

SUMMARY REPORT
THE EXPERIENCES OF PROFESSIONAL
MIGRANTS WORKING IN NEW ZEALAND.
A BIOGRAPHICAL-NARRATIVE APPROACH

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In terms of this particular study I am indebted to the thirteen men and women who generously shared their time and who so willingly and freely provided the stories that are at the heart of the research. The particular approach that I have adopted in the report means that those stories are more available to others than is often the case and, accordingly, I hope that the accounts I have rendered here do justice to the originals. I have endeavoured at all times to treat the participants' stories with the respect they deserve and if I have made any errors in reconstructing, representing or retelling your narratives, I apologise in advance. Like others who have read this material I was often moved by your experiences – what you have coped with and how you have responded. Just as many of you were motivated to take part in the research by a desire to make things different, I hope that this report will contribute to a broader and better understanding of the experiences of migrants. I hope, too, that it will help inform efforts to improve your future experiences and those of others.

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Patrick Firkin

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The Labour Market Dynamics Research Programme (LMDRP) is an interdisciplinary research project designed to explore and explain various dynamics of economic and labour market participation and related changes that are occurring.¹ The research reported on here represents the final qualitative inquiry of a programme of investigation looking at aspects of non-standard work (NSW) in New Zealand². As part of this the LMDRP has undertaken a number of research projects. These include a range of qualitatively-orientated studies of the experiences of various groups in relation to NSW. By way of completing the set of experiential snapshots that the LMDRP sought to build up, this report explores NSW in relation to migrants, and more specifically those migrants with professional qualifications or backgrounds.

Professional migrants can interact with NSW in various ways and for a number of reasons all of which have implications for their settlement experience, and those of their families, in both the labour market and personal/familial domains. There are, for example, occasions when NSW plays a positive role in the settlement and labour market experiences of professional migrants, and some of those interviewed for this study illustrate such instances. However, there are also many examples of migrant professionals having few, if any, alternatives but to engage in non-standard (and standard) work that is well below their qualifications and outside their experience, and which is often characterised by poor pay and conditions. While such work can clearly be a starting point or stepping stone, for many people further opportunities do not emerge. This study recounts the stories of people who find themselves in circumstances like these. Such accounts are also familiar from the many media accounts of doctors, engineers, scientists and the like, who end up flipping burgers, delivering pizzas, driving taxis and so on.

OVERVIEW

This working paper presents an abridged version of an earlier research report published by the LMDRP – *'New Zealand Experience(s)' – Biographical Narratives of Professional Migrants on Working in New Zealand*. It was decided to produce a shortened version of that report in order to make the findings more accessible to a wider readership. There are several differences and some distinct similarities between the two reports which should be noted at the outset. Firstly, although the research used an intriguing methodological approach, this is only very briefly outlined in the introduction. A more detailed account is contained in Appendix B. Those with an interest in the methodology should consult the original report which has a longer version of the chapter that is appended to this report,

¹ A list of all previous LMDRP publications is provided at the end of this report. A similar list is also available on our website: <http://lmd.massey.ac.nz> where many of the publications are available for downloading.

² Various discussions and reviews of the literature on non-standard work are presented in other LMDRP publications – e.g. Butcher (2002), Firkin et al. (2002; 2003) and McLaren et al. (2004) (see pages 62-64 of this report for details).

and also contains a methodological appendix that provides a range of additional resources.

Secondly, the thematic findings as presented in the original report are replicated here. While important in their own right, they also provide the context in which to consider the biographical accounts that are outlined in Chapter Three. As a result of the methods employed in this study, the original report presented detailed and lengthy accounts of the biographical narratives of each participant. Given that they provide rich insights into the experiences of individuals within the shared contexts derived from the thematic analysis, three accounts have been retained. As well, a brief chronology of each participant was included as a preface to the account of their biographical narrative. This has been retained for the three accounts presented at length in this report. The others are attached as an appendix (see Appendix A) so that the reader can learn a little more about the participants.

Finally, the original report contained a chapter that theorised, and illustrated with biographical material from this study, how biography and some associated concepts might be useful in exploring and understanding individual experiences within shared social contexts. In order to maintain the focus and goals of the shortened report, this chapter has been omitted.

As a result of the changes to content and organisation that have been made in this report, the introduction provides a brief overview of the methodology and participants so as to orientate the reader before the findings are presented.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM) (see, in particular, Wengraf, 2001). By way of briefly outlining the BNIM approach I want to consider the interview and analysis phases separately. The interested reader can find much more detail on both aspects in Appendix B. Finally, I offer some more general observations about the research process.

Interview

The specific interview method that has been employed in this study falls within what Wengraf (2001:111) describes as a "lightly structured depth interview". This method can be broken down into three parts. The first part uses "a single initial narrative question" to elicit narratives about "part or all of the individual's life story, their biography" (ibid.). In this research the single initial narrative question was:

Tell me the story of how a (professional occupation) from (country of origin) comes to be in (current non-standard work) in New Zealand.

The second part of the interview approach used here involves the interviewer following up the initial narrative with a series of questions which are structured to elicit further narratives, and that reflect the interviewee's original order of themes and, where possible, their use of language. The third and final part of the interview allows the interviewer the opportunity to pursue areas of researcher interest not raised in the preceding parts of the interview and to collect other relevant data (such as demographics).

Analysis

This data is then analysed using a lengthy and detailed approach. As a first step the interview transcript is prepared by transforming it into two accounts:

- the recounted story is organised into a chronology of lived experiences, the *lived story*, and
- a restructured *told story* that is broken down according to three criteria or types of changes – changes in speaker, topic or the way a topic is spoken about.

Analysis of both the lived story and the told story is conducted by a group of researchers. They approach the analysis initially 'blind' to the totality of each account. Instead they consider each life event or segment as it emerges without reference to what follows. As Chamberlayne and King (1996:99) put it,

This stage examines the temporal and thematic ordering of the account, the modes of discourse, and the patterns of interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, and makes detailed analysis of key text segments which are of particular salience to the interpretation of the text.

The process aims, as Breckner and Rupp (2002:297) summarise it, to allow researchers to "acquire insight into the variety of possibilities inherent in social contexts" so they are then "able to identify those chosen, ignored or rejected by the interviewee". They can then understand how the interviewee makes sense of their life in the present through considering the topics that are presented (what is talked about and left out; how much depth/detail is accorded each topic; and the relationships between topics – order of telling and other connections) and how they are talked about. In essence, researchers can gain some sense of the Gestalt of the interviewee's story. Gestalt in this sense is understood in various ways. For instance, Rosenthal (1993:62) portrays it "as a comprehensive, general pattern of orientation" such that "the narrated life story represents the biographer's overall construction of his or her past and anticipated life, in which biographically relevant experiences are linked up in a temporally and thematically consistent pattern". Alternatively, and perhaps more simply for these purposes, Hollway and Jefferson (2000:34) see it as "a whole which is more than the sum of its parts, an order or hidden agenda informing each person's life".

The Research Process – Some Final Observations

Before moving on to describing the participants in this study, some final issues need to be addressed in relation to the research process. One of these concerns how the primary question appeared to orient the interviews in particular directions. That is, people were obviously drawn to an account that emphasised their work and their time in New Zealand. While some people chose to open up their narratives to a richer account of their lives prior to migration, narratives around these timeframes and events often required further elicitation. Although the work theme was central to the research and is important in people's lives, most of those interviewed seemed to integrate this well into a wider discussion of their experiences. In addition, the question seemed to, at least initially anyway, orient narratives around the experiences of the individual who was being interviewed with varying degrees of reference to and inclusion of family members (spouses/partners and children). Again, though, most often people gradually expanded their stories to include these people and their experiences.

A second issue relates to how the literature often refers to the universal quality of story-telling in humans. As other BNIM researchers have recognised, however, (e.g. Wengraf 2001) not everyone feels comfortable or appears able to engage in this type of research. My own experience in this study would support these cautions. It is not that any of the participants in this study were incapable of telling stories, but rather that some people

clearly felt more comfortable answering questions. The use of a narrative approach rather than a question and answer format may also mean that interviewees with some research expectations may take time to readjust.

Two final points concern the question of using a method such as this with people for whom English was not their first language. By way of responding I want to, firstly, point out that coming from a non-English speaking background need not imply that a person does not have an excellent command of English. Indeed many of the interviewees were highly competent English speakers. For the others, a brief screening telephone interview was used to ensure that people would be able to take part in an interview based research programme and would feel comfortable doing so. Almost all of those who took part offered long and full accounts of their various experiences. Interestingly, many who participated were prompted to do so based on a newspaper article that asked for migrants who were willing to literally “tell their stories”. This was obviously hugely appealing as many of the phone calls I received contained some explicit reference to a desire and willingness to do just that. Thus, at the outset, people were ready to engage in a dialogue along the lines of a biographical-narrative interview. Lastly, the openness of the method in allowing interviewees to structure their accounts certainly appeared to offer people opportunities to talk around issues that they found difficult to immediately express and so find an account that satisfied them. The ability to encourage and leave open the spaces for this was crucial I believe.

PARTICIPANTS

Twelve interviews were conducted for this study. All but one of these was with an individual. In the exceptional instance, a couple jointly participated. In three other cases data on a spouse was also provided by the interviewee and, where appropriate, this was used in the analysis. Three interviews were with single people with the remainder of those who participated being married (though in one case the partner was not living in New Zealand). Ages of participants ranged from late twenties to early seventies with the majority being in their forties. Those interviewed had been in New Zealand between 10 years and a few months. Countries of origin were Brazil, China, India, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Zimbabwe. The professional backgrounds of those involved included accountancy, engineering, public relations, medicine, hotel management, secondary school teaching, management, law, architecture, and university lecturing.

Table 1 overviews the various characteristics of those who participated in the study. As noted earlier, brief biographical chronologies for each participant are included in Appendix A. Chapter Three provides detailed accounts of the biographical narratives of three of the professional migrants.

Table 1 Overview of Participants

Case	Sex	Age Group	Marital Status	Children	Profession	Country of Origin	Time in N.Z.	Note
Steven	Male	Late-40s	Married	2 adult dependent children	Accountancy	South Korea	11 years	a
Yong	Male	Late-40s	Married	No children	Engineering	South Korea	10 years	
Dinesh	Male	Mid-40s	Married	1 child	Accountancy	India	18 months	
Jerry	Male	Early-40s	Married	2 children	Public Relations	Philippines	9 months	
Charles	Male	Early-70s	Married	Adult children	Hotel Management	South Africa	2 years	
Jane	Female Male	Mid-40s	Married	2 children	Secondary School Teaching Secondary School Teaching	South Africa	6 years	b
Ram	Male	Early-40s	Married	1 child	Management, Law, HR	India	18 months	c
Paula	Female	Late-20s	Single	No children	Architecture	Brazil	2 years	
Melody	Female	Late-30s	Single	No children	Accountancy	China	9 years	
Doena	Female Male	Mid-40s	Married	2 children	Secondary School Teaching Industrial Chemist	Sri Lanka	6 years	b
Interview 11	Female Male	40s 40s	Married	2 children	Administration Surgeon	India	10 months	d
Sarala	Female Male	40s	Married	1 child	Administration University Lecturer	India	6 months	b

Notes

- a *Though adults, the children are being supported as they complete tertiary study*
 b *Although not part of the interview, additional material about spouses (who were professionals) was gathered in these cases*
 c *Although married with a child, this participant was living alone in New Zealand as his family remained in India.*
 d *Unlike the above cases, this interview was with both husband and wife.*

PROFESSIONALS, MIGRATION AND WORK IN NEW ZEALAND – A THEMATIC ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

The first section in this chapter considers the reactions and evaluations of those interviewed to recent changes to immigration policy. It is situated early in the chapter as the review and discussion of immigration policy in New Zealand that precedes the findings is an important means of contextualising the whole study. Like other studies of professional migrants the main focus in this report was on employment issues and a labour market focus is the subject of the next section which examines the particular difficulties that professional migrants face in getting their qualifications recognised and being able to work in their profession. As part of that section the theme of the 'paradox of migration' is explored, as is the issue of 'New Zealand experience'. Since the research approach adopted in this study allowed participants to set the agenda somewhat, the interview content and analysis also canvassed a much wider terrain than work and employment. Thus, the chapter then opens up to a wider set of issues that are grouped under the heading of 'The Struggle that is Settlement'. Canvassed here are short discussions under the headings of courage, motivations, knowledge, opportunity and discrimination. The last briefly looks at the issue of accent and how some migrants reframe the issue of discrimination. Finally, the issue of non-standard work (NSW) can be considered in relation to migration. Although this is a central concern of the study, it has been reported on last as the understandings that emerge from these outcomes are enriched and informed by the preceding literatures and findings.

NEW ZEALAND IMMIGRATION POLICY

While it has always been closely tied to labour market considerations, immigration policy has tended to be used in relation to short-term labour market conditions, rather than as part of any longer-term economic development or population strategy. As such it was characterised by a list of priority occupational categories and, up until the 1980's, it was essentially based on discriminatory principles adopted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and reaffirmed following the Second World War (Ongley and Pearson, 1995). This meant that, traditionally, "a strong preference was maintained for British migrants over continental Europeans and for Northern or Western Europeans over Southern Europeans" (Ongley and Pearson, 1995:773). However, a need for semi and unskilled labour in the 1970s saw the first wave of what have been called 'visible' immigrants (Spoonley, 2003) with the arrival of Pacific peoples.

A review and subsequent legislative changes in the mid 1980 saw a gradual liberalisation of immigration policy. Part of this involved the introduction of a non-discriminatory approach "emphasizing economic and occupational criteria, family links, and humanitarian considerations" (Ongley and Pearson, 1995:766). This was aimed at meeting the country's economic and social requirements by developing New Zealand's human capability base through the selection of skilled migrants who could benefit New Zealand. Eventually these changes would allow an opening up of source countries and saw the arrival of the next collective of visible immigrants, Asian peoples, in two waves: "the first in the early 1990s involving Koreans, Taiwanese and Hong Kong Chinese, followed by the second wave which has seen PRC Chinese and Indians dominate net migration flows" (Spoonley, 2003:7). Each wave has been subjected to intense racialisation.

