially with elderly people and people that are not well, you have to take into account their medical condition and their physical condition. You're not just there cleaning their house, you're overseeing them as well and if there is anything that you see that they need help or stuff. You are using a range of skills and at \$10.00 per hour, minus tax, you're not really getting paid for those skills. (Female caregiver)

In another case, a worker had undergone training specific to care work, had paid for it herself and received no recognition for it. She commented that she could do all the relevant training she liked without being given any acknowledgment for this in terms of a pay increase:

They are doing that particular course, but you have to pay for it... So you can do all this training, you can be really qualified in what you are doing, and caring for people and everything, but you are not getting anything more for it. (Female caregiver)

As well, this caregiver commented that her pay had not increased in the years she had been working for one particular organisation.

There were other issues associated with pay in alternative working arrangements. In some instances, pay structures are haphazard and random as this respondent reflected:

I would also like there to be some more set structure...set pay reviews and personal evaluations every six months or something, just to know that if you deserve a pay rise you are going to get it. (Female barrista)

Other participants were working on the basis of fairly loose verbal agreements and did not really know what their rates of pay were made up of. In one case, a clerical worker had been given an increase which was later withdrawn when management realised that a pay rise had not been budgeted for:

...someone in payroll put our...gave us this raise, but the people at L, the management, hadn't okayed it, so they actually took the raise back because they couldn't afford it in their budget to put our pay up. I think, even illegally, they just put the pay back down. (Male clerical worker)

Such an action is clearly illegal but for this employee and others taking part in our study, any challenges to employers about conditions of employment were not considered (see also Rossiter and McMorran, 2003). Again, there is a sense of ambivalence running through the interviews as is evident in this woman's reflection:

The salary or the wages that I get in each week varies. I can't actually plan to buy things because I don't have the same income each week. That is a bit hard, it may be a negative, but I think it weights up the positives, spending time with her [child] at home and not paying any person for childcare. (Female clerical worker)

A woman working as a caregiver suggested something similar. The nature of the work made it convenient and suited her family commitments, but she was not doing the job for money 'obviously because the money is so little. If you were paid a decent amount of money, it would make it a lot better'.

In their interviews of 47 low-income working families from London and North Luton, Dean and Shah (2002:67) found that although pay rates were low, people interviewed did not always comment on the rates they were earning because they might have been hardened to the comparatively low wage levels or even grateful to have employment on such terms. One of the men interviewed in this study said just that:

No, I wasn't paid well...I was paid enough...The reason that I was doing that job was it was suited to my hours and I could pick and choose my hours. I had school in the afternoon and it was exactly just enough money, even though I was working a lot harder than the money gave me, it was perfect for what I was doing...[But] that is not enough to have a normal lifestyle, I can't see my family very often because I don't have enough money...in fact I've had to put my car into the garage and retire it for a while, because I simply can't afford to pay for registration and warrants and all that. I can't really see my friends that often...my far away friends. I can't afford either the bus fare, the ferry or whatever. It's really impacted on my social life. (Male caregiver)

Our final observation in this section is that, for many reasons, at least five of the 30 participants told the interviewers that a portion of their earnings were not declared.

If they're all above board then I would be probably working for 30 cents for every dollar. I would find that unacceptable. But because some of what I do is under the table then I feel like it is acceptable. (Female working as cleaner and in childcare)

This is unsurprising given the content of the preceding discussion.

#### *5.2.4.1 Other Entitlements*

Not unexpectedly, most of the participants did not receive any employer-provided benefits such as health and superannuation benefits. However, the responses of participants around statutory entitlements reveals not only the complexities of alternative employment relationships but the worrying situation regarding more fundamental rights. Research, cited by Tucker (2002), highlights that casual employees are less informed about the minimum conditions they were entitled to than permanent employees. In addition, the growth in the number of working arrangements operating in many firms has resulted in employment relations becoming more

complicated. This is further exacerbated by policies tailored around full-time, permanent positions that do not easily apply to casual, fixed-term or temporary employees. Co-employment further complicates employment relationships.

Our own study found that a large number of the workers we interviewed were ignorant about benefit entitlements and it is left up to them to discover what their legal entitlements are. Thus, many of our interviewees were unaware that they were entitled to sick leave and some were confused about holiday pay. Several respondents did not know that they were entitled to holiday pay or whether it was included in their hourly rate:

The other thing, I wasn't entitled to holiday pay. It was part of that \$10.00-\$11.00... Yeah. But that is what got up my nose. I could have worked there for a year, two years straight and I don't know what legal standing there is, but it appears that I'm not legally entitled to a break. I took it anyway. (Male truck driver)

This woman, who was working in several arrangements, was vague when asked whether she received any holiday pay:

I won't be. Well not at this point. Her business is new, so I guess once she gets more of an idea of her...more structure in her business then I'll have more understanding of what she wants from me and how much she wants me. At the moment it's a bit more casual than that. (Female clerical worker)

Some did not realise that it was a statutory requirement:

I know that the Holidays Act has changed. I read about it in the paper. For us, I'm sorry, I can't really comment because I haven't really signed a contract at all so I'm kind of in a position where I don't have a say, in relation to a contract as such and basically I just sign my timesheets and get paid. (Female office worker, temporary agency employee and entertainer)

As well, there was some confusion about sick leave:

As a casual worker, we don't get any sick pay or leave, but we do get an additional 6 percent on top of our hourly rate which accounts for the sick pay and leave. (Male caregiver)

One participant working in hospitality had only recently discovered that she was entitled to sick leave – 'all we have to do is write it on our timesheet the days that we are sick and we will get it'. When asked why she thought she was entitled to sick pay, she responded that:

I think that it might be a generosity thing because we don't get public holiday pay, we don't get time and a half or anything like that. (Female in hospitality)

Aside from confusion around sick leave, for one of the men we interviewed, taking sick leave was too difficult because, as already noted, he would have to try and find a replacement for the shift he was missing due to illness. Furthermore:

I was on a completely part-time casual contract. It was just hourly pay for turning up and working. I just had a lot of shifts so that I had enough money to live off, but yeah, I didn't get sick leave or anything so if I was sick, I would usually just go in and work anyway. I couldn't really afford to lose a shifts work in money. The way it was organised was the responsibility was on you to find someone to cover your shift as well if possible so...yeah, it wasn't the best. (Male in clerical role)

Like the situation of those quoted above, many of these working arrangements are fairly informal and there are no written contracts. This is illegal according to Rossiter and McMorran (2003) who quote section 65 of the ERA (2000) which requires all individual agreements to be in writing and which outline the conditions of employment. Given the temporary nature of employment relationships and the cost of legal proceedings, as well the often reduced financial capital of employees, complaints against unjustified dismissals are rarely made. Consequently, some sought more legislative protection.

I'd like to see some type of legislation to be included for holiday pay for every job and things like that.  
(Female office worker and waitress)

Given that the types of protection sought by this interviewee already exist, it seems that what is needed is a high profile and easily accessible, independent source of information to advise non-standard workers on employment rights such as holiday pay, sick leave, special leave, and so on. Ensuring that written contracts are in place and requiring as part of that, an explanation of their entitlements also seems vital.

Although dealt with more fully in Section 6.3.1, it is worth noting here that the most common complaints, even for those with little interest in, or awareness of, legislation or policy related to secondary taxation and abatements. It was suggested by some of the participants with more than one job and receiving a benefit supplement that, because of secondary tax deductions, they did not declare all their income. This observation made by one of our participants working in four different casual jobs sums it up in a nutshell:

If they are all above board then I would be probably working for 30 cents for every dollar. I would find that unacceptable. But because some of what I do is under the table then I feel like it is acceptable.

In summary, it can be said that, in general, people interviewed were not particularly knowledgeable about their entitlements. Holiday and sick leave pay were the most common issues alluded to. Some people had little knowledge of the way their pay was actually structured.

### **5.2.5 Employment Tenure and Security, and Finding New Work**

In Australia, there is an ongoing debate about who the true 'casuals' are (see ABL, 2001). Murtough and Waite (2000, cited in Campbell and Burgess, 2001) suggest that it is necessary to exclude several groups of workers from the definition of 'casual', the largest group of these being 'long-term' casual employees. Yet it is precisely this group of temporary workers that is the subject of policy debates. In Australia, as well as in New Zealand, trade unions are concerned about the growing number of 'long-term' casuals being used by employers as a substitute for permanent employees. Long-term casuals would miss out on many of the entitlements that permanent employees receive. These could include paid sick leave, bereavement leave, notice of dismissal, redundancy pay, access to training, career progression and so on. Owens (2001:119) maintains that the long-term casuals are becoming a striking characteristic of casual employment. They pose considerable difficulties and challenges for policy makers.

Although most temporary workers remained in their jobs for less than a year, it is becoming increasingly possible for temporary workers to be employed on longer contracts or to accumulate several contract renewals, thus accruing time in a job spanning years but without the benefits they might have received had they been permanently employed. Evidence in Europe indicates that the majority of the temporary workers have considerable continuity of employment (OECD, 2002). In Australia, Wooden (1999, cited in Watts, 2001) estimates that the average job tenure for casual (adult) employees is almost four years. This was borne out by an interview locally with the Waterfront Union where several of their members have been working in this precarious way for years - one of their members had been trying to get permanent employment for over 10 years.

Another union official had something similar to say:

If we take ...the food industry, it impacts through the use of temporary workers and so what they, the companies have been doing is employing both temporary directly employed workers and Drake Personnel Temporary workers. They employ them for anywhere up to three months at a time and they keep renewing the agreements and so the workers never become permanent and...there is some question about whether the ways that they are used that actually complies with the Employment Relations Act, fixed term agreement. I suspect it doesn't, they made some steps in the recent negotiations in saying that after a period of 12 months of temporary employment a worker must be employed permanently. The difficulty with that and at another site ...the big employers, they have a large [group] of temporary workers and what they do is they lay them off for a couple of days or depending on what the agreement says in order for them to be able to be legally reemployed as temporaries. That is one of the big areas. The other problem is that those temporary workers, there is a group of them that are used almost continuously but never get offered the permanent positions

This union has, however, managed to secure equitable conditions for those in casual employment to match those covered by a collective agreement.

As Table 11 indicates, despite the very tenuous nature of their employment on a day-to-day basis, almost two-thirds of the people we interviewed had been in their current jobs for over a year and nearly one-third had been in the same role for over two years. The size of the former group reminds us of the points raised in the introduction which highlight that this is becoming an increasingly common way of working. The latter group might also be relevant to any discussion regarding the growing phenomenon of 'permanent casual' that is posing challenges for central government policy makers (see Owens, 2001). At one extreme, a couple of participants had maintained this form of non-standard employment for over 14 years.

**Table 11: Length of Time in Current Role**

	Number	Percentage
Up to 1 year	9	30
2 Years	9	30
3 Years	2	7
4 Years	2	7
5 Years	2	7
6 Years	1	3
7 years	1	3
'for years' <sup>14</sup>	1	3
Missing	3	10
Total	30	100

Perhaps the most graphic example of the incidence of this is a job advertisement appearing in 'The Press' (4-5 January, 4-5, 2003). Advertised under 'Hot Jobs', the company was looking for a 'long-term' temporary with permanent potential for the right candidates (see Appendix 2 for a copy of the advertisement). This almost certainly contravenes the regulation that

<sup>14</sup> One participant did not specify the length of time spent working in a non-standard way

employers cannot use temporary employment as a screening mechanism for potential permanence (see Rossiter and McMorran, 2003).