Various policy mechanisms were also introduced as part of these reforms. These included a points system, an increase in targets for permanent residents, and the introduction of General Skills and Business categories. Despite these shifts, problems and criticisms were continually being raised regarding immigration policy. For example, there were concerns that inadequate monitoring of the Business category migrants meant that the required investments may not always have been made (Ongley and Pearson, 1995). Other concerns were focused on the crude selection mechanisms that failed to adequately and efficiently match either labour market shortages with migrants, or acceptance for immigration with eligibility to work as managed by gatekeeper organisations (Spoonley, 2003). Consequently there were ongoing efforts at policy fine-tuning with adjustments primarily on the criteria for, and structure of, points allocation but also regarding English language requirements. In short, the General Skills Category "is designed to attract skilled migrants who are likely to secure employment, settle with relative ease, and make a positive contribution to New Zealand" (Benson-Rea and Rawlinson, 2003:60). How successful the policy has been in this regard is, according to Benson-Rea and Rawlinson (2003:61), dependent on how successful migrants are at settling and gaining employment in New Zealand. This report contributes to understanding the experiences of a small group of migrants in those processes.

Despite the focus on skilled migrants that has been gradually strengthened within immigration policy there have been ongoing concerns at this group's levels of unemployment and underemployment. Various factors have been cited in this regard. For instance "a small but growing body of research indicates that employer and organisational discrimination might be a factor (not the only one) in the integration of migrants, especially skilled ones" (Spoonley, 2003:8). As well, employers have been critical about migrants' accents, non-English speaking backgrounds, and their lack of New Zealand experience. The gate-keeping activities of professional organisations have made the recognition of overseas qualifications a further and considerable issue.

Extensive media attention and political interest is periodically focused on the experiences of professional migrants as they settle in this country. A particular concern has been the difficulties – extreme in some cases – that people in this category have faced getting work that in some way reflects their background skills, qualifications and experience. There emerges in such cases, a picture of well educated and qualified people with considerable experience in their fields being forced into work well outside their backgrounds, often requiring limited skills and of low quality and reward and with poor security. From these reports have come rather clichéd but none-the-less accurate portrayals of engineers, doctors, scientists and so on "flipping burgers", "driving taxis", "delivering pizzas" and working as cleaners, caregivers and so forth.

In July 2003 the Minister of Immigration announced further changes to New Zealand immigration policy in respect of skilled migrants. These were aimed at moving from a

passive approach that simply processed received applications, to one that actively recruited the skilled migrants New Zealand requires. In the press release that outlined these changes, the Minister identified that one goal was to end the 'professional-driving-taxi' scenario (Dalziel, 2003). It occurs, according to the Minister, because migrants have gained "residence by meeting the required points, rather than ensuring their skills and talents could be utilised in New Zealand" (ibid.). The new policy introduces a system whereby applicants who meet a points threshold can submit an expression of interest in applying for residence. These expressions are then ranked according to their points score, with regular selections made from those who are in the highest ranks. The points system differs from the previous regimes in that while points are still available for skilled employment in this country, work experience, qualifications and age, it is also possible to accumulate bonus points. These are available for "employment in areas of identified future growth, or absolute skills shortage, or within identified clusters ... for employment outside Auckland and for New Zealand qualifications gained in New Zealand over at least two years" (New Zealand Immigration Service, *no date*).

In all but one case, those interviewed as part of this study had settled in New Zealand by way of the General Skills Category (GSC) and according to the GSC regimes in place at the time of migration. While in other parts of this chapter, various experiences of those processes are recounted, I now want to report on the interviewees' reactions to the latest changes to immigration policy. Half of the people interviewed made some reference to the changes to immigration policy that had been announced just prior to the study commencing. Such reactions will be of interest to policy makers and the like.

Not surprisingly given the difficult and challenging experiences people had, there was a generally positive view of these changes, with one person wanting them even tighter. This was structured around the belief that it was better to "be cruel" at the outset and limit immigration opportunities rather than being "kind" then and accepting lots of people who experienced the "cruelty" later when they couldn't get meaningful and appropriate work, if at all. A couple of those interviewed put this in very strong terms. Further positive outcomes of these policy shifts that some people anticipated might be that those migrants who do arrive could be better assisted and they and the communities they settle in will consequently benefit. Underlying this is the perception that there is a dissonance between the policy, and the labour market and society more generally. While the policy gives the appearance of a society that is open and welcoming towards migrants, this is not how the labour market functioned in the experiences of those interviewed. Nor does it reflect the attitudes and actions of the society, which is, in many ways, and at many levels, unwelcoming and even hostile. There was a suggestion that earlier policy may have been more focused on bringing money rather than people to the country and that the changes are aimed at managing unemployment and welfare issues rather than resolving other matters. Extending this argument, I would suggest that since it only attacks one aspect of migration – policy – it is fair to say that other aspects – as addressed in this chapter and such as reception, discrimination and the like – are not changed or necessarily challenged.

A couple of people were more ambivalent about the policy, with one person suggesting that while he could see the rationale for the changes from a New Zealand perspective and thus understand them, it would be hard for outsiders not to see it as racist. Another person thought it was a sensible move so that others would not have to endure what they had but she knew of potential migrants who had struggled to get work before migrating. Given the difficulties that people already in the country experienced, she wondered what hope those outside would have. Finally, implicit in her comments was a view that in restricting numbers of migrants, such changes also limited the chances for people to leave oppressive or corrupt regimes and unsafe countries.

Only one person was against the changes. Though she thought they might benefit New Zealand in the short term, she did not think that the policy was a positive long-term approach to migration within a global context. For her it signalled a closed and unwelcoming society and meant that we could be excluding people or limiting contacts that could ultimately benefit the economy and society. She also thought it unfair in respect of how it treated those with applications in train.

PROFESSIONALS, MIGRATION AND WORK: THE LITERATURE

A General Overview

This section begins an exploration of work related issues emerging from the labour market experiences of highly skilled migrants and particularly in relation to their professional background. Issues in this regard generally related to how overseas qualifications and experience were treated and valued in New Zealand and the implications for migrants in being able to work in their profession. From this starting point a wider discussion of issues around migration are also canvassed.

The international mobility of professionals is not a new phenomenon but it is one that is growing, both in specific terms and as a component of global migration streams and "this increased level of mobility is one manifestation of the internationalisation of professions or professional labour markets" (Iredale, 2001:8). While it is not germane to the current task, nor possible within the restraints of space, to outline in any detail the current theoretical debates regarding professional migration, some mention of the broad parameters of those discussions is appropriately offered. To this end I briefly outline three broad theories of professional migration that have been identified and discussed by Iredale (2001).

Firstly, there is human capital theory, a micro level approach that explains migration as the result of people moving to find work more appropriate to their education and training. Clearly they now do this inside and outside national borders. Alternatively, at the macro level, is the structuralist neo-Marxist approach that allows for the effects of structural factors such as race, class, gender as well as differentials between rich-core and poor-peripheral nations. However, Iredale (2001) notes that institutional factors, various types of agents and the role of unions (and the like) are excluded from such an analysis. In order to make up for these shortcomings some have suggested that any theory must consider a mix of macro and micro elements, "including the new international spatial division of labour, the nature of careers, the role of intra-company labour markets and the lubrication provided by recruitment and relocation agencies" (Iredale, 2001:9). In a similar but distinct vein, a third body of theory can be identified. This is the 'structuration' approach which incorporates consideration of structural, institutional and individual elements and which recognises that both the state and the private sector are engaged in labour recruitment and that individual and institutional agents play crucial roles in various ways.

As noted earlier, professional migration has been positively affected by the internationalisation of the professions whereby there has been a move away from nationally defined standards and norms of professional regulation to more internationally orientated standards and procedures. Iredale (2001) identifies several reasons and types of shifts in this regard. Firstly, the emergence and strengthening of regional blocks (e.g. European Union, North American Free Trade Agreement) has provided one basis though there is considerable variation on how such arrangements affect professional recognition.

Secondly, international agreements and bodies (World Trade Organisation, General Agreement on Trade in Services) can have a similar effect. The global activities of professional groups and associations is a third factor, although this is uneven among professions. A fourth factor is the development of new skilled labour markets that are fairly independent of national controls. The information technology industry is probably the most obvious example of this.

Iredale (2001) also develops a typology to categorise professional migrants that is useful, to a point, to consider here. Table 2 lists the categories she identifies. Some elements of this typology help elaborate the make up of the sample in this study. For instance, the nature of source and destination categorises migration experiences according to where people moved from and to, often in terms of less or more developed countries. Clearly, in this study, there is a common destination country, New Zealand, although people did consider other destinations as part of their migration plans. The source countries were Brazil, China, India, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Zimbabwe. Similarly, the nature of the profession is useful in characterising the sample. Those who were interviewed in this study worked in accountancy, engineering, public relations, medicine, hotel management, secondary school teaching, management, law, architecture, and university lecturing. No background appeared to offer a particular easy, smooth or efficient entry into the professional workforce at some level. Length of stay is worth briefly considering in relation to this study. Iredale identifies this on a permanent or circulatory/temporary basis. Except for a woman who initially came to this country to study, another woman who arrived on a holiday and immediately applied for residency, and a man who was unsure of how long he would settle here, all the others who were interviewed intended at the time of arrival for their stay to be of a permanent or extended duration. Despite these intentions, one couple reported that they were likely to return to their country of origin because of difficulties getting suitable work.

Table 2 Typology of Professional Migration

<p>Motivation</p> <p>Source and Destination</p> <p>Channel or Mechanism</p> <p>Length of Stay</p> <p>Nature of Profession</p> <p>Mode of Incorporation</p> <p> Advantaged</p> <p> Neutral</p> <p> Disadvantaged</p>
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Source: Iredale (2001)

While elements of Iredale's typology are useful, given that the emphasis seems to be on the work orientation of migration, it is not entirely suited to our purposes. This may appear contradictory given that the present study is itself work focused. However, the issue here is the relationship of work to wider migratory experiences. Elements in Iredale's model

seem to presuppose work as the primary or a principal factor in migration. This is most clear in relation to the category of channel or mechanism by which people migrate and that Iredale subdivides into: "the internal labour markets of multi-national corporations; the movement of staff within companies to service off-shore work; the role of international recruitment companies and smaller agencies or ethnic networks; and recruitment by other means such as the internet" (Iredale, 2001:17). None of these channels or mechanisms applied to those in this study, but rather, they used more general processes. That said, work background is not irrelevant to those processes since employment qualifications and experience are important factors in the General Skills Category under which all but one of those interviewed were admitted. The types of mechanisms and channels may also have less relevance in light of the motivations for migrating of those interviewed.

In terms of motivations, Iredale identifies the following categories: 'forced exodus' covers various circumstances where professionals cannot remain in their countries; 'ethical immigration' stands in opposition to force exodus and covers migration prompted by moral or ethical imperatives; 'government induced' migration refers to the practices of governments to deliberately attract highly qualified migrants; and 'industry led' migration is driven by employers. While none of those interviewed in this study reported circumstances that could be construed as being 'forced' to migrate, some did appear to include an 'ethical' dimension in their decision. For some, their choice of New Zealand was based, in part, by the view they formed that this country was keen to attract overseas professionals (government induced). More commonly, the motivations for this group were *not* based on work related issues, though these were clearly factors in any decisions. Rather, motivations most often centred on a desire to give children opportunities not available in their country of origin. These included education and general security and safety concerns. Personal motives along similar lines were also prominent.

Finally, drawing on the work of Portes and Borocz (1989), Iredale (2001) identifies the mode of incorporation as a critical factor. This considers the nature of migrants' integration into the destination countries. There are three types of reception according to Portes and Borocz. Firstly, there is an advantaged reception where for various reasons a migrant experiences upward mobility in their professional and civic life. Then there is a neutral reception where people become incorporated into the primary labour market at a level appropriate to their experience and qualifications. Finally, there is a disadvantaged reception that can be the result of the policies and programmes of official quarters, closed shop practices, as well as race, legal and other discrimination. Consequently, people can end up unemployed or in low skill work. Such a reception often characterises more closed societies in contrast with open, accepting and flexible migrant destinations (Iredale, 2001:19). While useful at some level, Portes and Borocz acknowledge that it is difficult to compress the range of experiences that migrants have into three categories. In respect of those interviewed it is hard to justify rating any of their experiences as truly advantaged (when compared to their country of origin), even those who had been here some time and were quite settled. It is certainly easier to characterise most of those in this study as having had a disadvantaged reception, particularly in respect of their labour market experiences. That said, some – though not all, it must be added – found their reception at the everyday level quite positive. Interestingly, prior to arrival many of those interviewed formed the impression that because the government was very welcoming and encouraging then so too would be the society. However, their experiences after arriving were often quite the opposite.

New Zealand Research

This discussion of reception leads neatly into consideration of how professional migrants have settled in New Zealand. Recent shifts in New Zealand's immigration policies reflect the growing international mobility among professionals just discussed. They are part of our efforts to attract "highly skilled or wealthy migrants to meet the needs of a

restructured post-industrial economy" (Ongley, 1996:13). Recent analysis of data from the last two census reflect the impact of these efforts and show that, on average, migrants were better qualified than New Zealand born and that the qualifications of recent migrants were higher than longer term migrants (Boyd, 2003; New Zealand Immigration Service, 2003). In this section I briefly review the literature from more qualitatively orientated inquiries into the experiences of these highly skilled migrants as they enter, or try to enter, the New Zealand labour market.

Oliver (2000) researched the employment experiences of professional migrants. She found that the migrants she interviewed were intelligent, active and determined job searchers who used a range of strategies to secure employment. Not surprisingly, migrants found their search for work taxing and demeaning in that their substantial experience and qualifications often counted for nothing in this country. Also "there was a strong sense of dissonance at having so much to offer and being so evidently unwanted" (Oliver, 2000:25).

In terms of the barriers people experienced in their job searches, Oliver (2000) identifies four general categories – personal, cultural, economic together with systems and society. The first category covered a lack of 'smart' job search skills and people being unfamiliar with New Zealand culture both generally as well as in relation to the labour market and workplace. This meant that migrants lacked the same networks as residents, and were unfamiliar with local practices and knowledge regarding their professions. Other issues in this category were a lack of New Zealand experience that was interpreted to mean that employers wanted people who could do the job with minimal training and supervision. Migrants were viewed as also lacking local knowledge. Although some migrants accepted this position, there was a degree of ambivalence as it was sometimes viewed as protectionist. Oliver suggests that other research points to New Zealand experience being a convenient way to mask other types of discrimination. Despite some obvious discrimination many of those in Oliver's study often preferred to blame themselves and preferred not to characterise the reasons behind their negative experiences as discriminatory. However, there was a recognition that not just New Zealand employers, but New Zealand society more generally had a "fear of the unknown". Not unexpectedly then, Oliver also identifies various cultural and religious factors as impeding employment. In summary she suggests that, "the greatest barrier to professional migrant employment was employers attitudes, especially stereotyping of these cultures and a negative attitude towards employing people other than native English speakers" (Oliver, 2000:30).

While a common reason for failing to get a job was given as 'poor English', many of those interviewed actually possessed good English ability. The issue was in fact their accents, which could be very strong at times. Accents became a means to exercise discrimination and stereotyping under an apparently reasonable label. On this issue, but from an employers' perspective, the Equal Employment Opportunities Trust (2000) found that 65 percent of the human resource practitioners and recruitment consultants they surveyed discriminated against job candidates based on them having a non-New Zealand accent. Other groups, relevant to this study, were also subjected to discrimination: those from a different culture (53 percent); Asia (39 percent) and Pacific people (20 percent). The types of discrimination these groups (and others) experienced included a belief that applicants wouldn't 'fit in'; stereotyped views; a preference for particular kinds of people; a failure to recognise overseas qualifications and foreign names; and a refusal to interview or short-list based on particular criteria. Age was also an important factor as people sought younger employees. While not necessarily associated with migration status, given that many professional migrants are older when they make the transition they can face this additional hurdle.

Returning to Oliver's (2000) study she also identifies the economic climate is a factor – difficult economic times reduce opportunities but even in more prosperous periods the

level of competition among businesses favours employees who can “hit the ground running” and not need training and support. A range of what Oliver describes as systemic and societal factors are also canvassed. These include the quality of immigration policies and practices and the variable quality of immigration consultants. If poor, both can adversely affect migrants’ experiences and opportunities. Also important are the attitudes and policies of employers and professional bodies that can be protectionist and practice gatekeeping to varying degrees. The tendency for jobs not to be advertised in the country was another significant factor. Finally, Oliver (2000) outlines the impacts of long-term difficulties getting work. At best this was highly stressful and at worst it had a devastating effect on individuals and families. Migrants might return to their countries of origin or attempt to find work, with or without their families, in other countries. Various negative psychological impacts are cited. Oliver also notes that migrants felt that programmes of support and assistance for migrants would be beneficial.

Basnayake (1999) surveyed Sri Lankan migrants regarding their experiences in getting work in New Zealand. A large proportion of this group (75.4%) had a professional background, with a further nine percent having had technical roles. From a list of issues, respondents were asked to select the three main barriers to finding employment. The most frequently selected barrier was a lack of New Zealand experience (70% of respondents chose this) while a lack of understanding by employers of people from other countries was the second most frequent choice (56%). Other issues selected by at 30 percent of respondents were: a lack of New Zealand qualifications (47%); non-recognition of overseas qualifications (41%); limited English (33%); and bias/racism (32%). Migrants in this study were fairly evenly divided as to whether New Zealand was a place where diversity was valued. Just under half of the respondents reported being discriminated against during their job search. While a number of people did not elaborate, several people identified ethnicity, skin colour, accent and foreign name as reasons for this discrimination. Employers (65.5%) and recruitment consultants (56.4%) were prominent sources of discrimination. Nearly 30 percent of migrants experienced discrimination from the general public, while for 20 percent, employees and Work and Income were other significant sources. A third of respondents in this research experienced problems getting their overseas qualifications recognised. A similar proportion of migrants in work were doing so outside their profession. Of the professional migrants in work only just over a third were in similar or higher level positions.

The Ethnic Affairs Service (1996) of the Department of internal Affairs explored qualification, training and employment issues in relation to recent migrants to New Zealand in their *High Hopes* report. This involved both a postal questionnaire and in-depth interviews. In general, migrants were concerned at the inadequate and inaccurate information they received from various sources (ranging from informal through to official). This meant that migrants faced additional and unexpected difficulties in settling. Discrimination was cited as a problem in relation to settlement. Competency in English was also seen as vital. That said it was felt that even fluent English speakers could be viewed as having poor English competency if they spoke with an accent and came from a non-English speaking country (Barnard, 1996).³ A large proportion of those surveyed also experienced difficulties finding employment. The major issues in this regard were:

- Difficulties getting existing qualifications recognised;
- Employer prejudice (here, once more the association between accent and discrimination is raised);
- Lack of New Zealand work experience;
- Being too qualified for the available jobs;
- Poor English language skills; and
- Financial difficulties.

³ Barnard’s thesis is associated with the Ethnic Affairs Service research and so is incorporated here.

The report acknowledges that few migrants immediately got jobs that equated with their qualifications but that over time they moved to more appropriate positions. Those more likely to be working in equivalent work were people who had spent longer in New Zealand and those fluent in English. Issues related to recognition of overseas professional qualifications included the wide variation of requirements, processes and attitudes between professions and their administrative bodies. Further issues mentioned were communication, and the time, costs and demands (e.g. sitting examinations) around getting prior and overseas credentials recognised. Barnard (1996) also notes that some migrants felt that there should be greater clarity about the role of the New Zealand Qualifications Authority and that it should have a more integrated and co-ordinated role with the New Zealand Immigration Service and professional bodies and associations. Participants also felt that better post-arrival support and assistance was needed for migrants.

Though less descriptive in nature, the findings of Benson-Rea et al (1998) echo much of what has already been said. They found that the professional migrants from the former Soviet Union whom they canvassed in their research experienced similar obstacles to adapting into the New Zealand labour market. These included an inadequate level of English language; a lack of New Zealand work experience; no social networks; problems with getting their qualifications recognised; and inadequate professional levels. Age, a lack of suitable opportunities, being over-qualified and lack of perseverance were other cited obstacles. For a group of migrants from Asia, interviewed as part of the larger study, the perceived barriers or factors affecting employment were a lack of communication skill; fluency in English; lack of inter-personal skills; lack of New Zealand work experience; cultural differences; and a range of other actors/obstacles. Overall, a lack of accurate and appropriate pre-arrival information, particularly in respect of the labour market, hampered the employment prospects of both these groups by creating a mismatch between the expectations of highly skilled migrants and the reality of their labour market experiences (Benson-Rea and Rawlinson, 2003). Similarly, greater post-arrival support is advocated.

Benson-Rea and Rawlinson (2003) expand on the information issue arguing that it is information at the meso-level that is critical during the actual settlement process, since it would help set realistic expectations among migrants and initiate the skills matching process (between employer demand and employee supply) before departure. Therefore, it would ultimately ease settlement and labour market entry. The meso level is

the intermediate context for economic and political actors, as well as individuals, and covers companies and specific local conditions. In terms of sources of information it includes such groups as immigration agents and consultants, business firms, recruitment agencies, skills organisations, trade bodies and business associations (Benson-Rea and Rawlinson, 2003:72).

Despite the importance of this sort of information, there is limited access to it prior to immigration and the authors argue for more to be done in this regard.

In research exploring the experiences of migrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea, Ho and Lidgard (1996) found that over half of those surveyed or interviewed had found no paid employment in New Zealand. Less than half of the group who had found work were in jobs in some way related to their background skills and experience. Although these migrants believed that the New Zealand government was actively encouraging people to migrate, they found little planning, preparation information and support available to meet the needs of new arrivals thereby reiterating the sense of dissatisfaction about information and support identified elsewhere.

As part of their call for balanced research that focuses on both employer/business perspectives as well as migrant experiences, Benson-Rea and Rawlinson (2003) summarise the position well. They argue that,

the attraction and integration of new migrants to the benefit of the individual, the firm and the wider labour market will be a function of a number of factors. These include the skills possessed by migrants on arrival (or those subsequently gained), the capacity of labour market institutions to place migrants in appropriate jobs, and, finally, the attitudes of the business community to this supply of skilled labour (Benson-Rea and Rawlinson, 2003:62).

We now turn to presenting some findings around just these issues, albeit from one perspective, that of the migrant.

PROFESSIONALS, MIGRATION AND WORK: THE STUDY FINDINGS

Work and Working

In this section the findings from this study in relation to the work related experiences of professional migrants are canvassed. These findings bear close similarity to those presented in the preceding section. As such, they reinforce the importance and universality of these experiences. It is hoped that the form they take here can augment our understanding of the issues confronting professional migrants.

Professions

My initial analysis on the issues of professional recognition and acceptance seemed to suggest that this was a 'missing theme'. That is, despite the prominence that such issues get in other research, it was not as prominent in the interview material from this study. However, more careful reflection showed that what was missing was a great deal of discussion on the vexed issue of recognition from professional bodies. Instead, what could be drawn from the interviews regarding this issue was more related to people's efforts to get work in their profession. Before turning to this discussion I want to firstly background the cases, then note some exceptional cases and finally outline the limited references to professional bodies.

Whereas most of the interviewees belonged to specific professional occupations (accounting, engineering, medicine, and teaching) three had more general backgrounds. These were in the areas of hotel management, human resource management (though this person, Ram, had qualifications in law and accounting, it was in this area that he had mainly worked) and public relations. Though a teacher by preference and recent employment, Jane's husband also had qualifications and experience in business.

Only one person, Steven, made no concerted attempt to enter his profession of accounting after migration. Though he had intended to do so upon arriving he found that the study necessary to get equivalence in his qualifications would likely be very problematic due to his English language competency. Although he could have practised at a lower level, primarily within the local Korean community, he decided this was not something he was attracted to and consequently he and his wife bought a business. Charles, too, made no effort to enter the hotel industry. However, as an older migrant, his circumstances are different and he was already aware that he might struggle to get any sort of work. Melody's circumstances also merit some mention in this context since she came to New Zealand with existing qualifications and experience but for the specific purpose of retraining. Her decision to stay after finishing university was premised on needing work experience to complete her accounting qualifications. Despite her New Zealand based education she still struggled to get employment, initially, but did manage this within her field and has since moved into self-employment.

Issues to do with professional bodies were significant in only two cases. In the first instance, the only doctor interviewed had been aware at the outset of the requirements and huge obstacles to his gaining medical registration in New Zealand. Consequently, he had hoped to use his more transferable skills in medical administration to get work. However, after arriving a friend was encouraged by the success of other migrant doctors to get GP work in rural communities. Though they managed to arrange such a placement and supervision, it transpired that the temporary registration necessary for this was not open to people with his immigration status and so he was forced back into caregiving work. These events, together with no apparent alternatives to this type of work and a failure even to get a voluntary observer's position in his field, were all parts of a generally negative migration experience in New Zealand. Consequently the doctor's interview (with his wife) often contained references to the poor treatment in this country of overseas professionals, especially in medicine. The only other person to specifically mention their professional body was Paula. She, too, had entered the country aware of the requirements for registration. While registration is not necessary to work as an architect, even for New Zealand graduates, to become registered requires two years of work under the supervision of a registered architect. It was getting employment in order to accumulate this amount of supervised practice that was the biggest problem for Paula and she felt the professional body was not involved enough in assisting with this process.

Apart from Melody and Charles all the other participants, including Steven, wanted to some degree to enter their profession upon arriving in New Zealand. That said, as already noted the specifics of the doctor's case are somewhat different and Steven abandoned this before actively trying to do so. The remaining people, however, made considerable efforts. These efforts usually began with attempts to enter at or near the level that they had been in before migrating. When this was not possible – and no-one achieved it – they then began one of two strategies. These involved either looking for employment at lower levels or in associated work (for instance, from being an accountant to working in accounts related roles), or looking outside their profession. The latter strategy also involved looking for work at lower levels. The hope was that any lower level work outside the profession would provide the much vaunted New Zealand experience that all employers demanded, and that this sort of employment or work at lower levels within their wider professional boundaries would ultimately lead to jobs that were more commensurate with their experience and qualifications.

Rather than trying to group the remaining cases I will instead briefly outline the experiences of people individually.