About half the sample would have preferred a permanent full-time job or just the opportunity to work full-time hours. Although identifying this preference, some stated that this would be a long-term rather than an immediate goal. Several wanted more hours but did prefer self-employment. Another difficulty facing some non-standard workers in relation to efforts to find different and perhaps more settled or secure employment, is that when they are working in a casual or temporary job, it is difficult to find time to go for interviews for the next assignment. In addition, one of the women we interviewed had this to say:

Well what I have found when I have applied for part-time jobs, it is always, I feel exploitation, because they'll say, and this has been more than once, oh, well there will be a minimum of 15 hours a week, we want you three hours a day and we want you to cover if someone is sick or they go on holiday, and that means you can't get another job. That has ruled me out for quite a few jobs that I've gone for. Just what I have just said, every new job, there is difficulty with making phone calls, like business type phone calls that you have to make and also if you are in a job and you are searching for a job, that is a bit difficult too, to make phone calls. But they've been...when I had a temp assignment in O and I had an interview to go to, they were very good, they understood that. That was difficult when I was working in town. When I was in town I was getting the bus, I couldn't go out for anything because I didn't have a car. (Female clerical worker)

Some of those interviewed used their NSW as a way to screen the company to decide if this was really the job they wanted or as an opportunity to secure permanent employment. This is commonly mentioned in the literature and is also a strategy used by employers to screen potential employees. It is not strictly legal but a practice that goes on. In fact, we know of one of the participants in our study who started as an on-call casual worker and is now employed on fixed-term contracts. Although this is not permanent, it is slightly more secure as her hours are fixed and she still has the flexibility to take time off to spend with her children in the school holidays. Several other participants mentioned that casual work might be a stepping-stone into employment or a pathway into more permanent forms of employment. While some were using NSW as a means to transition into permanent employment, one man, working as a gardener both as a self-employed contractor and as a casual worker, commented that it would have to be a really good job for him to take another permanent office role. It had taken him a while to adjust to the substantial drop in earnings after he had been retrenched from a well-paying technical role, but he was now so used to the flexibility and autonomy that he did not want to go back to working the way he used to.

For many of the lower-skilled people we interviewed, casual/temporary forms of non-standard work were seen as dead-end work and people accepted that there were limits on how much they could earn and the lack of future in many of these jobs. Various metaphors are used to describe the potential effects of non-standard employment on labour market outcomes. For example, on the positive side, 'stepping stones', 'interlude', and on the negative 'trap', 'dead-end', 'parking lot'. Favouring the latter set, Carre (1992:75) suggests that as 'ports of entry', these jobs are often not connected to the rest of the employment structure within organisations thereby making advancement in the future limited.

Care giving is care giving, there's no room for moving up the ladder. (Male caregiver)

As is evidenced by this quote, some of our interviewees would agree with Carre's argument. Another man, working as a manual labourer had been with the company for almost two years and could still not get permanent employment despite having applied unsuccessfully for such a position with the company on various occasions. Thus, contrary to some expectations, working

casually does not always lead to permanent employment. The experiences of the man just cited had given him a very clear opinion of casual work:

If someone tells me that they start working for casual I would say, don't, there's no future in this. All you do is loading and ...that is all. There is no chance of getting promotion because some of these guys are working for the last 21 years, they are still loading and they are quite old, you know. Some of them 58,59, they are still loading.... (Male manual worker)

In short, this man, like many others had few alternatives and accepted whatever work he could find.

A further issue appropriately canvassed here looks at the strategies people used to ensure their ongoing, albeit non-standard, employment in uncertain circumstances, and which might also serve a purpose in gaining more secure work. One prominent approach in this regard was to make themselves indispensable. One woman made sure that she worked the maximum number of hours she is given to work and another stated that he would make every effort to be a really valuable employee to ensure that his job was secure. This is what they said:

I do overtime quite often. The money is important. It's good from the work point of view too. Not just building up bucks in the world bank, you are building up bucks in the goodwill bank of work, therefore more valued, therefore more likely to be kept, plus you are helping your mates out. (Male in hospitality)

I have to admit that I'm going on a two week holiday soon and I know that I have to make myself completely indispensable before that, otherwise when I come back I may not have this many hours. (Female in hospitality)

In a similar vein, a very common theme to emerge in these interviews was about accepting any work that was offered and not turning work away or querying any aspect of the employment contract in case these casual workers were overlooked for more work.

My job is secure in that they need male workers, however if for any reason I stopped selling myself or I turned down more work or whatever – it's very fickle and I wouldn't be called up and I...if I didn't push myself I would easily lose my job...not my job but the work that I am picking up. (Male caregiver).

As noted in the next section, another caregiver we interviewed made a similar observation, but referred to the 'Catch-22' inherent in this situation.

Feelings of ambivalence were often articulated during discussions of such strategies. Some participants felt that they had the desired flexibility in terms of the hours that they worked, yet on reflection, admitted that it was difficult to turn work away. One man working for a cleaning company spoke about the flexibility he had in his job and that he could turn work down, but then on reflection, added that this would not be a good idea:

...just flexible in terms of the hours. You don't have to do a job if you're asked. It's not a good idea to turn it down...You might not get offered it again, you know what I mean. (Male cleaner)

Aside from not turning work down, another albeit somewhat disturbing strategy, was not complaining about aspects of the job. As one man suggested, people did not complain for fear that they would not be considered for a permanent position if it arose.

They feel the same but they don't want to talk about it because if they talk about it, the company will mark them down so next time they won't get a full-time job, so they are quiet. (Male manual worker)

Startling evidence of this came in one interview when a woman reported not querying her holiday pay entitlement as it was not worth the consequences:

...did I feel that work might be threatened if I turned down jobs, and I didn't really feel that, but I felt if I had a bit of a bicker about the holiday pay on a stat day, they might...It is not worth worrying about. (Female clerical worker)

All these issues turn our attention to the qualitative dimensions of alternative working arrangements and it to those sorts of issues that we now turn.

## **5.3 The Quality of Work and Working Arrangements**

### **5.3.1 Introduction**

By way of beginning the second major section, it is worthwhile highlighting some of the negative aspects of alternative employment arrangements experienced by those we interviewed. For example, in many instances, work was structured in such a way that the company did not need to provide for basic rights that permanent workers take for granted like tea breaks:

They decided to have a big revamp as they do and they turned around and said, this is what we're going to do, we have to cut some peoples hours and all of us who were doing 3 ½ hours all got our hours cut to three so that they didn't have to give us a 15 minute break. (Female working in retail)

In another instance, one of the participants talked about the limit put on the earnings of casual workers in spite of their length of tenure and that the responsibilities of the job being the same as full-timers:

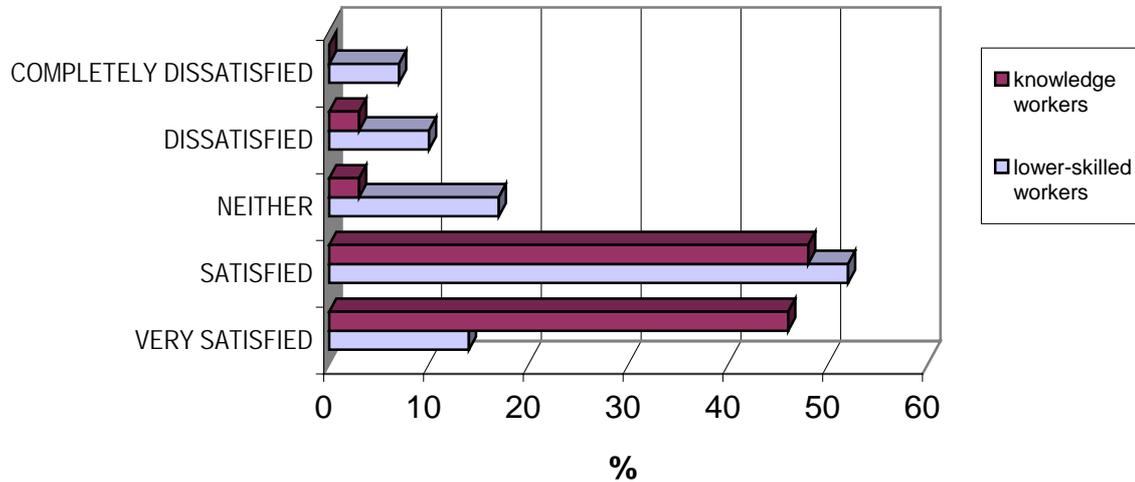
That is a problem that I have actually come up with, because in X we've got this scale with the time that you have worked there, you go up from level A to level B and you get more money but being a casual they put a cap on what you earn. I have reached the cap, in fact I'm over the cap but the only way I can get more money is to become a part-timer or full-timer...

As noted elsewhere in the report (see section 5.3.3), taking sick leave was a further issue that could be problematic. Something of a 'catch-22' situation existed in various forms for many of those interviewed. It concerns the negative effects of turning down work when it is offered and illustrates just how many of the low-paid non-standard jobs are structured. The following comment by a male caregiver outlines the dilemma they face:

Yeah, well the thing is that it is a bit of a catch 22. It's within your power to say no, you don't have to do every shift, but they hound you down and they ask you for things. You also have to know that as soon as you start rejecting shifts they won't ring you in the future, so once you start turning down jobs they'll turn to people that accept straight away, so you have to be careful not to turn down too many. (Male caregiver)

Despite these and other negative aspects of their working arrangements commented upon elsewhere in the report, almost two-thirds of the people we interviewed expressed general satisfaction with this non-standard way of working. This is broken up into 12 percent who were very satisfied and 51 percent who were satisfied. The first proportion is far smaller than the 40 percent of knowledge workers we interviewed who were very satisfied with these non-standard working relationships (Firkin et al., 2003). Taken together, the numbers of workers in this study who expressed some degree of satisfaction with their work circumstances greatly exceeds those who were dissatisfied or completely dissatisfied. A complete and comparative breakdown of the levels of satisfaction/dissatisfaction is provided in Figure 3. This and other subsequent figures compare the various measures with those from the earlier knowledge workers study.

Figure 3: Levels of Satisfaction and Dissatisfaction with Current Working Arrangements



### 5.3.2 Autonomy

The levels of satisfaction just described may be partly explained by the perceptions people had regarding the degree of autonomy they exercised over aspects of their working lives. As Figure 4 shows, over 60 percent of interviewees in this study indicated that some degree of autonomy was exercised. This is typified by the quote below:

Well I guess the biggest impact is that I feel that I have a choice and so I'm happier and I'm freer, so that has to impact positively on my family life. (Female caregiver)

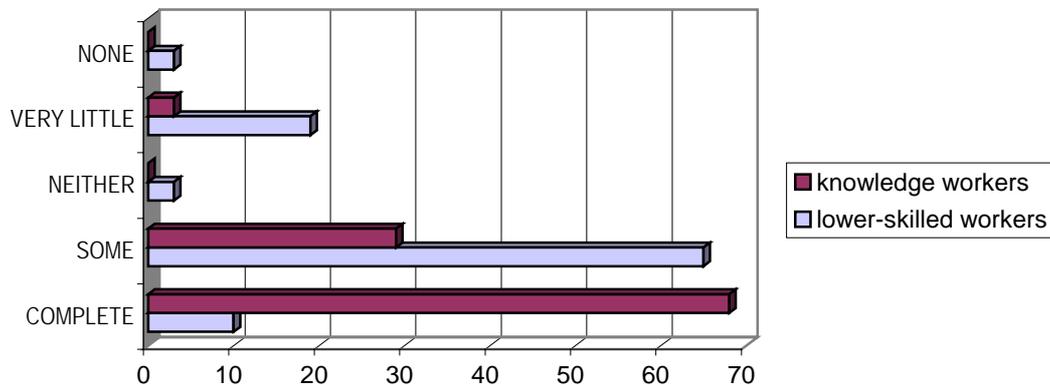
Thus, the freedom and autonomy made possible by working in alternative ways was sometimes appealing for the further choices it allowed. As this woman involved in cleaning, child minding, massage and on a partial benefit continued:

Yeah, when I was nursing I had less autonomy, less flexibility, I had to say yes, whereas now I feel like I have a lot more control over when and where...