- After arriving in the country Yong spent some time getting a New Zealand based qualification to complement his prior experience and overseas qualifications. However, this did not lead to any work despite numerous applications. He thus began to consider other options including self-employment and ultimately decided to buy and drive his own taxi.
- Dinesh could not get work as an accountant or in an accounting role despite a huge number of applications that never lead to even one interview! He was thus forced into completely different work at a much lower level serving in a gas station, having spent a year after first arriving doing door-to-door collecting for a charity.
- Jerry quickly came to realise that he could not enter public relations work at the same level he had been in but was happy to take a customer services position with an airline. He saw this as related work albeit in a different industry and at a much lower level but that it offered the opportunity to eventually move higher in the organisation.
- The doctor's efforts to work in his profession have already been canvassed. His attempts to get work in some form of medical administration were also

- unsuccessful and he was forced to take a job in a loosely related field but at a significantly lower position as a casually employed caregiver.
- Both Jane and her husband easily obtained provisional registration as teachers but struggled to get work in this field. Though Jane did get a one year contract – that allowed her registration to become unconditional – her husband could not get teaching work and called on his other background in business to get contract accounting work and then an entry level position in a bank. Unable to get any other teaching work, Jane took work in a supermarket while searching and eventually got some promotions into a training role with a large retail chain.
 - Doena, too, was a teacher who was also easily able to get provisional registration, but similarly struggled to get work in the profession. After years of unsuccessful attempts she firstly started some retraining but then got employment on a factory production line. Because her registration lapsed during this time, she now faces a new set of challenges to get registered if she chooses to pursue this. Her husband, an industrial chemist, undertook a local course and through this was recommended for work in his field and with equivalence to his experience.
 - Like others, Ram quickly came to the realisation that he was not going to be able to work in his profession, as a human resource manager, in New Zealand. Though he hoped to get work in customer relations of some sort, the only work he could initially get despite substantial door knocking was making sandwiches – a radical departure in every respect from his past. He did eventually draw on his background somewhat to get work managing a project in migration and was taking some significant steps towards being able to practice law in this country.
 - Over and above her criticisms of the professional body associated with architecture, Paula had difficulty getting work as an architect. She got one position as a draughting assistant but believed she was being exploited and under-utilised. There was also some voluntary work with an architectural firm. Aside from this she was forced into a range of low skilled casual work, such as cleaning, waitressing and so on.
 - Sarala's husband, while he had worked as a university lecturer in India, sought to use his business background to get work in accounting in New Zealand. However, a complete lack of any such possibilities saw him quickly opt for work in a service station.

Apart from issues to do with professional bodies, the most commonly cited reasons for people experiencing problems getting into their professions was a lack of local experience generally and in relation to their field. The reverse of this is clearly that their overseas and prior experience and qualifications are undervalued in this country. Language, and more specifically accent, was also cited as were some other discriminatory practices. All these issues are discussed separately later in this chapter. Aside from these matters most people could not readily identify why they could not get jobs as they appeared to meet the requirements but more often than not could not even get interviews.

In summary, it can be seen that most people were quickly disabused of the notion that they could resume their work lives or careers after arriving in New Zealand. Almost everyone was forced into a somewhat different work path with considerable reduction in status and often major changes in the nature and quality of the work they were doing. While some might still be able to positively re-frame their circumstances and there still existed the possibility that the work they were in could offer positive opportunities in the future, many were in work that would give them “New Zealand experience” and a source of income but that offered little else in the long-term.

The Paradoxes of Migration

This section examines some of the paradoxes that emerge in the migration experiences of the professionals interviewed. One of the major themes in this regard essentially captures a contradiction inherent in the immigration process. It was explicitly described by a couple of interviewees – indeed the idea of paradoxes comes from one of those interviews – but the same ideas were implicit in several other cases. The paradox concerns the contradictions between the requirements for migration and the value placed on these once the migrant has arrived. The former involves the awarding of points under the general skills category points according to various areas, including education, occupation and so forth, with higher points based on the level of education and particular occupational groups. A certain points total is required to gain entry. However, once people arrive in the country they find that New Zealand seems to be a place where overseas qualifications and experience are undervalued or discounted. Thus, precisely that which enabled people to gain entry to the country is that which is problematic, or at least of very much reduced value, once they arrive.

This situation is exacerbated in that the time taken to gain professional qualifications and consolidate that with experience means that, as was the case for many of those interviewed, many migrants are not young graduates looking to launch their careers. Rather, they are older and more established within their field (and in their personal and family lives as well). Thus age can become an intertwined issue. On the one hand, it may be that employers could be reluctant to take on an older employee, whose experience and qualifications are an unknown quantity (and quality). Alternatively, it can also become an issue in that migrants may be reluctant to "start at the bottom again" at their age in order to get the experience and recognition to overcome the devaluing of their original experience and qualifications.

Adding to the irony is that although there may be this devaluing or discounting in relation to their entering their profession, when migrants try to enter lower skill or level jobs, their past experience and qualifications may count against them in different ways. As some of those interviewed were told, they were over-qualified for jobs such as serving in supermarkets or service stations. This produced a tendency to be selective about one's background in order to get work. However, being excluded because of one's qualifications did not necessarily always apply, especially if the jobs were difficult to fill or less desirable positions.

A further dimension implicit in this paradox is that qualifications and experience, the latter particularly, allow a person to build up networks within a particular work-sphere. It is well understood how critical networks are in relation to employment – for example, through contacts alerting a person to job opportunities or being a means by which employers can judge prospective employees. Migration necessarily involves a person moving from a place where they will often have a high network density, to one where they will often have no networks at all, or at best very limited networks. Thus, at a time when they could use the richest networks, they have a marked poverty in this regard.

As with a theme that is explored shortly, New Zealand experience, people found it hard to understand why there was this automatic devaluing of their prior qualifications and experience. It showed a complete lack of respect to some of those interviewed. Nor could they understand the mismatch between a welcoming policy orientation that seemed to actively seek out and tried to attract well qualified migrants and their very different lived realities. It seemed to some that this might be a protection for local workers and that there needed to be more balance in weighing up the value of prior or overseas versus local qualifications and experience. They suggested that if this attitude within the local labour

market was to persist, then perhaps the policy needed to better reflect it. Shortly the interviewees' views on recent changes to immigration policy are canvassed.

The responses of interviewees to this rejection or undervaluing of their professional backgrounds mirrored their reactions to demands for New Zealand experience (as outlined shortly these include trying to get lower level or ancillary jobs, moving into low skill, low pay and/or non-standard work, downplaying qualifications and experience and so on). As well, it was apparent to a couple of migrants that qualifications gained in New Zealand might overcome this problem. Thus, one woman thought that advanced qualifications obtained in this country might put her on a more equal footing. Yong's experiences show that other factors can still work against the overseas professional who takes the time to gain local qualifications. Ram's interpretation of his experiences suggests that this local preference might be somewhat extreme. He believed that introductory social work and computing courses completed locally were far more valuable for getting work than his overseas degrees and experience in law, management and accounting.

Melody presented an interesting and alternative perspective on this issue by arguing that sometimes what is perceived locally as a disadvantage needs to be used to advantage. While this might not always be possible or easy, in her case she sought out work in business organisations dealing with people from her region of origin. However, she too was selective about how she presented her prior work history since, having decided to retrain, she was now an older graduate seeking entry level positions.

Another issue in relation to the migration of professionals to New Zealand and their experiences of the labour market raises a further paradox of sorts. This paradox emerges in large part from the cumulative effect of the negative issues canvassed throughout this chapter – the demand for New Zealand experiences, the other paradox of migration, and the role of NSW in relation to migration. It is explicit in Doena's story and experiences, and while less obvious in others, it is undoubtedly a feature of many others. The central feature of this paradox is the usual understanding that people have regarding the relationship between education/training and employment – that is, low skilled work is generally associated with poorly qualified people while higher education is thought to generate greater opportunities and that these are in higher paid and skilled work. However, the plight of many professional migrants may mean that low skill areas within workplaces may actually be populated by very well qualified people. Such outcomes for this group sever these commonly accepted associations or correlations.

Finally, such circumstances also have interesting implications for a view of migration that places it as part of a national response to demand for better qualified workers as part of a knowledge society. Yet experiences like those of Doena mean that for many of those selected on this basis or thought of in these terms, it may take considerable time for them to actually contribute in this way or on this level, if they are able to at all.

New Zealand Experience

The most representative theme, in terms of frequency of mention and strength of comment, was the issue of New Zealand experience. This reflects its presence in other research on labour market experiences of migrants as outlined earlier. Such was the prominence of this issue that, through a play on words, it has been integrated into the title of the report. It relates to the clear and repeated preference of New Zealand employers for local work experience. For most of those interviewed it came as a shock to find how strong this requirement was.

There are variations on how this is defined but it is a demand for either general or specific New Zealand experience. The former is a requirement to have worked in some capacity within the local labour market as compared to the latter where the demand is for local

experience within a specific profession or industry. Such can be the obstacle that this represents to migrants, even in its former, more generic form, that they can be effectively excluded from the labour market. The latter form represents a significant barrier to gaining employment in people's chosen profession. It seems that the degree of preference for New Zealand experience while high in all the professions that the interviewees were associated with, was especially marked in certain cases, such as teaching.

There is a certain irony in relation to the demand for New Zealand experience that escapes no migrant. How, they ask, are we to get this New Zealand experience if we are excluded from the labour market because we do not have it in the first place? It thus becomes a Catch-22. Usually the answer is to try and enter the workforce at points of less resistance. This might mean looking for work at a much lower level of the profession or in an ancillary professional role. Alternatively it might mean looking for work in other areas and where there are few people willing to work or the largest numbers of openings. Unfortunately, this often translates into low skilled, low paid forms of work, jobs that are hard to otherwise fill, and/or in non-standard arrangements. Some saw voluntary work as one way to accumulate New Zealand work experience of a sort. Working for migrant related organisations was another strategy.

To be continually refused work because of this issue generated a great deal of anger and frustration. It also made some people very desperate and despairing. One woman sarcastically suggested that she had seen an advertisement for a massage parlour worker and thought that that might be the depth she would have to sink to, to get work. However, she immediately wondered if she would need New Zealand experience for that too! In another case a woman was attracted to a casual waitressing job specifically because the advertisement indicated that no experience was necessary. After numerous rejections within and outside her profession she felt it was something she was finally 'qualified' for and that would not be another knock back.

Some of those interviewed accepted that a degree of preference for New Zealand experience was reasonable, but that it often went beyond this. They felt that some balance was needed so that New Zealand experience as well as other experience was considered. Often it seemed to be an excuse for not employing a migrant who in all other respects fulfilled the stated requirements of a position. Indeed, many of the interviewees had had countless rejections for jobs that cited a lack of New Zealand experience as the primary reason for declining their application. For most it served to even exclude people from an interview. There was a suggestion from some that this served as a protection for local workers

The other issue that this heavy preference for New Zealand experience raises is that it significantly discounts a migrant's prior work experience, regardless of how extensive and substantial this might be, since it is New Zealand based experience that is the gold standard. We have here, the paradox of migration as already discussed. In relation to the issues of New Zealand experience and the paradox of migration it would be fair, I believe, to characterise the strength and importance of their place in people's immigration experiences as very high. They could also be rightly seen as quite unexpected by most people, certainly in intensity.

The Struggle that is Settlement

Without doubt, migration is a huge and complex undertaking that produces many challenges and makes many demands. This is true of even the best-case scenario. Accordingly, it is not surprising that a strong sense of struggle, in various areas and to varying degrees, pervaded the interviews in this study. This might be in practical senses

through to more emotionally orientated coping. Often these are intertwined. This sense of struggle can be thought of as mediated by a number of elements that are now outlined. These are the 'bravery' or courage that characterises migrants; the motivations that prompt migration; the amount of knowledge people had prior to migration including the sources of that and how useful it proved; the desire to be given a chance; and experiences of discrimination especially in relation to accent and how people reframe this as not racist in nature.

Courage

This sense of struggle was presented explicitly in such terms in many of the interviews. At other times, it was approached a little more obliquely as the interviewees recounted their experiences and spoke of the need for perseverance, strength, and resilience. They needed to develop a thick skin and become "hard-nosed". There was also a requirement for lots of hard work. It was important, as well, to keep focus, not losing confidence, and have supports. The last can be hard if people are isolated in the receiving country. They had to cope with and overcome hardship, focus on positives not negatives and, indeed, sometimes try and turn negatives into positives. Overall, they had to develop and employ a range of different strategies and keep re-evaluating them. As one interviewee put it, summing up these various sentiments: "Migrants are brave people", a view agreed to by all those who were interviewed.

The issue of work illustrates this given that it is a very complex practical matter, with many dimensions, that featured as a common area of struggle for the interviewees. They might have struggled to get work in their profession or any work at all. Many had applied for, literally, hundreds of positions, seldom if ever even getting an interview. Often people had to gradually lower their sights and widen the parameters of their search. Any work they might eventually get often represented a radical negative change from what they were used to. It might also fail to offer any prospects for improvement in the future. Work difficulties could have implications for people's financial position and might also impact on their self-esteem that can flow on and affect the well being of whole families. Such was the cumulative effect of poor work outcomes that in one case the family was considering returning home after only a few months in the country. In other cases the senses of frustration, anger, and sadness that people's struggles had generated was palpable in the interviews. Two particular factors that exacerbated the struggle in relation to work are the requirement for New Zealand experience and the paradoxes of migration (as discussed earlier).

Motivations

Given this sense of struggle it is interesting to briefly contemplate the reasons or motives for migration. For, despite the difficulties that people encountered, these motives remained powerful enough to see people persevere, persist, as well as transform and endure in all sorts of ways. It is a useful task in respect of the group who took part in this study since their motives counters a view of migrant professionals as always being motivated by professional or employment considerations. In only two cases was this partially true – for one woman, the decision to stay in the country after studying was premised on business opportunities; another couple were looking for change in their lives, which included their employment. For the others, as will be seen, non-work motives were primary.

This was especially true of families with children, since children were the most often cited reason for migration. This was usually in order to provide them with better educational and, ultimately, work opportunities. Allied to this was a desire for a better quality of life more generally. The idea that families migrate to New Zealand "for the children" suggests that to outsiders New Zealand is seen as a positive place to bring up children. That parents would go to these lengths for the good of their children indicates a very powerful

sentiment, one that should be easily recognised and appreciated in the host country and by its people.

It is interesting to add three further observations to the theme of children as a motive for migration. Firstly, as one interviewee put it, "doing it for his children" was the story he usually told people when they asked why he had migrated. This might be for many reasons. For instance, as noted above, it is likely to serve as a very commonly understood and legitimising motive. Alternately, it can be an account that is used as an alternative to much more complex and personal motivations, ones that are often far less easily communicated. This was very much the case for Steven. Secondly, even if children are somehow the primary reason for migration, this can often be intertwined with other equally important issues. Thus, Doena tells of migrating for her children's welfare but this opens up the whole question of political corruption within her country of origin. Thus children's welfare becomes a proxy for other factors. Finally, although not considered in this study, it would be interesting to consider the impact and implications for children in the cases where parents had had very pronounced struggles to get work and settle, yet where migration was motivated by issues related to the children.

For those without children, the search for a 'better life' would probably best capture their motivations. In such terms New Zealand is seen as a safe and secure country that is also attractive for various environmental, political and social reasons. On a more personal level, migration in general offered some people the chance to fashion a new personal and/or family biography.

Knowledge

It might be thought that proper preparation could alleviate many of the problems that people encountered and thus reduce their struggles. Not unexpectedly, then, all but one of the interviewees gathered information before coming to New Zealand. Sources included official publications, consultants, friends and family, and the internet. Much of what people obtained from the first two was, not unexpectedly, positive and painted a very different picture from the lived reality. This was especially true of the official information that some people felt painted a necessarily positive but somewhat misleading picture, especially in relation to employment.⁴ This became problematic when people based their planning on such literature.

Even if people were in some way prepared for the struggle that lay ahead, the nature and size of issues, especially around employment, were much greater than expected. This may have also been exacerbated in that most of those interviewed had a positive expectation that New Zealand was a tolerant and open society. While some found this to be the case on an individual level, it did not seem to be necessarily so in terms of employment, as already discussed. In addition, the fact that New Zealand immigration policy seemed to be encouraging and welcoming, and based on people gaining points according to certain criteria implied to the interviewees, as potential migrants, that New Zealand was keen to have skilled and qualified people. However, they found quite a mismatch between policy and everyday life.

A final point in this issue relates to the New Zealand Qualifications Authority assessment and acceptance of their qualifications. While most seemed to understand that this related only to the immigration process, there was an assumption that this would in some way reflect the status of their qualifications more generally. The fact that no such implications proved to be even remotely true was at the very least surprising to most.

⁴ It should be noted that those interviewed had been in New Zealand for between 10 years and 9 months. Thus, they had been exposed to a wide range of literature and information that would have changed over time. However, both recent and more long-standing migrants complained about the information they received.

Opportunity

Common to all the interviewees was a desire to make a contribution to the society they were now part of. This seemed to be an implicit part of the whole immigration process. To do so required that they be given some sort of opportunity. In this regard, the title of Ho and Lidgard's (1996) piece, "Give us a chance" well captures the sentiments of the migrants in this study. Tied in with this was the hope that any such opportunity would reflect who and what they were – that is their background, experience, qualifications and so on. They certainly did not want to be a burden or to be dependent, on welfare for instance, though there was a sense that they were being forced towards such circumstances by the difficulties they encountered in the labour market.

Discrimination

It is interesting to see how the question of discrimination emerges and is described in the interviews. Some anecdotal and second-hand accounts were provided of employers sorting applications by surnames and discarding those that appear foreign. As well, some of those interviewed reported their own and others' experiences of discrimination through particular agencies. As has been briefly alluded to already, some people described different responses to them as migrants. It was common, for instance, to recount positive experience from a day-to-day, face-to-face level, but to encounter problems with organisations, and with individuals as part of organisations. Since many of these are the same people, there is an obvious contradiction or certainly a tension between these two sets of experiences. That said, this did vary and one woman suggested that good everyday experiences might be the 'story' migrants develop and tell, or the version of events they emphasise, because that is what New Zealanders want to hear.

Accent

One area that people did commonly comment on was the effect their accent had on their experiences. Migrants are often classified as coming from English speaking (ESB) and non-English speaking (NESB) backgrounds. A status as non-English speaking is used to designate those countries where the first language is other than English. However, this need not indicate that English is not taught or used in these countries. As many of the interviewees from NESB indicated they were often taught English but were frequently limited in their exposure to the spoken language, but had good reading and writing skills. Others, despite also being from NESB also spoke English and my experiences via the interviews was often of sophisticated English usage, though some struggled a little more than others. Certainly all those who were interviewed demonstrated sufficient spoken English competence to participate without problems. As was evident in comments in the interviews, however, this was accented English. And here we have another critical issue regarding migrants' experiences – their perception of discrimination based on accent. Thus it is not so much their language competency as the fact that they speak with an accent – one that is very distinct at times – that can have a negative effect on their experiences.

Ironically, as migrants pointed out, they too have to deal with accents. In their case, however, it is the Kiwi accent that they must come to understand. Their children have to immediately cope with this in school. Since they manage this, it is hard for them to see their own accents as anything but a temporary difficulty as people adjust (on both sides), and one that reduces over time.

Literature in the field of migration often refers to visible migrants. The issue of accent means that even those who do not readily appear 'different' can now still be recognised as such, as one woman put it, "as soon as I open my mouth". It also meant that they could be identified in circumstances where there was no face-to-face contact (such as phone inquiries).

The issue of accent was frustrating for many of those interviewed for several reasons. For instance, migrants were often told not to simply rely on sending in a CV in order to get a job. Instead they were encouraged to make phone contact to register interest and to speak with key people. However, the experience of such approaches was that their accents served to signal their 'otherness' and so they often could not get through gatekeepers such as secretaries and the like, or they could get no further in the process.

Re-framing an Issue

A small number of those interviewed chose to reframe the discrimination they experienced. Thus it became an issue of New Zealanders not understanding different cultures, and making assumptions. An interesting argument emerged in a couple of cases that the desire for New Zealand experience and the devaluation of overseas qualification and experience can be seen as a natural and reasonable protection of the local workforce and not a discriminatory issue. Along these lines there emerged an impression, from some of those who had been in the country a long time that New Zealand was first and foremost a place for those born here. Thus, opportunities in any areas of life should be available to this group first and that migrants would be able to take up what was left. This was seen as an acceptable state of affairs, and something they would expect and accept in their own countries. It was not seen in discriminatory terms but as a form of pragmatic realism.

PROFESSIONALS, MIGRATION AND NON-STANDARD WORK

Having established some background in relation to the more general labour market and settlement experiences of migrant professionals, and presented findings from this study in relation to those issues, it is now possible to move into an informed discussion of NSW in relation to this group. This is prefaced by a brief overview of some relevant literature on NSW.

Changes to labour markets, however they are conceptualised, are associated with changes to the structure and organisation of work. Whereas after the second world war until the mid 1970's work was organised according to stable, predictable and rational bureaucratic structures, from the 1970's technological revolution and growing international competition have made longer-term planning more difficult rendering the standard bureaucratic model almost redundant. Kalleberg and Schmidt (1996: 253-254) describe this well in their observation that organisations are changing from structures built around jobs to shifting 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 new and different forms of working arrangements and the growth of other pre-existing forms. Thus, 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, 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.

A number of ways have been suggested for conceptualising and making sense of these shifts and trends with the resulting arrangements and relationships variously characterised as 'non-traditional', 'atypical', 'flexible', 'alternative', 'market-mediated', 'vagrant', 'vulnerable', 'precarious', 'disposable' or 'contingent' (Kalleberg, 2000:2). For simplicity's sake, the term 'non-standard' has been used by the LMD in its various reports

as a general descriptor of the variations on work arrangements that are being examined. As a starting point, NSW can be defined as work that is no longer characterised by certain features that have been regarded as standard. Whatman (1994:356) suggests that standard work is employment characterised by being permanent (i.e. an expectation of continuing employment) and fulltime (30 hours or more per week); comprising regular hours over the whole year; and being undertaken for someone else (an employer) and primarily at an employer's premises. Implicit in such a set of criteria is that standard work refers to one job. In respect of regular hours Tucker (2002) notes that "the criteria of 'done in daylight hours' and 'on weekdays'" could be added. The former essentially refers to shift work and the latter rostered work. Brosnan and Walsh (1996) appear to support this inclusion with their definition of standard hours as between 7 am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday. Brosnan and Walsh (*ibid*) also help clarify the criteria of work being done primarily *at* a employer's premises by suggesting that the work occur *on* the premises or *out of* them. As well, Carroll (1999) adds a category that can be thought of as 'overwork' to the mix. This is defined by an individual working more than 50 hours each week. Finally, it should be noted that NSW can be characterised by a mix of these features. That is, for instance, a part-time position may also be for a temporary period, may involve shiftwork and can be one of two other jobs a person has.

By drawing together these various definitions we have deliberately created a very broad and inclusive definition of NSW that easily draws in working arrangements that are commonly accepted as non-standard – that is, part-time, casual and temporary work, self-employment and contracting, multiple-job holding, teleworking, and contract-company employment⁵, while also allowing for greyer or more marginal attributes – such as shift and rostered work, as well as overwork – to also be considered. These more 'marginal attributes' are included here as the interviews seemed to indicate that they often represented quite foreign working arrangements for many professional migrants.

Since NSW has always existed, it is probably more accurate to note that the last 20 years has seen an increase in the proportion and consistency of NSW (Zeytinoglu and Metushi, 1999:1). Indeed, the persistence and growth in some areas have made certain forms of NSW quite common and widely accepted (part-time work is an obvious example). 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, 1996:6). 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 they total more than half of all workers. As prior LMD research has implicitly and explicitly demonstrated, the experiences of NSW differ across groups and within groups. Important considerations are the background of the individual (work, experience, qualifications and so on), their present circumstances (for example, having to care for a child), the generalities of the non-standard working arrangements the person is engaged in, and the specifics of their employment.

While migration can be usefully considered in a number of ways in relation to changes to the labour market and work, the focus of this project has firstly been on the connection between NSW and migration and, in particular, to the experiences of professional immigrants. This group can interact with NSW in various ways and for a number of reasons. These engagements can be voluntary or enforced and may be closely or marginally related to an immigrant's background or experience. They might be undertaken for a range of reasons such as offering an entry into the New Zealand workforce and a means to gain local work experience. The resulting experiences might be

⁵ This is where the employee is employed by a company but within a separate business. For example, cleaning is often undertaken by employees of a separate cleaning company who perform this work within businesses that they have contracts with. To the 'outside' eye these cleaners will appear to be part of businesses that, in actual, they have no direct employment relationship with.

positive or negative or various shades between. Obviously then, there are a wide range of possible experiences that can then affect the settlement process.

There are obviously plenty of occasions when NSW serves a positive role in the settlement and labour market experiences of professional migrants, and some of those interviewed for this study illustrate such instances. Such accounts are not likely to be as frequently reported or generate as much interest as the more often cited experiences of migrant professionals forced into non-standard work, well outside their background and experience and often of low skill and with low pay. These are the prompts for reports of doctors, engineers, scientists and so on, flipping burgers, delivering pizzas and driving taxis.

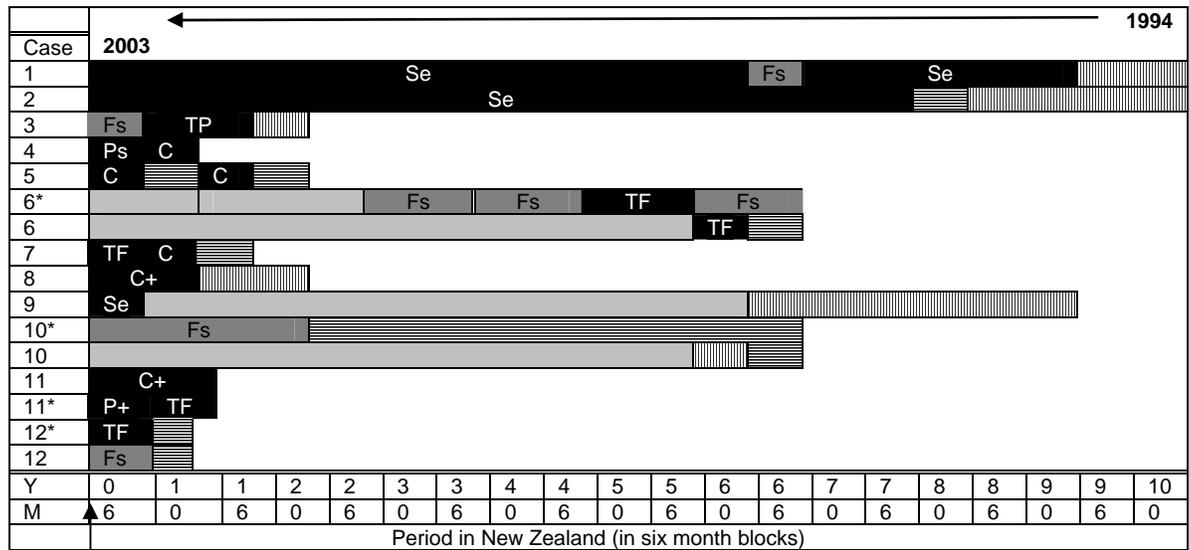
Some of these permutations are evident in a study of the experiences of Indian and Chinese migrants across the period 1998 to 2002 (Trlin et al., 2004). In response to difficulties getting any work or employment that reflected their background those interviewed in this study sometimes took any jobs that were available. These typically involved part-time work that may have had some relationship to the person's pre-migration employment but which was more usually unskilled or semi-skilled. While this could be the basis for better employment opportunities – moving into full-time employment and work of a better quality or fit with people's background – it could also be a long-term trap, with a negative impact on skills, health and well-being. Being longitudinal, this study allows some picture to emerge of the shifts in proportions moving between standard and NSW over time. An alternative strategy involving NSW that was used by people in this study, particularly those from a non-English speaking background, was to engage in self-employment, though for some this was done reluctantly. Ho and Lidgard (1996) also note the tendency towards self-employment amongst their sample of Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korean new settlers.