That said, this woman goes on to highlight a sense of ambivalence regarding autonomy. After suggesting that she is happier and freer, she also observes:

Well I guess when I say I have more control over saying yes or no, I say yes sometimes governed on salary because if I say no, I don't get paid. I don't have those...I have to work to earn, I'm not going to earn because I have clocked up this many hours at some point. There are benefits in being able to say, that doesn't suit me, but then if I say that too much, I don't get that money.

Figure 4: Perception of Autonomy



### 5.3.3 Surveillance and Self-Discipline

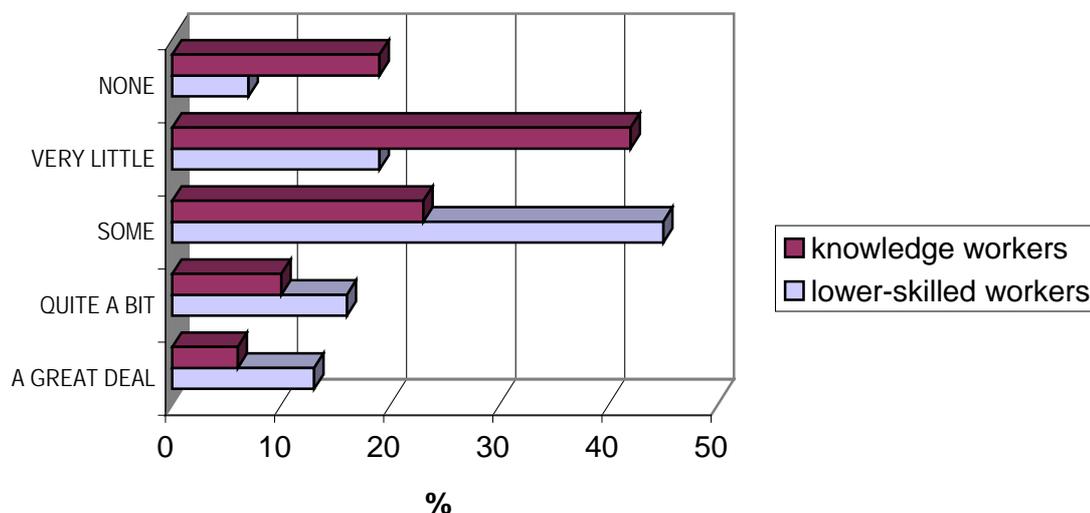
Figure 5 presents data on people's perception of the level of monitoring or surveillance in their work. It shows that almost three times as many knowledge workers reported no monitoring of their work compared with those in lower paid work. Further, unlike the 61 percent of knowledge workers we interviewed who commented that their work was monitored very little or not at all by employers, under half that proportion of the participants in this study could make such a claim. This latter percentage still indicates that despite being in low paying jobs and there being some degree of monitoring, many of our participants were left to do the work with little or no supervision. Clearly, levels of responsibility were not always linked to pay.

Outside of this direct inquiry, few comments were provided or elicited about monitoring and supervision in terms of the way people worked. However, from the interviews, it emerged that one of the common outcomes of working in alternative ways is the self-discipline required of these workers. One woman, working in multiple casual jobs observed that:

No, I don't feel I'm monitored. It is my own guilt that monitors me.

Often the desire for more permanent employment and employers' recognition of work 'well done' meant that people engaged in real self-discipline because they felt that if they did not do the job properly, their employment would not be renewed. Smith, (1998) in a study of 45 temporarily employed people in a high technology company in the USA, aptly subtitled a section in her paper 'At the Epicentre: Self-discipline and Temporary Jobs'. She found that participants' desire for a permanent job 'led them to engage in deep self-discipline'.

Figure 5: Degree of Surveillance over Work Done



Vosko (2000:178), in her analysis of temporary female workers, found that many complied with unreasonable demands because of the precariousness of their jobs. Participants in this study made similar assertions claiming that they worked long hours just so that they would not be overlooked for future employment.

A certain amount of self-discipline. I guess finding a way to convince yourself that it's your choice. If I am offered another cleaning job and I have to choose...and perhaps I'm needing to do that for the money and so convincing myself that this is my choice so I guess some self illusionary tools, I guess. I think self-discipline is the biggest thing and motivation. Self esteem because so much of it is selling myself, to a degree, and faith, having faith. (Female cleaner)

Elsewhere in the report, we examine more fully participants' perceptions about the fear of losing their jobs, or a reduction in hours, and how they worked harder to secure these. Becoming 'indispensable' was a common strategy used by participants, as was the reluctance to turn work down, even if it meant working extraordinarily long hours.

Conversely, however, working on an as-needed basis can eventually become demotivating and an interview with a union secretary in Auckland representing workers in a highly casualised industry, indicated that the rate of casualisation and difficulty in getting permanent employment had impacted on the work ethic of many. The unpredictable nature of casual employment wears workers down and sometimes it is easier to go on welfare rather than work from day-to-day when pay is inconsistent and unpredictable.

### 5.3.4 Intensification

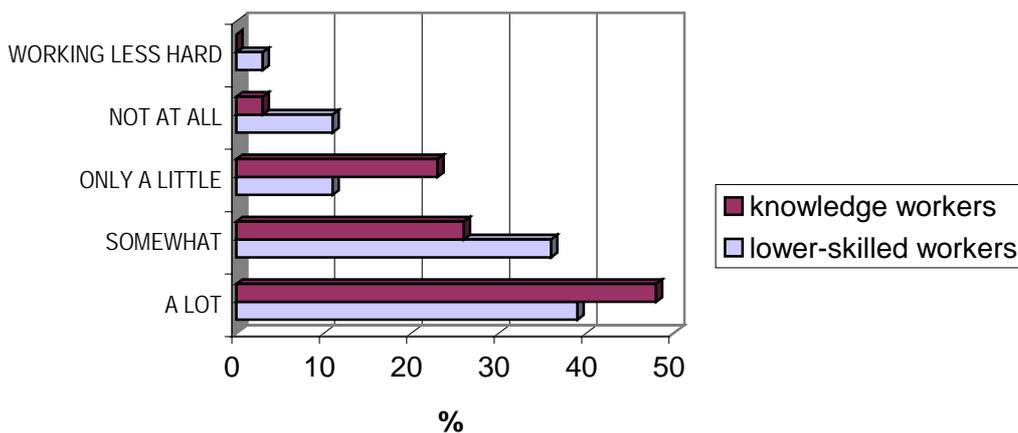
When asked about a related issue, work intensification, many of the people we interviewed felt that their work was now more intense to varying degrees as shown in Figure 6 below. This graph shows that almost three-quarters of the 'lower-end' non-standard workers we interviewed felt that their working roles had intensified, which was not all that different from the so-called higher skilled and higher paid non-standard workers that we interviewed in a previous study. Intensification could occur for various reasons. For instance, several respondents expressed the view that that they felt pressurised to work harder or more quickly:

What I find really frustrating is that, yes, you do work more intensely but you're under a little bit more pressure to get things done. When you see a desk and you have time to do things and do them correctly...prime example, I have been here Thursday and Friday this week, I came in here and M gave me some [work] to do and I was in here for two hours only, and he wanted the replies back by the 1<sup>st</sup> of November so I wanted to get it out by Friday and you rush it. So, it's minute little things but for example leaving a gap between the name when you do the letterhead, things like that that I would not normally do, but I was rushing because I had my .....go home and I had to get out because I had commitments at home, pick up the kids and do that and it was just awful and it puts you under pressure and that's what I hate about it. Whereas if I was working here for the day I would have had a longer period of time, I could have done it correctly the first time. You tend to make a few more mistakes when you are working in this sort of...you tend to rush a bit quicker. (Female administrator)

Often the nature of temporary work can contribute to the intense qualities of contracting because temps might be brought in for specific tasks or for a limited period of time. Those in more than one job felt that they worked harder and the combined effect could mean that they work more intensely than in a single role.

In addition, several participants for whom work had intensified, spoke about charging only for the hours they actually worked and excluding even the smallest breaks. This is very different from permanent workers who have the opportunity to chat, have coffee etc. One woman with several jobs, one of which was telemarketing, felt she worked harder now than she did in a standard role. She reflected that in organisations, you often saw permanent staff having coffee breaks and standing around talking but as a casual worker, she could not do so. Not being salaried staff, you are paid only for the hours you work. She recorded when she started and stopped work, including when she stopped for a 15-minute coffee break. These breaks often coincided with 'down time' when she was waiting to call someone back.

**Figure 6: Intensity in Non-Standard Work**



This intensity might have implications for health and safety on the job – particularly if it means working longer shifts and going days at a time without a break. The following section examines some of the implications working in temporary employment relationships might have for health and safety in the workplace or on the job.

### 5.3.5 Health and Safety Issues

Overseas studies indicate that the increase in non-standard work requires that more attention be paid to health and safety legislation. Mangan (2000), for example, cites the 1993 study undertaken in Spain where it was found that 48 percent of all industrial accidents involved workers on temporary contracts. In a recent review of 93 research studies covering 11 countries, the growth of non-standard work arrangements was found to have had adverse effects on health and safety. Of the 93 studies, 70 found that precarious employment was associated with this deterioration (Wilson, 2002). Ross Wilson, President of the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (2002), sees the growth of precarious employment, together with the increase in working hours and the intensity of work for some sections of the workforce, as creating a division in the labour market between 'work rich' and 'work poor'. One of the markers between the 'work rich' and 'work poor' is the coverage and care in terms of employment health and safety requirements.

Importantly, like so much legislation, the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) regulatory framework is designed to deal predominantly with permanent employees (Wilson, 2002). This can cause various sorts of problems. For instance, where casual employees have worked for several companies in one week, the record of employment becomes problematic for ACC payouts in terms of calculating what constitutes 80 percent of wages.

Findings from an LMD study into workers employed by temporary agencies (Alach and Inkson, 2003) also suggests that there are concerns around health and safety issues for temporary agency workers. Alach and Inkson question whether or not temporary workers are more likely to put their health at risk by being unwilling to take sick days or go on doctors visits for fear of being perceived as 'unreliable' and denied access to future work. One participant we interviewed typified this:

It's a real concern because two things happen when you get sick, one, you're out of work and you have no pay and you don't have anything to fall back on, second, because you're not showing up at different places and you're not showing yourself as being available for work, they ring other people, like I mentioned before, so not only are you losing the current work, you are losing future work because you are just not there. (Male caregiver)

Another important issue, arising from the often fractured nature of employment relationships, multiple employment relationships and contracts of very short duration, is that health and safety training can be overlooked or glossed over. As well, some employers are increasingly looking to lower their costs (or in the case of intermediaries, the customers' costs) by making temporary employees provide their own safety equipment (Vosko, 2000:180). This was confirmed by one of the union representatives whom we interviewed:

There is a difference, if you've got the contingent liability of a full-time employee then you have to fill out all his holidays and superannuation, health benefits, clothing, and protective gear and all the rest.

Those in alternative working arrangements may have to bear the burden of costs for safety equipment themselves as was the case for one of our interviewees. Although only earning \$11.00 per hour, he had to supply his own safety boots and vest.

You supply your own boots, your own vest, the boots were \$200.00. That is no mean feat for a fella that is broke all the time. And the vest, they're \$60.00 a pop. (Male truck driver)

It is important to note that it is not only in relation to training and the provision of equipment that casual workers are adversely affected. The very ways that such employees are expected to work places them at risk and in danger of contravening regulations aimed at ensuring their safety since, for instance, too many shifts and very long shifts contravene health and safety requirements. While the issue of hours of work has been dealt with earlier in the report, the issue here is somewhat different. We will end this section with a quote by one of the men we interviewed working as a caregiver:

Because I have a casual contract they can call me at any time of the day and sometimes when you're really, really busy they call me all the time and sometimes I have to do double shifts or triple shifts, which isn't really allowed but they still do it.

He felt that he had little choice – although he could decline the request to work extra shifts, his employer was very persistent ('they hound you down and they ask you for things'), and it would jeopardise any future offers of work – typifying the catch 22 situation many of the people we interviewed were in.

Finally, in this section, we will examine the implications working in non-standard arrangements might have for upskilling and on-the-job training.

### 5.3.6 Human Capacity Issues

There is no doubt that there are low rates of job-specific skill acquisition for those in temporary and casual employment (see also Lane et al., 2001) and that training is most effective when employment is permanent (Mangan, 2000). That said, there is variation in the provision of education and training opportunities for those in alternative working arrangements. For instance, on-the-job training varied significantly among the caregivers we interviewed. Some, like the young man quoted below, did receiving training:

Yeap, yeap, you had to do a Treaty of Waitangi course and a first aid certificate and because I was working in Behavioural Houses as well, where there are people that will beat you up if you don't do the right thing, you get taught how to de-escalate situations and stuff like that, but that was all ongoing training, they paid for that and it was actually after I started that we had to do the training. (Male caregiver)

Whereas other employees in the same industry working for a different employer apparently were not required to have any training and were not provided with employer-initiated training:

With the care giving job, I was pretty much left to myself, I was dropped straight into it and I had to learn from there, there was no training, no nothing. There wasn't a lot of support. I could contact my boss and have a chat and say, what do I do about this and she wouldn't really know, she wasn't really involved in that kind of work. It was basically up to you. There's a certain kind of person could do that job, and that was it. (Male caregiver)

For one of the union representatives we interviewed, the issue was that in certain industries, little recognition was given to the need for a skilled workforce and, because it cost money to upskill employees, this was not always addressed.

...the employers haven't recognised that if you want to create a stable workforce you have to create a skill base and you have to recognise those skills otherwise you will simply have a constant interchange... In a rest home, that's a mistake. The consequences for the residents are that they don't get the high quality care either. People should be able to see themselves as having a career in age care, it is a growing industry and it is highly skilled. There is no reason why a career shouldn't be possible... but it's not because the employers won't pay for the skills.

The problematic nature of education and training for temporary and casual workers could also mean that individuals need to self-fund training or else risk falling even further behind their permanent counterparts. Prior to getting employment in some low-paying roles like security,

some of our participants had to take part in pre-selected training courses. The participant quoted below described how he was employed as a casual employee until he had obtained his Certificate of Approval (COA) and then repaid the loan to the employer once he was employed as a permanent employee. Clearly, all costs of job-related training are borne by the employee:

[Employment at] S is casual in the first year, which people don't realise and in security you're casual because you have to get COA...so they're keeping you casual until you get all these classes done...Oh yeah, you pay \$600 for your COA, \$160 for the Advanced Security Licenses, \$150 for your first aid and what they do at S is they give you a loan upfront on employment and you are basically working it off for \$25 per week, plus they do something that they can't do to the regular employees, which is a four day work week, but you work four 12 hour shifts, you do two day shifts and two night shifts and you're expected to cover special activities in between. (Male in hospitality)

Moreover, the reduced opportunities for on-the-job training for casual and temporary employees can impact on their long-term career prospects and potential stagnation. Even when employees take on the responsibility and expense of training, getting additional qualifications whilst on the job does not mean any financial recognition by the employer:

They do the first aid training course as well and there's another course that they are doing now, which you have to pay for, and which you don't get any money for once you have completed it. You've got this qualification, something to do with the Aged Care and it's quite a long course and it's quite a few hundred dollars, but then your wages don't go up, so you spend all this time doing all this stuff and you're not going to get anything back for it. (Female caregiver)

Although the human capital development of casuals and temps can be hampered by this way of working, several of the clerical temps interviewed in Auckland (Alich and Inkson, 2003) submitted that the multiple worksites contributed to increased knowledge as they learn so much from the different working environments they came into contact with. Similarly, as indicated in the report on knowledge workers in Auckland (Firkin et al., 2002), there are ambiguities. Workers might miss out on internal and externally funded training, but on the other hand, they can benefit significantly by moving from one workplace to the next. Several of the people we interviewed made similar comments:

I find by coming to do casual work, especially in casual work, you get involved in different... every single company has different ways of doing things, different programs they use for the computer, different... so you're learning. I might not know about it when I walk in, but I've learnt something that day. That helps me keep my skills up and because I'm doing a variety of jobs I'm having that chance. If you are stuck in one company you only learn their way of doing things (Female clerical worker).

The variety that this way of working offered was seen as a distinct advantage by several of the participants in this study. Some suggested that they were not stuck in a rut, were able to acquire a range of different experiences and skills, many of which were transferable, and they were able to try out different work areas. For example, the skills learnt in café work can be used anywhere in the world.

Another reason this way of working was seen to be an advantage is that 'I'm keeping my mind active and I've got my foot in the door' (casual administrative assistant). Furthermore, it allows those with limited human capital resources to gain experience and others who have been out of the workforce for a while to keep up-to-date with technology.

Having considered specific aspects of roles that were part of non-standard working arrangements, in the next section we will examine some of the other outcomes that were associated with non-standard ways of working and the implications this had for workers and their families.

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## OTHER ISSUES

### 6.1 Introduction

We now discuss our findings in relation to other topics canvassed in the literature and highlighted in our analysis. Once again we divide the material into two broad sections. The first examines issues more related to the nature of work and working arrangements. We begin that section by looking at the major issues of insecurity and uncertainty. Then the matter of insider/outsider relationships is considered followed by a brief acknowledgement of the importance of personal networks. A final matter that is discussed in this section concerns migrants and NSW. The second section explores a range of issues related to the impact on people's quality of life as a result of working in non-standard ways. Many of these fit within the broad rubric of the work-life balance. In addition, we consider the challenges of combining welfare and work at the margins and discuss the potential that exists for workers in such circumstances to become trapped in poverty.

### 6.2 Work and Working Arrangements Issues

#### 6.2.1 Insecurity and Uncertainty

Changes in the labour market have been identified as one of the key factors in the development of uncertainty and insecurity (Mythen, 2001:2). As several of the older participants in our study noted, these are unwelcome features of such changes. Take these comments of a man who had been working casually for the same employer for over a year:

I don't like not knowing whether or not I'm going to have a job tomorrow or not. I'm of the old work ethic, fair days work, fair days pay. In those days you could expect the boss to at least look after you a lot better than they do now. I can't hack it, going to work one day and not the next. (Male truck driver)

By way of signalling the significance of these changes, Beck (2000) suggested that while class societies are bound up in issues of scarcity, risk societies are pre-occupied with the problem of insecurity (Mythen, 2001:8). The insecurities that have emerged as a result of changes in working relationships take many forms and Standing (1993: 425-426) has developed one of the most used typologies:

- Employment insecurity – employers can terminate an employee or reduce working hours;
- Job Insecurity – the content of the job could be altered or workers moved to other jobs;
- Work Insecurity – work is at risk due to an unsafe working environment like pollution;
- Income insecurity – unstable earnings;
- Working-time insecurity – employers can impose fragmented or varying working hours;
- Representation insecurity – employers can refuse to negotiate with employee representatives;
- Skill reproduction insecurity – there is little access to training or education; and

- Labour market insecurity – represented by labour surplus conditions so the chances of gaining permanent employment is low with workers taking whatever employment is available to them.

Each of these are relevant to those we interviewed and emerged in the comments made by participants.

With labour market conditions changing rapidly, perceived powerlessness in terms of labour market outcomes are not uncommon. Vail et al. (1999:7) more usefully describes economic insecurity as 'an individual's interactions with the labour economy which provides sufficient (or insufficient) material resources as a foundation for personal security'. This includes financial security, job security and investment in human capital (education and skills). It can be safely asserted that most of our participants could not rely on an employer for the provision of any of these issues. Many of the participants felt vulnerable and powerless in determining their life course and their economic security was in the hands of their employers. Although the insecurity of employment is not only the fate of lower-paid workers, the insecurity of their employment outcomes seem to be exacerbated by the just-in-time philosophy of employers who are unwilling to take the risks associated with employing staff in standard arrangements. Risks are now placed firmly in the domain of the those who do not have the choices they might have had with different social capital endowments, skills or education.

The implications of uncertainty can be divided into the immediate and longer term. Short-term uncertainty about aspects of the job were almost universally identified.

Just not knowing if you're going to be laid off at anytime. Just no security really.

As has already been canvassed in the preceding section, many respondents made reference to uncertainty and the lack of predictability both in terms of getting any work and also in terms of the hours worked. Take the case of a man working casually in a manual role who did not know from one day to the next how many hours he was being allocated:

Most probably like today, I don't know what I'm doing, I'm on call. I can't go anywhere, I can't go and see my sister. I sit by the phone and wait for the call. (Male manual worker)

The effect of this short-term insecurity had implications for many. They did not feel that they could turn work down in case work dried up. Consequently, as discussed in Section 5.2.3., they often worked more hours than was legal or desired. This woman is a typical example:

Yeah. I think being self-employed you...it's...I find it really difficult because I find it hard to say no, because I don't know how long this job is going to go for or...so I've always got too much work and I am always rushing around madly and...but I seem to spend at least two hours every day doing some sort of volunteer work, so at the end of the day where I count up my actual paid hours, it always ends up to be...occasionally I'll manage to get a nine hour day and an eight hour day, but it's usually less than that, it is usually only about five or six hours paid work every day. (Female in various roles like cleaning and childcare)

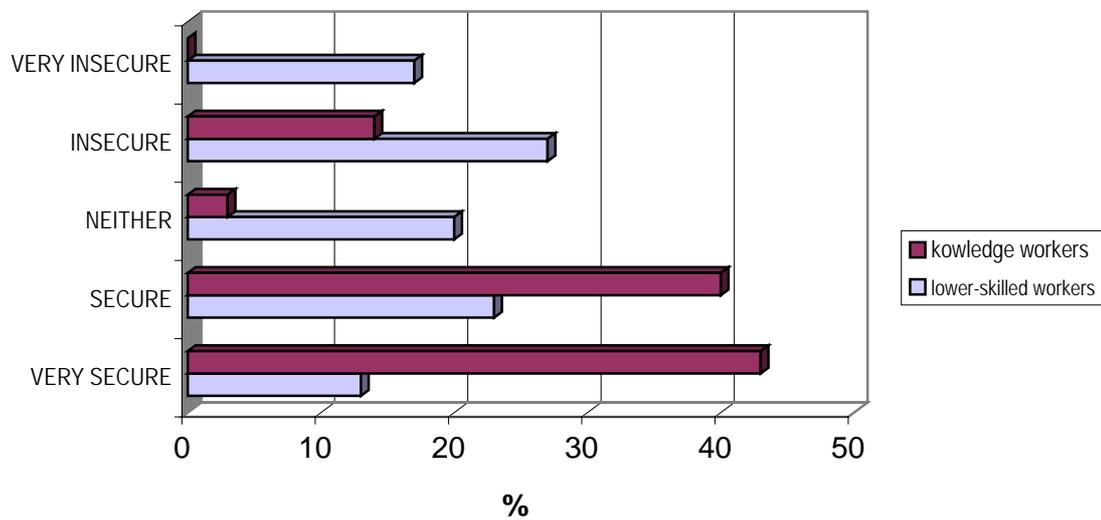
As Figure 7 shows, in terms of long-term insecurity, 42 percent of participants felt either insecure or very insecure in the long-term as opposed to only 13 percent of the knowledge workers we interviewed. There are severe and negative implications of this for the former group. It can be emotionally draining and daunting living day-to-day and hand-to-mouth.