For those who participated in this study working in non-standard ways often represented a major shift in terms of both the work content and how it was organised. As the work histories of each person have been outlined in the case presentations, I have attempted in Figure 1 to represent these in graphic form. This is intended to illustrate the prominent place of NSW in the employment histories of the interviewees since arriving in New Zealand. In Figure 1 the left hand column of the table (after the case number) represents the most recent six month period. In all but two cases, the first jobs people got in New Zealand were NSW in some form. The exceptions were Melody, who re-trained here, and Doena's husband who, after not being able to get a job in his field undertook a course and got recommended for a full-time permanent position through a lecturer. Melody later chose to move into self-employment from a standard job. Aside from these two exceptions, of the others who had been in the country longer than two years, NSW in the form of self-employment had become permanent for two, and had lead to standard work for another couple. The remaining person was entrenched in a permanent full-time shift-work position.

What is not apparent from Figure 1 is how this engagement with NSW relates to people's professional background (and here I exclude cases 11* and 12* from consideration since they do not precisely fit the criteria for professionals that we have been using). Of the 14 cases to consider in only four instances was some aspect of the NSW that people engaged in related to their profession. Apart from Melody's deliberate choice to start her own accounting firm, which has a strong, direct and ongoing connection with her profession, in the other cases any relationship could best be described as limited or tenuous. For example, Jane got a one year teaching contract but none of her other NSW engagements were related to teaching; her husband got some contract work in accounting, a field he had some background in but which was not his first choice of work, which was teaching; and Paula got some casual work doing draughting in an architectural practise but also had to do many other forms of NSW to make a living. For the remainder,

the NSW they engaged in had little to do with their profession though Ram drew on aspects of his background in the project work he eventually got, as did Jerry in his customer relations role. However, it is hard to make any such tenuous links for those professional migrants who spent time making sandwiches; cleaning; caregiving; assembling electronic components; driving taxis; pumping gas; and working in a supermarket, restaurant or café. Such experiences, especially if they become long-term, can have very negative consequences for the people involved and are what contribute to concern on various fronts (media, politicians and so on) about how professional migrants are treated in this country.

Figure 1 Work-Type Profiles of Professional Migrants Since Arriving in New Zealand



Interview point

KEY

	Period of Non-Standard Work of some sort
	Period of Non-Standard work characterised by Shift and/or Rostered Work
	Period of Standard Work
	Period of Job Seeking While Not in Paid Work of Any Kind
	Period Out of Paid Work But Not Seeking – Usually for Study (except #8)
*	Where a couple's data is available indicates the wife's work history
TF	Temporary or contract work that is full-time
TP	Temporary or contract work that is part-time
Se	Self-employment
Fs	Full-time, permanent employment with shift or rostered work component
C	Casual work
P	Part-time work
Ps	Part-time permanent employment with shift or rostered work component
+	More than one job of this nature in the period

NOTES

This figure is illustrative only. Periods in particular jobs or other activities are assigned to six-month periods by approximation.

BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES ON WORK AND WORKING IN NEW ZEALAND – THREE ACCOUNTS

INTRODUCTION⁶

The thematic analysis outlined in the previous chapter provides one way in which findings from this study can be generated and presented. However, the particular method employed in the research also allows other possibilities. In the original research report an attempt was made to theoretically and conceptually flesh out a biographical approach that offered just such an alternative. Although not included in this summary report, a similar sense can be gained by drawing on the biographical narratives of participants. When aggregated these narratives provide the basis of the thematic analysis. But each also gives insights into how those themes were encountered, lived through and experienced, coped with, responded to, and talked about. This provides not only a more intimate, detailed and complex picture, but personalises the reporting, returns it to its sources and re-animates it. In this process the harsh reality of many migrants' experiences are laid bare, something that can be lost or made indistinct in the distance created by a thematic approach.

While a thematic analysis clearly has benefits in generating wider understandings than are possible at the individual level, returning to that level helps develop a further analysis. While people may share common experiences – examples in this case could be the demand for New Zealand experience and paradoxes of migration – the details of these differ and they respond to these in different ways. Appreciating and highlighting these differences stops the thematic analysis being viewed as a static context of experience, which people are rather passively party to. Instead, it is part of a dynamic interplay of structural and individual factors that is being shaped as much as it shapes.

In this chapter, accounts of the lived and told stories of three participants are presented at length. These accounts demonstrate that while each person lived within a shared wider context – being professional migrants, coming to New Zealand, and encountering the issues and themes outlined earlier – they each have a very individual story to tell that reflects their unique set of experiences.

JANE

The Lived Life

Jane and her family come from South Africa and had been in New Zealand just over six years when interviewed. She is in her mid forties and is married with two teenage children. Both Jane and her husband worked for many years as secondary school

⁶ With only two exceptions – Melody and Sarala, who wanted their real names to be used – the names used in the report reflect those preferred by participants or selected by the researcher to protect their identities.

teachers in South Africa. Jane taught geography and German while her husband has a background in commerce and accounting. They have two children who were born in the mid 1980's. After deciding to immigrate and going through the process for New Zealand, Jane's husband arrived in Hamilton early in 1997, ahead of the family. He immediately began applying for teaching jobs. When none eventuated he considered work in a service station as an interim measure but was declined as too qualified. He then began looking outside teaching by drawing on his commerce background and applied for and got two jobs simultaneously - one a full-time permanent position with a bank and the other a contract accounting position that paid slightly more and was located in Auckland. He took the latter. However, after one month a dispute over pay saw him quit and re-approach the bank for work. Although the original job was filled, they offered him a position in a Northland town which he accepted.

A few months after his arrival, Jane and the children joined her husband in Northland. Jane immediately began looking for work herself and got some relief teaching. However she settled on a full time position at a local supermarket, firstly as a packer and then as a check-out operator, for the remainder of that year. The following year, 1998, she got a one year teaching contract at a local school and was able to get her full teacher registration in New Zealand as a result. At the beginning of 1999 the family moved to Auckland after Jane's husband got a transfer with the bank. Jane continued to apply for teaching positions without success. She also attended a 10 week part-time re-training course to improve her chances. Jane then got another supermarket checkout operator job in March that year. After a few months she moved into a similar position with a large chain store. In this company she took every opportunity for training and the following year moved into a role in the advertising department and then as a buyer's assistant. Both were located on the North Shore, a considerable distance from her home in southeast Auckland. The year before our interview she had moved within the company again, this time into a staff training role, at the same location.

The Told Story

For Jane the interview is an opportunity to tell it like it is, or like it was for them. That said, it is not a bitter or vindictive narrative. Rather she wants to present a "real" account not what people might want to hear. Jane's initial narrative is not extraordinarily long but she canvasses a great deal of information, and doesn't just provide a chronology. As part of that she spends a little time on the background to their migration but mostly covers her and her husband's work experiences. Within this initial account the primary concern was to be able to teach wherever they migrated to. Not only was this the profession they wished to continue with, it was the way they supported their family. This meant an English speaking country and they were lead to believe, by a private immigration consultant, that not only was the New Zealand culture similar to their own but that there were plenty of jobs for teachers. They were quite easily able to get sufficient points by being teachers to migrate to New Zealand, something that only reinforced an impression that jobs were readily available. Unfortunately the information regarding teaching posts was historical rather than current. Jane presents the outcome of this on her husband's situation as 'disappointing' and, at this point, just says that he subsequently got a job at the bank. It seems that despite her husband's difficulties, which at this point aren't entirely recounted, the couple decided that Jane and the children would still come as she would be under less pressure to get work. However, in acknowledging that she too faced the same difficulties as her husband we are given more insight into their shared experiences:

Secondary school teaching jobs were not that available and secondly as a foreign teacher you were not that welcome because schools feel that you don't understand the culture, you don't have the background, you don't understand how schools work here, you don't understand the children.

Though she did get a contract job after a while at a local school, and this allowed her full registration in New Zealand, it did not help her get a teaching job once the family moved to Auckland. Hence her involvement in a short retraining course. But despite numerous applications she still had no success. One principal told her that there was such competition for jobs, and applications from so many foreign trained teachers that they often did not even get considered. Even if she was considered she was frequently told she lacked New Zealand background and such.

Thus she found herself in a position where "I just got to the point where I got sick of it. I got sick to be told that you don't have any experience. I got sick to not even have my application looked at. I just got sick of the whole thing" so she got a job in a supermarket. Her story moves us quickly to a shift to a job in a large retail chain which she positively describes as providing opportunity and being open to everyone. She recounts her moves within that organisation and the training opportunities she has taken up. She ends her initial narrative with the observation that: "At least now I am teaching people again, even though it's different. Even though I am not earning what I could earn as a teacher, I have some peace in myself which is worth a lot more". Indeed, there is a constant tension in her account that is, perhaps, emblematic of her experiences, and comes from her having the tenacity and will to overcome adversity but at the expense of her teaching hopes and ambitions. She adds after a pause that it is hard to move away from your area of expertise as you are considered too qualified by some employers – and here we learn about that her husband was rejected for service station work just because of this – or a risk by others since you will likely leave once you get what you are really looking for. This leaves the person in a no man's land – without money or a job.

In what follows, we get a much more detailed account of various experiences only briefly touched on so far since Jane's initial narrative is a tightly packaged account of the family's experiences in New Zealand. While there are hints of the struggle and emotion that are an integral part of it, most of that emerges in the subsequent parts of the interview.

The reasons for migrating were, firstly, personal and, secondly, related to various aspects of South African society. Jane cites, for example, concerns over their personal security and safety, especially for the children, the education system and the long-term employment prospects. So, although they had good jobs with good incomes, the future did not look so good for their children. We then get some more detail on the actual process of migrating, particularly the husband's experiences. He went to Hamilton initially, where they had friends and stayed with them as he searched for work. His first job was in Auckland so he moved there. There is some discussion of the very dubious practices of the company he initially worked for in relation to new migrant professionals and after not being paid he approached the bank that had also offered him a job to see if they had anything. They could only offer him a lower level position but he took it given that the family were due to join him shortly - "with two degrees and a diploma he started on the sort of wages that the tellers were starting on. But he took it because we had to start somewhere".

This takes us to the family's arrival in Northland and her work and job search experiences in such a small place and then to the move to Auckland. Her supermarket work was on a rostered basis (not Monday to Friday) and she deliberately organised a weekday off to allow her to spend a whole day job searching. She makes some telling observations at this point, arguing that teaching is not a job, it's a career, but her New Zealand experiences have been so damaging - "to be told over and over and over you are not good enough" - that she decided she would not teach ever again. Her experiences caused stress in the family and her husband struggled to understand why she would work in a supermarket when she could ultimately be a teacher. Even in her efforts to use her background but not directly in teaching she came up against the demand for "New Zealand experience". Like others she asked "where are you supposed to get this Kiwi

experience if you are not allowed to start?" She also asks why prior experience need be so completely devalued in New Zealand. One of her closing remarks is that migrants need opportunities and support initially.

Thus she decided to move out of teaching and look for opportunities with a large chain store. Her husband was also moving into more senior positions with the bank. They own their own home and have gradually become "settled". Her experiences were such that had she been able to afford it she would have readily returned to South Africa in those early years. She talks about the immigration agent, a New Zealander living in South Africa, who advised them. Like many other clients they found the picture he painted of New Zealand inaccurate and misleading. While they also sought out information from other sources, "reading up and living it is two things". Jane also highlights what she sees as the official versus the public position. The former may be encouraging to migrants, but her day-to-day experiences of the latter are the opposite - "if the population doesn't want that, the immigrants here, then the government should listen to that ... Not tell them 'you're welcome'". Now that she is settled here she is less forgiving of the attitudes of New Zealanders but worries that many migrants don't want to offend because they see themselves as "guests". So, she thinks, they have a positive public story and a less flattering, and often quite sad, private story. Part of her motivation was to ensure that a less flattering story such as hers was part of this research. At this point Jane wonders about New Zealander's attitudes to outsiders, whether it is visibly different ethnic groups, those more inconspicuous groups who reveal themselves through their accents, and/or those whose culture somehow differentiates them. She is pleased with the government's changed policy towards skilled migrants and thinks they could go even further. A frustration for Jane is the tendency for some migrants to expect and get government support soon after arriving. Despite their own experiences and difficulties this was something they never contemplated.

As an aside Jane reveals some of her daughter's school experiences in New Zealand. After arriving in Auckland she was placed in the lowest class at the local school. Already an outsider she was ostracised even more when she excelled at schoolwork. She became depressed and was keen to return to South Africa when she had finished school. However, after her impressive efforts in that first year she was appropriately placed the following year which resulted in a very positive transformation. At an already stressful period, this was yet another major difficulty to cope with for the family.

Jane agrees that women do seem more willing than men to engage in lower skilled, lower paid work. But that does not mean that that is where their aspirations lie. It is simply a matter of necessity and a response to circumstances – "women are prepared to do it because they have to put food on the table". In drawing the interview to a close, Jane talks about migrants having to be creative, resourceful and resilient people. Thus, since her husband was deemed "overqualified" to pump gas, she didn't mention her own background and qualifications when applying to work as a shelf stacker or checkout operator. Later, when she sought promotion she used these to her advantage. Accordingly, she sums up the migrants' lot as having to "grow a thick skin ... focus on something there and work towards it ... find a way". That is what she has done but it doesn't stop a lingering discontent that despite what she has achieved it is still not what she expected and would really love to do – teach.

In these last remarks we get a sense that Jane, and her husband, have experienced not just a disruption to their biographies, but a rupture of sorts. Given his wider background, Jane's husband was able to repair this fairly quickly but at some material cost. Jane, like others in the study, has never been able to gain work in her profession. Given that she has been in the country much longer than some of these others, we are able to explore a larger period during which she engages in biographical work around this rupture. For a considerable time, Jane remained tenacious in her efforts to get teaching work. However,

eventually she decided the cost was too high and we have a rupture of her work biography. The reconstruction she undertakes is lengthy and, when interviewed, she has achieved a great deal in moving from checkout operator to staff trainer. This success is given a sense of continuity with her earlier biography by an acknowledgement that she is now, in some way, involved in educating once again. However, the rupture is not entirely healed as there is still a sense of loss with associated anger that she cannot teach. Part of the biographical work that Jane's account reveals is, as in other cases, related to the children in the family since Jane and her husband had migrated primarily to offer their children a more positive and secure future. This must have been a constant tension when held against the work difficulties they encountered.