...you've got nothing permanent. You've got nothing to look forward to. You can't say I am going to save this amount of money and bills come in and you have to be so careful about how you live your life. Going out to the shopping and things like that, it's no longer a wonderful experience, it's not retail therapy it's being driven nuts. (Female driver)

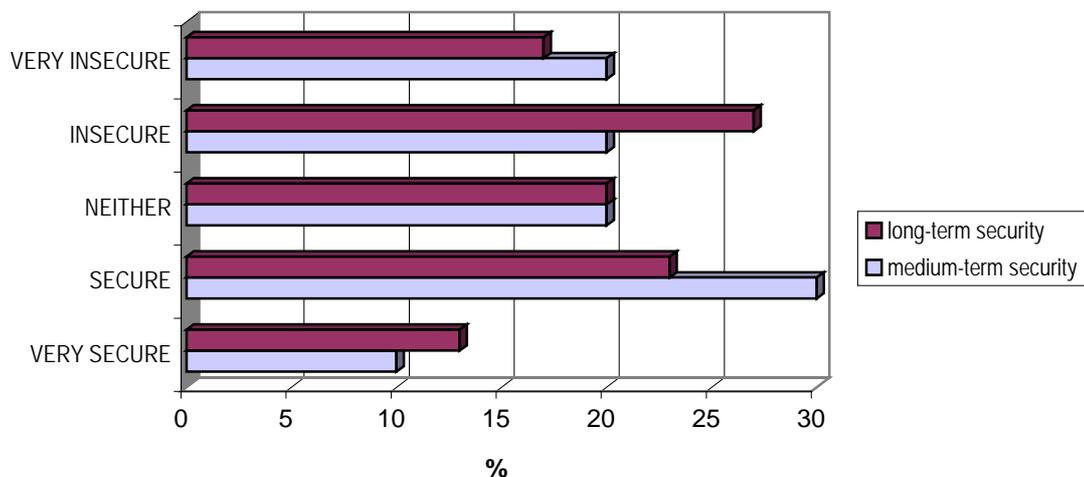
As well, it becomes impossible for many low-income casual, fixed-term or temporary workers to undertake much, if any, long-term planning. One of the single parents we interviewed described the dilemma of trying to plan and the difficulties this presented – her way of rationalising this was interesting:

I guess my thinking now is a little bit more long-term, but it's also governed by short-term because I have to...because I am one person looking after two children, my thinking is more short-term, how do I deal with this week, is there money for this week and I'm there when I'm needed to be there for this week. I guess my children are my superannuation policy and medical...because I have a Community Services Card, so there is my medical benefits. I have arranged my own medical benefits because I am choosing work that suits me, so I am staying well. (Female working as a cleaner and child minder)

**Figure 7: Perceived Level of Long-Term Employment Security/Insecurity Experienced by Knowledge Workers and Lower-paid Participants**



**Figure 8: Perceived Level of Employment Security/Insecurity Experienced by Participants When Considering Medium and Long-term Future**



Consequently, one of the union officials we interviewed doubted that anyone working this way would not take the offer of a permanent job:

I don't know any that wouldn't. Particularly a casual is a younger person and when a younger person gets married or starts a family, the security of full-time employment is essential, particularly if you want to get into your own home situation. I can just imagine that with some of the people coming here to us who want references or affidavit that they can take along to a shop to buy a bloody bed. As soon as you say you haven't got a fulltime employer, who's going to lend you it, no matter how good a worker they are or how often they work... as soon as you mention the word casual you don't get the loan, you don't get the hire purchase agreement and it's very difficult and really it is a poverty trap.

Figure 8 compares the perceived levels of security/insecurity in the medium and long-term of participants in this study. Although there is no real significant difference between perceptions of the two scenarios, slightly more participants felt insecure about their long-term future employment than they did in the medium-term.

Given widespread uncertainty in several instances, another undesirable outcome of working this way was the feeling of alienation which is examined below.

## 6.2.2 Alienation - Insider/Outsider Relationships

Being considered an outsider relative to the organisation they are working in, both by management and fellow workers, was one of the common feelings articulated by casual and non-permanent staff in our research. As discussed in the section on labour market segmentation, this is becoming increasingly evident as the dual labour market is expanding. It seems to make little difference whether workers are at the higher or lower end of the non-standard work spectrum and many of the knowledge workers we interviewed faced the issue of being an outsider in relation to other employees in the company they were working for at the time (Firkin et al., 2002, 2003).

Several of the people spoken to in this study commented on the fact that it was difficult to find even the most basic information (such as where the toilet was) making those on temporary contracts work extremely hard at relationships. The following comments give some idea of how alienated several of the participants felt whilst working as casuals or temps in organisations:

You never really fit it. Because ... myself, I find it really frustrating when I can't find things. When you're a casual employee that's the problem. When you're temping I find that you go into a company and you're going to temp and you don't always find things...but you ask and you think they're so sick of answering the same thing and it's really frustrating, so you always feel a bit of an outsider. You don't belong. (Female in administration)

Of course the part-timers and full-timers have a better relationship within themselves because they always work in the same house. When you are a part-timer or a full-timer you are assigned to one particular house. As a casual worker you work in several different places, so you make friendships with different people but you haven't got that close knit type of relationship that they have... Yeah, we're treated the same way, the only difference is really there's not that close knit relationship, so you don't get into the drinks after work and things and you don't do all that kind of stuff, which is a shame but within the job itself, the actual nuts and bolts of the job, you are treated exactly the same, yeah. (Male Caregiver).

Temporary agency workers are often seen (or perceive to be seen) as 'disposable' or 'second class' (Vosko, 2000:183) which was a sentiment echoed by several of our participants:

Full-timers always say, oh you're casual, shut-up and do your job. They think casuals are like the slaves. (Male manual worker)

Yes, you're ostracised to some extent. You've got to work very, very hard on personal rapport, getting on with people, I found myself putting a great deal of effort into that, than I would have with a permanent job because with a permanent job you have time. Things evolve over time, but there isn't the running in period, you've got to get it as good as it ever is going to get as quickly as possible. Learn whose who, learn who's last when there are questions, and there will be. It's a survival thing. You don't even know where the toilet is, let alone anything else and it all gets a bit wearing after a while, you get quite impatient with it. (Male in hospitality)

There have been a couple of jobs where I've been left out on a limb. One example was...I worked for company M and because I was a part-timer...it's really terrible, but I can remember when we were up in the staff room, the full-timers never ever spoke to the part-timers because they weren't...I really don't know what their problem was but there was definitely separate tables where part-timers workers drank their tea and had their morning tea and then there were the tables where you had full-time workers. That definitely happened. Then I worked for an accountancy firm in T and that was exactly the same too. I was always left out and really felt alienated. I don't know if it was part-time work or whether it was because I was a Maori or what, I don't know. After a while you just shrug it off and I did. It used to bug me, but after a while I couldn't care less. But yeah, there are definitely those things that happen out there. (Female in administrative roles)

We're at the bottom. Even the top of the building, we don't even know who the top people are. We don't even get introduced to them. They don't come down and say, look you guys are doing a great job. We don't even get that. We're in there and we're out the door. If something has gone really well, it is not us that gets thanks, it's the people above us. We don't get anything. No wonder they have staff turnover. (Female clerical worker)

One man went further by suggesting that the competition for scarce work further divided those working in temporary arrangements for a particular company. Some organisations build on these tensions to maximise on their returns, leading to jealousy and competitiveness (Vosko, 2000: 184). Several of the participants in our study had just such experiences:

It actually set the boys up for us being casual. It actually set us up against one another. We couldn't feel as a group. We were always worried which one of the group wasn't going to be there. There were no social clubs, no Christmas party for the kids, you know, you might put in a bit of money every week, no. (Male driver)

This was not the only incidence of this sort of competition amongst casual workers for scarce hours. One woman working in a clerical role reflected that:

Well it is three shifts, but I need four. Just to get a little bit extra. They're just so nasty. You can be cancelled... I need the eight hours on a Saturday, .....and they cancelled me and as I walked out the door my friend walked in the door, and I said, what are you doing here, and she said, I've got work and I said, well I haven't. There was nothing she could do. She only worked two shifts. Whereas I had done Monday to Friday, and was doing a Saturday and she got that shift and it was the same job that I was doing. They could have left me on it and kept her at home. It was much harder for her, she had three younger kids, younger than mine and a husband. That wasn't the issue, the issue was, I was already there and why bring her in here when she has two shifts.

Another participant working as a manual labourer had similar experiences and commented that there was intense competition between casual workers as to who would get the next permanent job. There was a lot of backstabbing and he suggested that there was a lot of distrust amongst workers.

As a final reflection, it is useful to quote Ehrenreich (2002: 194) who sums the situation up as follows: 'It's a lot harder, I found, to sort out the human microsystem when you're looking up at it from the bottom, and of course, a lot more necessary to do so'.

### 6.2.3 Personal Networks

Networks have formed a notable part of earlier LMD research (see, for example, Firkin et al., 2001; Shirley et al. 2001a; 2001b; 2001c;) and were a prominent feature in the working lives of the so-called knowledge workers we interviewed (Firkin et al., 2002; 2003). Our research into working in non-standard ways has shown that the value of networks cannot be underestimated. Word-of-mouth is a common and suitable metaphor for how networks operated in relation to generating work opportunities in many cases. Although the participants in these interviews did not use the more specialised networks, associations and collaborations that others in our previous studies did for activities such as marketing and peer review of their work, both groups drew on social networks for the acquisition of work. Indeed, at least one-third of our participants found these important in that process. The following comments highlight this:

Totally important. I've probably picked up 80 percent of my work just through networks. (Male gardener)

I know heaps of people that have got jobs through friends. It definitely helps...you've already got someone that you can work in with, that says they are a good person. If you get someone completely cold off the street you don't know if you can work in with them. (Male caregiver)

For café work, exceptionally good, because if your job falls through and you know other people then that makes it all the easier to get another job. For temping it doesn't really matter. (Female in hospitality)

All my work really came to me through personal recommendation, word of mouth, people in the area that knew me, that knew my standards and would approach me. (Female caregiver)

Networks were particularly important in the entertainment industry. A man, qualified as a violin maker but working as an entertainer, reflected that the ability to get work was really only successful depending on 'who you know'. Although it was good to have a portfolio, personal contacts were still the most lucrative in terms of procuring on-going employment. Further, exemplifying the importance of networks, he recognised that, as a foreigner, it was difficult to find work initially as that is the way 'that the whole business thing works here in this country'.

### 6.2.4 Non-Standard Work and Migrant Workers

This is an area that has received a lot of publicity and is the subject of a separate report in the LMD programme (see Firkin, 2004 forthcoming). It also emerged in the interviews for the research. One union representative commented that the employment of immigrants in non-standard work has had a huge impact on the labour market, particularly as they are being engaged at lower rates than New Zealanders would accept.

What you find is for instance, in the wine industry, the agricultural part of it, whole teams of people are brought into the country to do the job on lousy wages, on fixed-term deals and then they go back home to Samoa, or they go back home to Tonga and so the immigration laws are being used to prevent the bargaining power of workers and securing some of those better provisions, so for instance in the age care sector, if an employer can't find a person who'll do the job, they'll try to get somebody through immigration and they'll ask us if we know of people that can do the job because if there are New Zealanders that can do the job then they will do it. What we're finding is, is that you can bring in a whole low waged vulnerable workforce through that ... and that means that those few times in history where workers suddenly have bargaining power in the service sector to negotiate up their rates because the employer desperately needs them, completely undermines them.

A participant interviewed for the study had similar comments to make. She lives in a rural part south of Auckland and has seen evidence of this in her area. In her case, she expressed

resentment that immigrants desperate for employment were accepting significantly reduced hourly rates making it impossible for local New Zealanders to work for similar rates of pay:

First came the Indians slowly but surely and then to my horror, very, very dark faces, the Islanders all came on board and the jobs started to get harder and harder to get and because of those Islanders accepting poor wages, out here in the fields in Pukekohe they get less than \$6.00 an hour and they're working those hours and that's why New Zealanders today cannot get a decent flaming job because all of these imports will take the crap and they will take... (Female driver)

This highlights the traditional role of immigrant labour as a cheap alternative to local labour, and the tendency for economic competition, in this case around labour, to exacerbate hostility and suspicion. It does not only apply to the lower-skilled jobs. The report on temporary agency workers (Alach and Inkson, 2003) alluded to issues of discrimination and exploitation of recent immigrants who are using temp work as a way of gaining entry into the New Zealand workforce.

It may be helpful to end this section with a few observations emerging from the migrant study which is also part of the LMD programme. Firstly, it should be noted that the migrants interviewed for this are professionals. Since all of them had struggled to gain employment in their professions or in associated areas to varying degrees, most had some experience of non-standard work. Often they found themselves in such work because it was the only employment they could obtain. Given that earlier in the report, we identified the limited knowledge and awareness that participants in this study had regarding their legal entitlements and so forth, it is not hard to imagine that new settlers could be equally, if not more, unaware of such things. Indeed one migrant recounted an incident he knew of where new migrants were deliberately targeted because of their vulnerability in this regard. However, no-one in the migrant study mentioned the wage exploitation referred to above.

### **6.3 Quality of Life Issues**

We have deliberately chosen to orient this section to quality of life issues rather than the current vogue notions such as work-life balance and family-friendly policies in workplaces. Although these are prominent in various discourses around employment practices and policy we agree with many others that they are problematic. This is particularly true for the groups that are at the centre of this study.

Work-life balance policies are introduced essentially to enhance the autonomy of workers: 'Work life balance practices are those which, whether intentionally or not, increase the flexibility and autonomy of the worker in negotiating attention and presence in employment' (Felstead et al., 2002:6). To this end, the New Zealand government has established an integrated work programme to develop family-friendly and other policies to promote a work-life balance (Labour Minister Margaret Wilson, [announce@executive.govt.nz](mailto:announce@executive.govt.nz)). However, most of the initiatives associated with work-life balance that companies introduce generally apply to the permanent 'core' group of employees and exclude peripheral workers because of the contingent nature of their contracts. The question can be asked whether these policy initiatives actually increase the insecurity of those working in contingent ways. In their research into low-paying labour markets, Dean and Shah (2002:70) found that in companies with 'family friendly' policies, employers acknowledged that this was more likely to benefit those higher trained with more specialist skills, rather than the less skilled lower paid workers. In fact, one employer in their survey emphasised the need to protect the company's 'intellectual capital' which, by

implication, meant that those with fewer skills had less value. Although the evidence is limited, there is the possibility that work-life balance initiatives by employers may inadvertently fuel inequalities (Dean and Shah, 2002:77).

Based on our interviews, we suggest that evidence is not so limited. Many aspects of the lives of those we interviewed were affected by the temporary or casual nature of their employment relationships. For instance, unpredictable working hours had a significant impact on the family life of one man in a manual labouring role. As indicated before, he had worked in this role for over a year and still had to work split shifts determined for him by his employer.

There's no [way of knowing] when you're going to go to work, when you're going to finish at work. If you do go to work, they might send you one hour...like rainy days, the full-timers they don't want to stay back, so we have to stay back. Sometimes I have to ring back and tell someone to pick my daughter up, my daughter will stay at her nanas place for another hour, while I work. (Male manual worker)

This case is an example of a more general trend that we identified among people working casually, whether this was by choice or involuntarily. These lower-paid non-standard workers had to fit in with employers' requirements and permanent employees generally got the preferred shifts. A balanced family and social life is often unattainable for workers in these circumstances and those having to work shifts:

Oh God. My social life and my home life is...like Christmas time and holiday time when all my friends have their time off, that's when I work the most and I need to work the most 'cause I need to save the money for the weeks when it's more quieter, when I have one shift a week or whatever, so it stuffs up my private life and it stuffs up my family life and things but they understand. They know that there are times when I work and times when I don't and I just have to plan my family life into my schedule so if there's a family affair or a social affair that I want to go to, I just know that that particular shift I wont work and I work around that shift. (Male caregiver)

You come off work at 4.00 in the morning, you cannot go .....social things, lets meet for lunch, I don't think so, I get up at 3.30pm. Going to lunch is like, hey let's have breakfast 3.00am. Cultural and religious observances are right down the drain, you cannot .....on the feast day of the deity of your choice, because you are either sleeping off the night before or you are at work on the day. The place is actually closed on Christmas day, great, but it's open 'til the stroke of midnight on Christmas Eve ... You've got to get some sleep somewhere. You have to shoot off to work to be uniformed up, sign your gear out and you are ready to rock again... The impact on domestic and personal relationships can be devastating. (Male shiftworker)

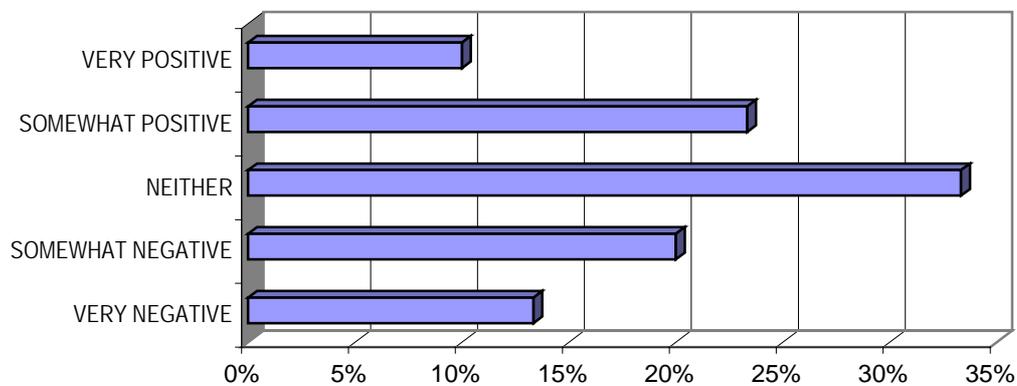
It's had probably a bad influence on my social life in some ways. It didn't matter so much when I had a long-term girlfriend, we just organised our life around it really. If anything, recently when I've been single and...like my new job at Avondale, I work Saturdays...I work Friday, Saturday, Monday, and then at L I do Sunday, so it is...that main block of work is exactly when everyone else is having their weekend. It's quite antisocial in that respect. Since I've been starting to date someone new, I've been...I've found it quite hard to actually see them, ever. Not being able to see people in the daytime, on the weekends is a little bit antisocial. Last year I used to work all evenings so I missed out on a certain amount of time just hanging out at the flat with my flatmates in the evenings and things like that. Partly the antisocialness is a personal choice because to be able to do some writing, it's a lot better to have days off in the middle of the week when I'm going to be less distracted by the possibility of going out and doing stuff with other people. My weekend is more, Tuesday, Wednesday and partly Thursday. I do a shift on Tuesday night and it's quite quiet and then I do a shift on Thursday, but mostly Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, I have the day off, so it gives me a lot of time where I'm not about to socialize, where I can spend it on doing my thing and practising playing bass and things like that. Yes, my job is a little bit antisocial, but at the same time I've chosen it to be like that. (Male part-time shift worker)

In addition, low wages impact on the ability to have a social life as this male in a care giving role suggests. Although he had chosen to work casually, this man did not earn enough money to sustain much, if any, of a social life, let alone a 'balanced' one:

Well it's basically the student lifestyle, which is enough money to feed you and to pay your rent, and you make it with \$10.00 extra a week, and that's not enough to have a normal lifestyle, I can't see my family very often because I don't have enough money...in fact I've had to put my car into the garage and retire it for a while, because I simply can't afford to pay for registration and warrants and all that. I can't really see my friends that often...my far away friends. I can't afford either the bus fare, the ferry or whatever. It's really impacted on my social life.

To ensure that we do not present a skewed account of our participants' experiences, we introduce Figure 9 which shows that while one third of the people we interviewed indicated that non-standard working arrangements impacted very negatively, or somewhat negatively, on their quality of life, a similar proportion have some sort of positive evaluation.

**Figure 9: Impact of Non-Standard Work on Quality of Life**



Interview data supporting the positive effects of these arrangements on people's quality of life can also be recounted.

Yes, I work around my kids now. I'm there for my husband when he needs me so that's the reason that I am doing it. He doesn't want me to work fulltime, so it suits our life style at the moment. It doesn't cause any problems in our...if we are financially struggling I wouldn't be doing this work, I would be looking for a fulltime job. But we are not, so it suits our lifestyle at the moment, yeah. (Female clerical worker)

The advantages are that you can walk away and do your own thing whenever you want to. The advantages are simply this, you can...with all the things that I have going on in my home with my young people, with young A and B...I can drop anything at a moments notice and I can do whatever it is that they...if I had to spend a day with my son taking him to whatever, be it medical things or whatever it is then I have to do it. (Female driver)

Well I will say enriched, definitely. How can anything you do that you feel like you have more choice and freedom, not enrich you...It has to enrich you, so from that sense, not separating my cleaning and child minding from my other two, it all enriches me because I have that flexibility. (Female clerical worker)

A prominent and positive feature of these ways of working alluded to already in the report is the temporal *flexibility* they offered people, thereby allowing many of our participants some autonomy over the management of their time. This was accompanied, however, by a sense of ambivalence that arose from the continual tensions between living with ongoing uncertainty and low pay just to have the flexibility to fit work in with their personal lives. As a result of this flexibility, many of those we interviewed, particularly women with children at home, enjoyed the flexibility of the hours worked and the autonomy they had in determining those hours. Working

as a casual caregiver (on set night shifts) allowed one man to study full-time, look after his children and earn some money. His wife was the breadwinner with a permanent full-time job as well as working as a permanent part-timer in a care giving role. All these hours were spent in low-paying roles to make sure that there was enough money to pay the bills.