STEVEN

The Lived Life

Steven is in his late 40's and is from South Korea. He is married and has two children, both of whom are now in their twenties. At the time of the interview he had been in New Zealand for around 11 years. Steven had trained and worked as an accountant prior to his arrival in New Zealand. His fairly stable work history up to this time involved only a couple of changes in employers and contained two extended periods out of Korea when he was sent by his employers to postings in Saudi Arabia and Germany. Following the last overseas posting Steven took on a new job, organised through a friend, which kept the family in Korea for a further six years. During this period Steven's father died. Some time after this the family decided to immigrate and eventually selected New Zealand.

Upon arriving the initial decision to rent a property was quickly replaced by a move to purchase a home. For Steven, the first year was spent undertaking a course in English at a local polytechnic. During this time the family decided to bring all their assets to New Zealand. Following the English course, Steven and his wife decided to buy a fruit shop. After two and a half years and considerable losses they closed that business. They also put their house on the market as a first step in preparing for relocation. However, they experienced some difficulty selling the property and in the interim Steven saw an advertisement for taxi drivers and after taking the appropriate courses he then began work as an employee taxi driver. After about six months he bought his own taxi and became an owner-driver. A trial of running a second car and employing a driver proved problematic and he quit this after a year. He continues to drive his own taxi working twelve hour shifts, six days a week. Both his children are at university. His wife works part-time in a catering company.

The Told Story

From a personal perspective I must acknowledge how lucky I was having Steven as the first person I interviewed. He proved to be a wonderful narrator. As I nervously tried to engage in the sometimes counter intuitive processes associated with this interview approach, he took me on a short initial account before opening up more fully into a rich narrative. He was a considerate narrator, providing me with the necessary contextual information but also willing to be open about his personal experiences.

Steven's initial narrative takes us very quickly through arriving in New Zealand, studying English, the unsuccessful business venture and the preparations for a further relocation. No mention is made of his decision not to practice accountancy. He then provides more detail about how he became an owner/operator taxi driver. Interestingly, in this he omits

any detail of the period of buying a second car and employing a driver. All this is a fairly neutral or factual account. Having encapsulated his account he then wonders if I might be interested in why he chose New Zealand as his second country.

This part of Steven's narrative begins with a brief overview of Korean society necessary for what he will later tell me. In these remarks Steven explains that in Korean culture the eldest son is responsible for the family. Despite these responsibilities, Steven observes that some migrants from Korea have left their parents in Korea. He also notes that there can be difficulties between the women in the family. Having established these points Steven then notes that his circumstances are different. Firstly, after a dispute over how the inheritance would be spent following his father's death, Steven tells of giving up these related rights as the eldest son in return for also giving over responsibility for caring for his mother to one of his brothers, a medical professional, whom Steven felt was well suited to the task. Part of the resolution for this involved a decision to immigrate to New Zealand. Secondly, Steven moves immediately into a discussion of the other motivation for migrating, talking of his children's unhappiness at having to return to Korea after a period in Germany. They found the large class numbers difficult to cope with after the small classes and excellent facilities in Germany. However, it is an obligation outside the family that takes immediate priority and Steven goes to work for a friend. It will be six years before the family immigrates "for my health, for my children's education and to solve all family problems". He then elaborates on the inheritance issue that created a fissure in the family.

It is important to point out in relation to this aspect of Steven's story that he admits there is an "every day" account that he gives people about his reasons for migrating – that he came to New Zealand to benefit his children. While this is true, he reveals that the main reason relates to family issues following his father's death. It is likely that people will have both public and private versions of accounts regarding aspects of their lives. The possibilities and privileges associated with interviewing in depth is that circumstances sometimes allow us to share in the latter.

The very personal motivation and circumstances for migrating that he identifies serves as a motif for many of his experiences post migration. In order to resolve the family conflict he hands over both obligations and entitlements to a brother. As part of this process he migrates and in doing so is also able to respond to the needs of his immediate family. It would seem to be difficult for Steven to return to Korea given the circumstances of his leaving so there is some pressure to succeed here or move elsewhere. Succeeding in New Zealand ultimately requires making further concessions, mainly in giving up his professional career. Although he is mostly positive about his circumstances there are glimpses of the cost and sense of loss in making these concessions. At every point there are competing demands, often generating great tension. The motif is one of making concessions in order to achieve, of accepting particular losses to make other gains; it is tied to close relationships – father to eldest son and brother to brother, then father to children.

The decision to immigrate involved consideration of three countries - Australia, Canada and New Zealand. Since Australia was not well known to them or those they knew, they were left with a choice between the last two. New Zealand won out "because of the fine weather and small population and excellent circumstance". Interestingly, while up to this point Steven's second narrative has indeed canvassed the period before arriving in New Zealand and the issues an events surrounding the family's migration, he then carries on to provide a second and more detailed account of some of the issues and events around their time in New Zealand.

Arriving in New Zealand, Steven recounts that he and his wife "didn't expect to get a proper job". Rather their experiences of living overseas had prepared them for the fact

that they might have to do any and all sorts of work. This they didn't mind, he says. Following a narrative pattern he used before, Steven then engages in a brief contextualisation, talking about the small number of Koreans who were in New Zealand when he arrived, the growth in Korean immigration to New Zealand, and about how Koreans often have little knowledge of life in other countries, especially in the West. Inferring a gullibility on their part and a misrepresentation on the part of immigration brokers, Steven says that most Koreans believe what they are told that they can easily get work in New Zealand. He goes on to acknowledge that many potential immigrants from Korea possess wealth and qualifications that, in earlier immigration regimes, would assure them entry. While they also possess reasonable abilities in writing and reading English, they often struggle with hearing and speaking. While many see this as a problem for the host country, Steven firmly locates it as a problem for the immigrant. It is one of many issues that migrants must contemplate and face, leading him to conclude, "all immigrants are very brave people".

Steven takes this as a chance to return to discussing his work as a taxi driver. This second account is more emotive and he explains that he is not very happy working as a taxi driver given the various and ongoing problems with passengers. There is an ambivalence in his evaluation of taxi driving, however, as it does provide a reasonable income, is better than many unskilled jobs and self-employment has its advantages. "As an Asian immigrant with not enough English capabilities, taxi driver is not very bad to make money to survive". Steven believes that many other Korean taxi drivers feel similarly negative but he counters their complaints with his view that very few other opportunities are available to them.

From this point on Steven's interview is more orientated to my questions as I tease out further narratives. He talks of preferring to have little to do with the Korean community in New Zealand as they must be careful who they associate with since they don't know anything about people's past lives. It is here that we learn a little about Steven's decision not to practice accountancy in New Zealand. This was prompted by a realisation that he would not get a senior position in this country because of his poor spoken English and lack of New Zealand experience and knowledge. He feels it is too late to start again. The alternative – to open a small bookkeeping practice which likely would serve Korean small business owners – is unappealing. It turns out that he did intend to practice when he arrived and was going to take the necessary courses at university after completing his English language course. However, once he had had a chance to read the textbooks he realised that the language requirements were beyond him. Thus, he and his wife opted for self-employment.

Steven's migratory experience is built around leaving behind much of the past – not only in breaking ties with his family, but also in not involving himself much in the Korean community in New Zealand. He sees himself as a New Zealander. In a similar vein to this point he has omitted almost any reference to his accounting background in relation to his time in New Zealand. It is only in response to some direct questions on the subject that he raises it at all. This despite acknowledging my interest in migrants who aren't working in their professions and expressing some ambivalence about working as a taxi-driver.

The interview then turns to his experiences of taxi-driving – the stresses in getting to know the job and area, and the discrimination he faces at times. Steven thinks it unlikely that he will engage in any other employment besides taxi-driving. The alternatives are other small business opportunities that would likely not return any more but bring greater risks. His income is good, but there are long hours and he encounters various problems from time to time because of his ethnicity. His financial goal is to get his children through their university studies and then his work as a taxi-driver will be more than adequate for he and his wife. It is as part of this discussion that we learn that he employed someone to drive a second taxi that he had brought. This was a fellow Korean but the move was

unsuccessful and he sold the cab. Though he could still afford to do so again, he would only reconsider if he found a reliable person. Later he talks about how he got into taxi-driving in more detail and that he moved from the company he originally worked in because of discrimination. Steven notes that many of his fellow drivers are from professions in Korea and believes that there are too many now. Although he earlier recognised that people with these sorts of backgrounds often end up in small businesses when they can't get work in New Zealand associated with their profession, he feels that the Korean small business market is rather saturated.

As to recent changes in immigration, Steven believes that the move is not racist but is the New Zealand government simply doing what it believes is right. That said, he doubts he would be accepted as a migrant with such a policy. Despite some very negative personal experiences (which he recounts), Steven has a fairly positive impression of New Zealand and considers himself a New Zealander. He also recognises that migrants as well as the receiving country have parts to play in successful settlement. What he used to think may have been racist he now views as more a response to strangeness, an outcome, perhaps, of our isolation. As a consequence he doesn't think New Zealanders have a very open mind to people from other countries. Here, and at other points in his account there are efforts to make sense of what are essentially discriminatory experiences, but in other terms. This is echoed in many other accounts.

Although, like others, Steven did not practise in his profession after arriving in New Zealand, the experiences he recounts require a different understanding from, say, Jane. While he initially intended to work as an accountant, after studying English Steven realised that his language skills would make the study needed to get appropriate qualifications rather difficult and so he did not apply for accounting jobs. Instead he opted to start a business. Eventually, after the original venture failed, and having resisted any thoughts of going into the accounting field at any level, he ended up becoming a self-employed taxi-driver. Thus, there is a disruption to the flow of his work biography. However, his response is to revise that biography by opting for self-employment. In Steven's case this type of biographical work is assisted by the motivation to deliberately disrupt other currents of his biography. By giving up any inheritance entitlements after his father's death in exchange for his brother taking up those familial responsibilities that Steven would usually assume as eldest son, he created something of a discontinuity with the past. Revisions of his work biography in the face of difficult employment prospects help sustain this break, since they make the migration successful in other regards. As well, another goal of migration was the opportunities it offered for his children and this serves as further support for necessary revision in terms of employment. However, this does not mean that revisions are always entirely successful as Steven is, at times, ambivalent about his work.

DOENA

The Lived Life

Doena is in her mid forties, and is married with two children. She comes from Sri Lanka and with her family had lived in New Zealand for around six years when interviewed. In Sri Lanka Doena trained as a secondary school teacher, and her husband as an industrial chemist. They both had many years experience in their professions before migrating. They have two children born, aged around eight years and four years when the family

came to New Zealand. Doena reports that they considered Canada, Australia and New Zealand as possible destinations and eventually arrived in 1997. Both of them began applying for jobs after their arrival. The husband kept this up for six months before starting a university course in his specialist area. He also helped in the laboratory in his spare time. After the course he obtained a job in his field.

Doena began her job search by applying unsuccessfully for various teaching positions. Since she did not have any luck she started doing voluntary work with migrant/refugee families. After a year without getting teaching work she undertook a six month course for overseas trained teachers. At the end of this she continued with her search for teaching work. Early in 1999 Doena started a university computing course part-time. She had continued her voluntary work throughout this period but now changed organisations. Up to this point she had applied and been rejected for a large number of teaching positions. In the middle of the next year and just over halfway through the course she began searching for work again, this time in the computing area. Throughout her job search to this point she had never received an interview. After only a month on this strategy she changed the parameters of her job search and began to look for any work opportunities even in the semi and unskilled category. Very quickly she got work in electronic assembly. After two years in this work she successfully applied for a promotion to supervisor which she had been doing for over six months when interviewed.

The Told Story

At the outset of the interview Doena wanted to be sure of what I was interested in - feelings, actions or what - and I reassured her it was whatever and however she wanted to tell me. Doena's opening account is very focused on the issue of work and provides an intense but short overview of her difficult work experiences. She begins by establishing the equivalency and acceptability of her qualifications and the failure to initially get any employment, even after 150 or so applications. This led her into taking the course for overseas teachers. From this she learned the differences between the New Zealand and Sri Lankan systems but is quick to reassure me that, as professionals, all the overseas teachers were capable of the transition. A period of applying for teaching jobs, again without success, saw Doena decide to change tack. With minimal explanation she describes starting a university course in computer programming. But then, only half way through she stopped to search for work in this field. Again she had no luck and then reaches the conclusion that she should just look for any work.

Rather than turning to this next stage in her job search, Doena takes an unexpected turn and talks briefly about the various forms of voluntary work she has been involved in during this whole period. She did this "because I did not want to waste my time". Only now does she return to her more general job search that quickly resulted in her getting a full-time and permanent job - initially on a night shift and then rotating between morning and afternoon shifts - on a production line in an electronics company. This is the source of a narrative that describes the highly qualified and multi-national character of much of the workforce. She compares this with the lower qualifications of the supervisors. There is also a reference to difficulties she and others had with a much younger New Zealand born supervisor.

Getting this job, and the various aspects she recounts are obviously pivotal to Doena making sense of her situation since she now declares "I realised the situation". In reflecting on her own experiences and talking to others Doena posits the idea that it might be migrants' accents that are the greatest impediment to their getting work. However, this doesn't stand up to scrutiny when she considers that it wasn't a problem in her voluntary work. Instead she sees that in terms of paid employment there are not enough jobs for everyone so it is only fair - "if I think in my country, same situation, I do the same" - that

New Zealanders should get first preference - "if somebody come to my company, if there are two I give first preference to my country people". Now that she has made sense of what has happened to her and that she and her husband both have jobs - even if her job is far removed from her professional background - she declares herself "satisfied" and draws her opening narrative to a close.