Several participants, more generally women, talked about the fact that they could determine when they worked or did not work, and take leave when it suited them. For most of the single parents we interviewed, it was the preferred way of working because of family commitments. As one man, a single parent, commented:

I've got two kids who live with me...Being able to work flexible hours means that I can sometimes drop her off at school, pick them up, go to after school functions. It's just a matter of keeping a very good diary and knowing what's important, where I'm going to be, where I'm going to be working. Say, if I have two jobs to do and one's miles away and the other is very close to the school, I'll usually do the one close to the school at the end of the day so I can then just pick up the kids and go home, or maybe pick up the kids, drop them home and then go back to the garden I am working in. (Male gardener)

More generally, this way of working allowed time for other activities and importantly, could free them up for leisure or voluntary work. One of the participants spent time with a group of physical and intellectually handicapped people teaching arts and crafts and another had a regular fortnightly shift working at the City Mission. For some of the younger participants, working in alternative arrangements ensured that they were more able to control their working lives and have time for other pursuits. One young man worked as a teacher aid for 5 hours a day and did not want to work longer hours. This gave him time to reflect and more time for leisure activities. Another man worked in casual clerical roles and had just found a permanent part-time position that was suited to his life-style. This is what he said:

I don't really like working 40 hours a week jobs. I don't know. I just find it a horrible way to live your life, working five days out of the week and then afterwards you spend time going backwards and forwards to work and it's more time that the job takes off you and then in the evening you are too tired to do much but watch TV and I just found that a bit banal I guess, and I'm not that interested in money and things like that, I would rather live cheaply than make lots of money. I live cheaply and save money that way, rather than try and make lots of money by having a real job and the other thing is just my other interests, especially the writing and I would quite like to get into that...(Male in clerical role)

Flexibility could be enhanced and tensions reduced somewhat if, as happened in several instances, workers were able to have some say about the hours they might be rostered for. One woman in hospitality suggested that if she made her preferences known before the roster was drawn up, her employer did try and accommodate that. Swapping with others was no problem either as long as they were similarly skilled.

General comments made by several people we interviewed highlighted the importance of the psychological benefits of working which impacted on their families:

It was very, very, very good to be in work. I'd be happier, nicer to be around and be better. (Male in hospitality)

The main positive effect that it has is that...I would suppose it would be...when you're not employed you don't appreciate relaxing and not doing anything as such, you don't appreciate being at home, so in some respects it gives you a healthier home life because you're a lot more happier to be home. It gives you...as everyone knows, you've always got a lot more energy in some respects, after working. You're getting up earlier in the morning...It doesn't really have a huge effect on my home life and my relationship with my family as such, it's just my personal energy levels and stuff like that. I find whenever I'm working, whenever I get up in the morning and actually do something, I have a lot more energy and I'm a lot more happier as well. You have a lot more confidence when you are working. It doesn't really affect...well it would affect my family life, just because I am happier. (Male teacher's aide)

Clearly, then, there are differing assessments of the impact of casual and temporary work on people's quality of life. These are not just between people, but can occur within the account provided by a single worker. As can be seen from many of the preceding quotes, there is an ambiguity and ambivalence that pervades people's quality of life assessments. For instance, one woman, working in market research, felt being able to work at home benefited her home life – she was able to spend more time with her family. However, work decisions were partly negotiated around her daughter's part-time work and the availability of her daughter's car. The following example makes this ambivalence very obvious. This woman highlighted the positive aspects of casual work in multiple jobs but suggests that her insecure weekly earnings did mean that she had to make sacrifices:

They're very good with my type of lifestyle that I've got. I enjoy them because I can work around my family and other commitments as well that I have, which is not much but it's nice to catch up with other people sometimes when you're stuck at home by yourself and to get out to the shops and have coffee with someone. Just little things like that I can work around my work, which I'm very fortunate in that respect... At this stage, rather than have set days or set hours, although later on when H goes to Kindergarten, I would like more permanent hours and permanent days. But at the moment I can switch it around to what suits me. I like that flexibility. The salary or the wages that I get in each week varies. I can't actually plan to buy things because I don't have the same income each week. That is a bit hard, it may be a negative, but I think it weights up the positives, spending time with her at home and not paying any person for childcare. There is not that outgoing expense. I get to look after her if she is not well as well. If she is sick, I can't work today. To have that type of flexibility is very suitable for me at this stage. I enjoy that aspect. My partner works shift work and he's home sometimes during the week and I have those two days off during the week and we can do things like renovate the house, family time together, which I love as well. It's positive at this stage, but I would like it to change eventually. (Female clerical worker)

Similarly, several participants chose this way of working in spite of the negative aspects of the job because it best complemented their domestic arrangements.

These kinds of complex and, at times, contradictory evaluations are not well suited to rating questions. Taking each interview as a whole, we formed the opinion that collectively, the people we interviewed had a more negative view of the impact of their working arrangements than is apparent in Figure 9. Returning to the issues of work-life balance and family friendly policies, this assessment makes us join with others in being somewhat sceptical of such policies (for instance, see **New Zealand Herald**, Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 2003: A13) especially for the group focused on in this study. As Carol Beaumont, CTU Secretary, observed recently, any strategy addressing work-life balance issues had to include decent working conditions rather than free gym membership or coffee machines (Dearnaley, 2003). Andrew Little, National Secretary of the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union, made some similar points in a speech on the work/life balance from a worker's perspective (Little, 2003). Given her comments regarding people employed in the same circumstances as those we interviewed, we will close with some of Beaumont's remarks, many of which have been illustrated in the preceding discussion. She noted that many workers – like those in part-time jobs wanting more employment or casual employees working for one employer in the hope of gaining permanent employment – were under-utilised. As well, Beaumont observed that many people were forced to work on-call which had an impact on their lives, as several of our participants attested to. She argued, rightly in our view, that any initiatives should be as much about low-paid workers having to hold down multiple jobs as executives under pressure to work unpaid hours.

For many in low-paying precarious jobs, the general powerlessness (perceived or otherwise) to determine labour market outcomes, meant that the social security system was integral in providing some minimum protection in an environment of contingency, vulnerability and insecurity for several of our respondents. Income supplementation by Work and Income New

Zealand (WINZ) was critical to the survival of at least six non-permanent employees in our sample. The following section examines the intersection of employment and benefits.

### 6.3.1 Combining Welfare and Work at the Margins

As non-standard employment relationships increase, there is a growing band of 'neither-nors' – these are people who are neither unemployed nor in possession of secure, stable employment (Mythen, 2001:5). At least six of our sample received benefit supplements. This is due to many factors. For example, some of the single parents we interviewed placed more emphasis on being at home with their children, thereby reducing their engagement with paid work. Others found the hours of work that they could get were not enough to earn a living wage.

In Australia (ACOSS, 2003:111) the trend over the past decade has been a sluggish growth of full-time secure employment that has left many low-paid workers relying on a combination of social security payments and a succession of temporary and usually part-time jobs. This is borne out by the discussion earlier where casual jobs in Australia have risen from 19 percent to 29 percent between 1990 and 2000. This has significant implications for so-called 'at risk' workers. Lane et al. (2001:16) have found that workers who are likely to receive welfare benefits are more than twice as prone to be in alternative working arrangements than are other workers. Similarly, we found that several participants in our study had their incomes supplemented by WINZ which makes allowances for this and provides a safety net for those with an insufficient number of hours in paid work to earn a living wage.<sup>15</sup>

Some participants found moving between benefit supplementation of income and temporary employment problematic. One of the women we interviewed had encountered difficulties with the benefit system. Although preferring not to be on a benefit she was entitled to one if she was working under 30 hours a week, but had irregular hours (some weeks she worked over 30 hours and less in others) which meant that she frequently had to go back and forth to WINZ.

The secondary tax issue was also frustrating as she said:

The more hours you work, of course you lose more. Last year there were times where they were taking so much money off me, it was pointless working. I still work just to get out of the house and as much as I tried to drop my hours back, that sort of worked okay. It's still a big thing. They say to you, go to work, go to work, we will help you out but...it's only because I want to get out, I can't sit at home all the time. Because they are going to say to me, you need to do a course and you need to do this course or this course or this course and then...it doesn't matter whether I want to do it, I've got to do it. So I think, okay I will just stay at work. As long as I'm working they won't touch me. That's why I decided to stay. .... end up having to pay tax back and...

Another suggested that she was working casually as an interviewer for a market research company so that she would not be approached by WINZ to do more courses.

The administration around receiving benefit supplements and paying secondary tax did encourage at least two of the people we interviewed to increase their hours and end their reliance on WINZ. This man who was working as an administrative assistant commented that:

Well when I first left University I went on the dole for a brief period and it wasn't too bad. You used to be able to say what I was earning each week and they would reduce my dole accordingly. There isn't much allowance for doing part-time work on top of it. I'm allowed to work \$80.00 on top and then after that they

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<sup>15</sup> For information, see Appendix 3, Table 11, outlining benefit entitlements for those earning some money and table 12 listing the number of people in Auckland on income support between 1996 and 2003.

would take most of the money back. I don't know. I would much prefer to do a job where I only make a bit more than the dole, than actually be on the dole and be earning on top anyway. (Male in clerical role)

On a positive note, benefit supplementation was important for some of the single parents we interviewed as it allowed them to get out of the home and engage in a few hours of paid work. However, the negative aspects raised above were of concern to many. While other research has focused on the tricky issue of abatement regimes and the like, the findings of this study mirror other LMD research (see Shirley et al, 2001a). The low remuneration often associated with temporary and casual forms of work and the necessary involvement of welfare assistance for such workers raises questions about the cumulative disadvantage that people face in these circumstances. This is the next issue that we canvass.

### 6.3.2 Poverty Trap

Working casually, or on a fixed-term contract, in lower-paid jobs can place workers in an ongoing poverty trap. Even when working full-time hours, precarious casual employment can limit their returns from the labour market.

The proportion of jobs that are casual and part-time and more specifically low-paid is of growing concern in New Zealand. Richardson and Miller-Lewis (2002) observe that there is understandable interest in whether this growth should be a cause for concern for policy makers and the community. They submit that certain jobs are 'dead-end' and that the growth of these jobs will contribute to an underclass of people and families who have to deal with long periods of poverty and insecurity, or employment that does not provide a living wage. Our own research reinforces these concerns, especially for those low waged temporary/casual workers who have few if any options. Several participants exist in jobs that provide inadequate and uncertain levels of income, and that are without any of the advantages associated with more standard forms of employment. People in such circumstances often, and not unexpectedly, require benefit supplements. For these involuntary contingent workers, a lack of appropriate protection and statutory conditions of employment together with the nature of their employment relationships reinforces a poverty/employment trap. Moreover, it restricts the ability of individuals on temporary employment contracts to get mortgages and personal loans. Hutton (1995) suggests that this poses a threat to social cohesion. He describes the emergence of the 40:30:30 society where divisions are growing between the 40 percent who are privileged in a relative sense by being in reasonably secure employment or self-employment, the 30 percent who are marginalised and insecure and 30 percent who are disadvantaged by being unemployed or economically inactive. The coincidence of low pay and insecure work, and the lack of choice of many of those working in poorly paid non-standard jobs, has significantly increased the numbers involved in debates about social security support, and the nature of that support. In lower paid jobs, only full-time employment gives poor people the income they need to get out of income poverty (ACOSS, 2003:111). With the net loss of full-time permanent jobs in the last decade, wage inequality has increased due to the redistribution of paid working time in favour of highly skilled workers (ACOSS, 2003:112).

Reflecting on the impact of casualisation in his industry, one union official observed that:

Yeah, apart from the safety and poverty aspect of the person who gets caught up in the system, I think that's enough. From an organising point of view, obviously we would like to see everybody there receiving the proper conditions. If you've got an organised workforce and everybody is receiving their entitlements,

including smokos and breaks that casuals don't always get, it's just treatment of human beings are a lot better when they're in an organised structure. I don't know...I am trying to think out loud but it's definitely turning a lot of New Zealanders into second-class citizens.

The nature of jobs that are precarious, contingent, low-paid and on the margins of employment has significant implications for the individuals involved and wider society.

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## FUTURE RESEARCH

This research report has only touched on some of the issues that impact on the lives of the lower-paid non-standard worker. Changing employment relationships and increasingly contingent, precarious and marginal attachments to the labour market have important implications for research. Firstly, we have no idea how many people in New Zealand are employed on a temporary basis. The only figure we have is that in 1995, one third of employees in New Zealand were engaged in non-standard work (Allan et al., 2001: 761). However, indications are that this number has grown in the last 8 years since that study was undertaken. Secondly, with the work-life balance initiatives being undertaken by the government (Wilson, 2003b), the impact of the quality of jobs on the work-life balance and families would make a valuable study.

When the ECA was introduced in 1991, many commentators predicted that the Act would have a different impact on different sectors of the population with the outcome of growing inequality. Women, Maori, Pacific peoples and the young would become increasingly marginalized in low paid and casualised occupations (McLaughlin and Rasmussen, 1998). Yet one of the problems in evaluating the impact of the ECA is the lack of information about the effects the Act has had on employees. McLaughlin and Rasmussen (1998) suggest that the secondary labour market is problematic because of a lack of appropriate research and this becomes even more difficult when statistics that might indicate the growth or otherwise of the secondary labour market are absent in New Zealand. What is required is adequate statistical information, including longitudinal data to indicate transitions, incidence and the impact on different groups of workers. The Honourable Steve Maharey, Labour's employment spokesman when the party was in opposition, called for both the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) and the Quarterly Employment Survey (QES) to be redesigned to throw some light on the quality of jobs and measure the extent of casual and temporary employment (Smith, 1995). More recently, Margaret Wilson has referred to the new jobs as the 'McJobs' variety, a term which has been used to describe jobs requiring skills allowing for these jobs to be performed on a casual basis with high turnover of staff on low wages (Wilson, 11<sup>th</sup> August, 2000). She continues that the last decade has seen the casualisation of work in New Zealand although 'it is not always clear what is meant by that term'? It would be most beneficial if the HLFS, QES and Census were modified to more accurately reflect the changing employment relationships in New Zealand's labour market.

Given the paucity of information on the secondary labour market (see also McLaughlin and Rasmussen, 1998) and the influence this has on individuals and their families, the little work that has been done appears to have excluded the most vulnerable people in our labour market. The LMPG is addressing some of these gaps in research, but more needs to be done to ensure that the labour market in New Zealand does not polarise even further.

In their paper presented to the Social Policy Conference in Wellington (2003), Spoonley and McLaren (2003:21) suggested that the first question to be asked is to what extent the status of all forms of temporary employment has been acknowledged in New Zealand policy and submitted that the following observations might contribute to this debate:

- Fundamentally, in order to fully explore the intricacies of the experience of temporary work should there be a 'putting aside' of the (often) unquestioned assumption that conventional, permanent employment is always and should always be *the* most preferred way of working (Alach and Inkson 2003)?
- Does the lack of systematic and sustained data reflecting labour market changes in New Zealand mask what could have important policy implications?
- Do temporary workers constitute a new kind of underclass?
- Where does the appropriate platform for workers' rights and entitlements lie: should they be tied to the contract of employment, to policy or to labour market status?
- Does employment and unemployment mask growing under-employment?
- How can long-term traps in temporary employment be avoided?
- How can the labour relations system best accommodate flexibility whilst ensuring protection for the most precarious workers?

These are some of the issues that would present valuable insights into the changing employment relationships in New Zealand and provide informed comment to local and central government agencies.

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## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

As modern life still revolves around the labour market (Wheelock, 1999:75), the focus of research on growing forms of non-standard work is becoming increasingly essential if we are to understand how labour markets have changed and what effect these changes have on individuals and their families. Whilst this may be a preferred way of working for many in lower-paid jobs, for others it is involuntary and can have devastating outcomes for them. The focus of our research was on people working in alternative arrangements either casually, on a fixed-term or temporary basis, for a contract company or temp help agency, in self-employment, on shift work or a combination of employment relationships. As in our previous research into non-standard work amongst knowledge workers, precisely because of the myriad of ways in which people earn a living, we found it difficult to set strict criteria for the selection of participants. Hence, we have interviewed a group of people engaged in an interesting array of strategies to earn a living.

There is increasing evidence that some companies are creating within their establishments important qualitative distinctions between the terms and conditions of permanent and temporary workers and the way in which the workers on different contracts are treated (Osberg, 1995:13), highlighting evidence for the increasing popularity of labour market segmentation theory. Yet little is known about the incidence of temporary employment arrangements in New Zealand. This omission makes it difficult to determine the extent to which the secondary or peripheral labour market is growing and becoming an integral part of employment locally. Furthermore, information is required on the extent to which workers choose these employment arrangements as opposed to those who see NSW as the least preferred employment option and to ascertain whether Tilly (1996) is correct when he suggests that unemployment is masked by growing under-employment, especially in terms of temporary arrangements. Little is known about aggregate numbers and the characteristics of these workers in New Zealand. This is not unique. Basso suggests the following:

The sloth of the official statistics, and their covert *ideological* criteria, also permit them to overlook the greatly expanding area of non-domestic 'shadow' work, of casual work, as well as the substantial amount of time that, in an epoch of generalised 'Toyotism', wage workers 'voluntarily' give their companies just to prove their loyalty (Basso, 2003:2).

The challenge for New Zealand policy makers is to recognise the trend and create an environment that values and respects the non-permanent worker and the contributions that these workers make to the economy - their contribution is no less important than those made by permanent employees (Management, 2000:78-79). Normalising the temporary work system by ensuring that policy is predicated on equivalence might go some to ensuring that these workers are not marginalised any further. Many non-standard jobs offer a combination of good pay, flexibility and autonomy (Firkin et al., 2003) but many are insecure and poorly paid. Whereas casual employment can be beneficial for some, it can lead to hardships for others creating a poverty trap that is difficult to escape (Ryan, 2003, personal communication). In this

environment, several of our participants felt vulnerable and powerless in determining their life course, their economic security and future options.

A variety of contradictions are becoming increasingly evident in the labour market today. On the one hand, companies pride themselves on so-called family friendly policies and the work-life balance, yet on the other hand, they might have a large number of casual and temporary staff working for them on an ongoing basis further highlighting the growing polarisation of the workforce between the permanent, core group of workers and those very much on the periphery.

The interviews with people undertaking various low-paid jobs has highlighted for us that almost no job or role can be defined as unskilled. In order to keep their jobs, albeit many with very low rates of pay, people had to have a variety of personal characteristics often only associated with those in more skilled professions. Although many of the participants had little, if any, formal training and education, they had to be confident, flexible, adaptable, self-disciplined and motivated in everything they did. Working standards had to be high and communication skills well developed because of the many relationships they had to sustain, as they moved from assignment or job to job.

Working in temporary arrangements requires resources, skills and energy together with levels of responsibility that are not always recognised and valued by employers. What we have learnt is that alternative working relationships cannot be reduced to generalisations as every situation is unique and strategies of paid work differ depending on the availability of employment, individual circumstances and choice.

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## APPENDIX ONE

Table 3: Employment Status: 1991, 1996 and 2001

Employment status	Numbers		
Description	1991	1996	2001
Employed on a wage or salary for between 30 and 50 hours and not a multiple job holder	695,565	645,783	698,910
Employed on a wage or salary for between 30 and 50 hours for first job and a multiple job holder	50,628	69,072	61,767
Employed on a wage or salary for 50 hours or more or MJH employed for 50 hours or more for first job	152,694	224,307	236,655
Employed part-time on a wage or salary and not a multiple job holder	178,581	242,313	275,319
Employed part-time on a wage or salary and a multiple job holder	17,391	31,650	24,264
Full-time self employed with employees and multiple job holder	10,167	10,644	14,403
Full-time self employed with employees and not a multiple job holder	117,987	97,515	101,202
Part-time self employed with employees and multiple job holder	2,073	1,560	1,545
Part-time self employed with employees and not a multiple job holder	29,016	12,588	12,483
Full-time self employed without employees and a multiple job holder	6,483	20,097	27,732
Full-time self employed without employees and not a multiple job holder	92,166	122,373	135,027
Part-time self employed without employees and a multiple job holder	528	5,889	6,960
Part-time self employed without employees and not a multiple job holder	9,039	37,005	43,398
Full-time unpaid worker in a family business and a multiple job holder	1,410	6,603	6,219
Full-time unpaid worker in a family business and not a multiple job holder	10,404	17,190	12,999
Part-time unpaid worker in a family business and a multiple job holder	678	5,283	5,811
Part-time unpaid worker in a family business and not a multiple job holder	7,962	24,933	14,262
Employed but labour status undefined and multiple job holder	486	32,592	1,668
Employed but labour status undefined and not a multiple job holder	12,072	23,418	46,641
Unemployed	163,275	136,506	139,908
Not in the labour force	1,022,715	933,639	933,909
Unspecified	2,502		88,449
Total non standard work	2,587,575	2,786,220	2,889,537

Source: Personal communication with James Newell (2003) MERA

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## APPENDIX TWO

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### LONG-TERM TEMPORARY

**The position:** Long-term temporary work with permanent potential for the right candidates.

**The company:** A local manufacturing and exporting company located in Addington.

**The work;** Physical and demanding. However, working as part of a team is essential, and possessing an eye for detail, and the ability to learn and work with a minimum of supervision is certainly an added advantage. Your work ethic must be strong. Reliability and timekeeping are paramount.

**Hours of work are:** Dayshift: 7,30am - 4pm. Afternoon Shift: 4pm - Midnight. Work is basically a minimum of 40 hours a week, but extra hours are available to those who are looking to do that little bit extra towards the team effort.

**Applications:** I am taking registrations of interest from Monday January 6, 2003, from 9am by phone, and for those wanting an interview, I must have two recent work references, who I can contact by phone immediately. You should possess safety footwear and have your own reliable transport.

**Prospects:** It must be stressed that these are long- term, ongoing positions and are not suitable or available for anyone wanting casual work or short- term assignments.

**Pay:** Rate of pay is well above the basic Labouring rate, and the opportunity exists for regular reviews. Full remuneration and rates of pay will be discussed at the interview stage.

**Contact:** To register your interest, please phone Adecco Personnel after 9am Monday January 6, on 3799-060.

Part: F

Section: FEATURES

Sub-Section: GENERAL

Column: YOUR CAREER

Topics: INDUSTRY; EMPLOYMENT

Sub-Topics: CHRISTCHURCH CITY

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## APPENDIX THREE

**Table 11: Income Support Entitlements**

Gross Income Thresholds	Deduction Rate
Up to \$80 per week (\$4160 a year)	No change to the benefit BUT other allowances could be affected
\$81 to \$180 per week (\$4161-\$9360 per year)	30c on each \$1 of income from \$4161 - \$9360
\$181 and more per week (over \$9361 per year)	70c on each dollar of income from \$9361

(Source: www.msd.govt.nz)

**Table 12: Income Support received in the Auckland Region 1996 - 2003**

Year	No	Income				Total
		\$1 - \$80	\$81 - \$180	\$181 - \$300	>\$300	
1996	35,314	1,825	1,263	588	264	39,254
1997	36,280	2,029	1,447	684	285	40,725
1998	39,893	2,225	1,753	840	353	45,064
1999	42,148	2,381	1,950	932	341	47,752
2000	41,564	2,218	1,925	901	302	46,910
2001	40,404	2,079	1,838	880	285	45,486
2002	37,558	2,043	1,692	819	240	42,352
2003	34,582	1,988	1,534	724	195	39,023

(Source: Work and Income Auckland North Office: Personal Communication: 2003)