The remaining narratives are in response to my questions. In regards to the family's decision to migrate, Doena's initial response is that this was prompted by a desire to get away from the violence and danger of the civil war in Sri Lanka. This was especially frightening for children and she then develops the children's education as the main thing behind their migrations. This is reinforced when a little later she tells how they decided upon New Zealand. With insufficient points for Australia they were guided by a friend already in this country who recommended an Auckland school. Another issue was the corruption in various areas of social life in Sri Lanka. This affects people's access to all sorts of things such as healthcare and education as well. It is clearly a critical and intense issue:

I do some part-time job at moment, delivering papers, sometimes in the wintertime, cold and rain. I always curse my politicians. Because we had good jobs and good everything. We didn't do this type of job in there, because we had good standard in there, good houses, jobs and everything, our relatives and everything. But why we still here, if we have the same country like this, we won't come here. Who made us come here? Our politicians because they are the ones who made the corruptions and not only war. Actually I don't blame New Zealand, I blame my own country, my politicians, they are the ones who made us to come here.

It seems then that there are a number of inter-locking reasons for their migration.

An intriguing aside that emerges as Doena recounts her friend recommending New Zealand in terms of education is the fact that this friend was also a teacher from Sri Lanka. She had retrained in New Zealand and still struggled to get work, as did another Sri Lankan teacher she knew. Although these experiences didn't appear to affect Doena's belief that she could get a job teaching, she does acknowledge that these stories meant she never saw the point of doing New Zealand teacher training.

The interview then moves into a brief discussion of her husband's experiences. This is of interest since he tried for six months to get a job in his field without success. He realised that he might benefit from doing a New Zealand based course in his field. During the course he also helped in the laboratories on a voluntary basis out of hours. A referral and recommendation from his course supervisor ultimately lead to him getting work.

Although they clearly had friends in this country Doena recalls that she and her family based much of their expectations of New Zealand on a New Zealand Immigration Service publication. They were quickly disabused of the picture painted in the this book.

Actually when I read that book I thought everything we can get it from this ... And we thought, okay, after we go there we would find good jobs ... but the picture has changed after one month. Frustrated actually, after one month, two months. Because of that book. I think still I have or I throw it away that book, I hate that book.

She is also critical of the fees charged by the service to settle here, thinking that it would mean that they would be provided with various forms of assistance. Instead she came to realise that it was a processing fee (though they did get a three month subscription to the Service's magazine). This discussion about how very different the reality of life in New Zealand was compared to the how it was portrayed brings Doena back to recapping her understandings of why things are the way they are. Against the background of her 'New

Zealanders first' thesis, which she is adamant is not discrimination, she now adds that for migrants "if you try, if you try, if you try, you can get a job". Of course this may not have been the job you imagined or wanted but, with your foot in the door, you can show your talents. As proof of this she talks of getting a promotion against ten others (none of whom were New Zealand born) who had more qualifications but less specific experience. In this story she tells of how her boss, himself a Sri Lankan was scrupulous in his process so that no claims of favouritism could be levelled if she got the job.

As I was curious about an earlier comment she had made regarding accent, among some closing questions aimed at clarifying various details of her story I offered her the opportunity to expand on this issue. In response she recounts being told by a senior teacher that he always sorted applications by surname, removing those that were 'foreign'. Hence, she says, the tendency for people from overseas to adopt a European first name. His advice was to speak to the head of department as he always picked out the applications of people he had personally spoken to. Unfortunately, Doena's experience was that she could never get past the school secretary - "because of our accent on the phone I think". She then spoke of a meeting with various parties at the end of the course she went on for overseas trained teachers. There the question was asked why so many migrant teachers can't get work to which one principal replied that he had to consider his pupils and pick people whose accent would not be hard to understand. (Apparently the reply from the teachers was that migrant children seem to cope with Kiwi accents.) This discussion evokes a memory of a placement at a school during that course. The behaviour and attitude of some of the children was quite a shock to her. Now, having been a parent of children in the system for a number of years and become knowledgeable about and used to the New Zealand culture more generally she feels she could cope with teaching. Thus, despite some earlier sense of being settled it is clear that Doena would still like to teach. Unfortunately, her first step in this direction - applying to renew her registration revealed that changes to regulations in the time she has been away from teaching mean it is even less likely she will be able to return. The ambivalence as to her future in relation to teaching demonstrates, I believe, how difficult it can be to break those connections to our past that give us some sense of who we are. It is not easy for everyone to readily reconstruct themselves or to make sense of the dislocation between past and present, even after a disjunctive event like migration. This is conveyed in the underlying dissatisfaction or unhappiness I sensed in Doena's narrative despite some assurances to the contrary.

There is a brief discussion of how voluntary work can help migrants. This is especially true in terms of it providing some sort of 'New Zealand experience' through exposure to workplace culture, practices and the like. Doena also reveals that her long efforts to stay with teaching in New Zealand relate to a level of insecurity and uncertainty in work in this country that she is not used to. In Sri Lanka people tend to want, and are able, to stay in one job or profession all their lives. In a short exchange about Doena's impressions of the New Zealand education system for her children she once more reiterates how corruption in Sri Lanka would have limited their chances. Consequently, she thinks there are more possibilities here in New Zealand.

In concluding what she wanted to say Doena returns to two key issues for her – discrimination and accent. In respect of discrimination, once again she reiterates that what she and other migrants face is not discrimination in her terms. Rather, it is a lack of knowledge about others and their cultures, and a consequent preference for a New Zealander because this is their culture and country – "I don't think it's discrimination. If they understand who you are, until that, they do discriminate. First chance I think they were afraid to give us a job because they don't know. They think: they come from other country and what's their culture?" There is, here, a subtle change in her argument that introduces the importance of time in the country, the value of particular experiences and a sense of acculturation. In regard to the issue of accent, Doena emphasises the difference

between language and accent problems by pointing out that Sri Lankans use British English, and use it well. As a consequence they struggle to understand New Zealand accented English which is one of many variations between and even within English speaking countries and regions. This, she feels, is more easily overcome than people want to admit.

From her story I think it is readily apparent that *understanding*, is very important to Doena. In an overall sense understanding represents a very deliberate reflection on why she finds herself in these circumstances and the development of an acceptable rationale that she can articulate in her life and story, to herself and others – what I refer to *now I understand*. For Doena, this understanding does not involve discrimination, as she defines it, but a preference for the indigenous population, and an appreciation of migrants over time. In a second sense, understanding relates initially to the issue of accent which gradually gains importance in her account. Because of the difficulties people have with her accent she comes to realise that she apparently cannot be easily understood. However, she clearly expands this beyond accent to take on a wider significance in her references to foreigners cultures and backgrounds not being known or appreciated. Without being too obtuse, the two senses can be taken together to produce the rationale that Doena *now understands that New Zealanders don't understand her*.

In relation to a specific question regarding the recent changes to immigration policy Doena appeared to have mixed views. On the one hand, when considering their own poor experiences and how these failed to match expectations set up by the Immigration Service information they were given, Doena thought the changes were good. They would mean that people would have work and wouldn't have to suffer the struggles and indignities that she, especially, has been through. On the other hand she recognises that it may well stop lots of people coming here and make things very hard for them to migrate.

By way of closing Doena reflects on the shortages of teachers that she has been aware of and wonders why she and her overseas colleagues were never accepted. She looks back on the course they did as a waste of time and money, especially since she thinks no-one on it got work. In her final remarks she wonders whether she will return to teaching but is put off by the additional tests, especially in respect of English language requirements, that she would have to complete without any guarantees she could get work. Perhaps it would be better and easier to just stay where she is and try for another promotion.

Like Jane, Doena was unable to get work as a teacher and so also experienced a biographical rupture. She responded to this by trying to reconstruct her work biography around retraining but even this was unsuccessful. Given the importance of work, both materially and emotionally, and the effects of not being able to get meaningful work, Doena set about getting any employment she could and easily found low skilled factory work. The importance of work is given added weight by the need to help support a family. She has since been promoted to a supervisor's level and hopes for further opportunities for advancement. Despite these prospects Doena is unhappy at having had to give up teaching and there is a sense that she, like others, would now like to "reach back" and re-engage with teaching. However, new regulations, her time away and the earlier difficulties make this unlikely. So she is forced to develop a personal understanding of New Zealand society that makes sense of her current circumstances and thereby offers some biographical integrity. This understanding is that New Zealanders should get first preference - "if somebody came to my company, if there are two I give first preference to my country people".

Although the primary and sustained focus of this interview was on Doena and her experiences, we have, vicariously, learnt about her husband's experiences. This presents

us with two contradictory outcomes within the same family – the husband's struggle but ultimate success in getting work that reflects his background (qualifications and experience) and Doena's extended struggle, including a range of strategic and tactical manoeuvres that has ended with her in work, but of a very different kind and quality to her background. Other cases also present such different outcomes but none have a couple who both fit our categorisation of professional but with very different experiences.

CONCLUSION

Introduction

As part of a larger programme of study to explore non-standard work (NSW) in New Zealand, this research is focused on the experiences of professional migrants. In order to better understand and contextualise the findings in relation to NSW, the study necessarily explores wider settlement and labour market experiences. This working paper represents an abbreviated version of a larger and more detailed research report published earlier by the Labour Market Dynamics Research Programme (LMDRP) – see Firkin (2004).

Methodology

Although, like previous Labour Market Dynamics (LMD) research, this study remains within a qualitative paradigm it employs a different approach to the interview process and subsequent analysis. That approach is the Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method (BNIM) – see Appendix B.

Participants

Twelve interviews were conducted for this study. All but one of these was with an individual. In the exceptional instance, a couple jointly participated. In three other cases data on a spouse was also provided by the interviewee and, where appropriate, this was used in the analysis. Three interviews were with single people with the remainder of those who participated being married (though in one case the partner was not living in New Zealand). Ages of participants ranged from late twenties to early seventies with the majority being in their forties. Those interviewed had been in New Zealand between 10 years and a few months. Countries of origin were Brazil, China, India, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Philippines and Zimbabwe. The professional backgrounds of those involved included accountancy, engineering, public relations, medicine, hotel management, secondary school teaching, management, law, architecture, and university lecturing.⁷

Thematic Summary

Several key issues that emerged in a thematic analysis of the interview data have been canvassed in this report. The first is related to recent changes to immigration policy. Not surprisingly given the difficult and challenging experiences people had, there was a generally positive view of these changes, with one person wanting them even tighter. A couple of people were, for various reasons, more ambivalent about the policy. Only one person was against the changes as they did not see them to be a positive long-term approach to migration within a global context. While the new policy addresses some aspects of migration experiences it is fair to say that other aspects, as addressed in the report (e.g. reception, discrimination and the like), are not changed nor necessarily challenged.

⁷ Table 1 provides a further breakdown of participant data.

Another issue looked at the combined effects of professional background, migration and work for participants. All but two of those who took part in the study made some effort to enter their professions once they had arrived in New Zealand. However, only two people specifically mentioned problems related to professional bodies. For the others it was language difficulties (particularly around accent) and a lack of New Zealand experience (both generally and in relation to their profession) that were significant and persistent obstacles. Consequently, most people were quickly disabused of the notion that they could resume their work lives or careers after arriving in New Zealand. Almost everyone was forced into a somewhat different work path with considerable reduction in status and often major changes in the nature and quality of the work they were doing.

Experiences such as these in relation to professional employment are part of what has been termed in the report as the paradoxes of migration. One of these highlights the contradictions that arise between the requirements for gaining residence in a country – including level of education, work qualifications and experience – and the much lower value placed on, or discounting of, these once the migrant has arrived. They may, in fact, hinder people's efforts to get work. Thus, that which enabled people to gain entry to the country becomes problematic once they arrive. This situation is exacerbated in that the time taken to gain professional qualifications and consolidate that with experience means that, as was the case for many of those interviewed, professional migrants are often older and more established within their field. Thus age can become an intertwined issue. A second paradox arises from the usual understanding that people have regarding the relationship between education/training and employment. Essentially this is that low skilled work is generally associated with poorly qualified people, while higher education is thought to generate greater opportunities and that these are in higher paid and skilled work. However, the plight of many professional migrants may mean that low skill areas within workplaces may actually be populated by very well qualified people. This seems a huge waste of human capital at a time when the notion of a knowledge society is so prominent.

The most representative theme, in terms of frequency of mention and strength of comment, to emerge from the experiences of these professionals was the issue of New Zealand experience. There are variations on how this is defined but in general it is a demand, expressed as a clear and repeated preference by New Zealand employers, for local general or specific work experience. The former is a requirement to have worked in some capacity within the local labour market as compared to the latter where the demand is for local experience within a specific profession or industry. Such can be the obstacle that this represents to migrants, even in its former more generic form, that it can effectively exclude them from the labour market. The latter form represents a significant barrier to gaining employment in people's chosen profession. For most of those interviewed it came as a shock to find how strong this requirement was and it generated considerable difficulties. This has been a prominent theme in other research on the labour market experiences of migrants. There is, of course, a certain irony in relation to the demand for New Zealand experience that escapes no migrant. How, they ask, are we to get this New Zealand experience if we are excluded from the labour market because we do not have it in the first place?

From these work related issues the report opens up to a set of themes around settlement more generally. These highlight the struggle that settlement often represents across a number of areas of life. Migrants must, therefore, be "brave people" (as one interviewee put it) who are strong and resilient, and who must persevere. All those who were interviewed just wanted the opportunity to make a full contribution to New Zealand society. Although the migration of professionals is often seen in light of work and employment motives, all those interviewed had non-work reasons for coming to New Zealand. For those with families concerns for their children's wellbeing – be that in terms of education, security, safety and/or future employment – lay behind the decision to

migrate. For others, the search for a “better life” briefly encapsulates their motivations. Most of those who were interviewed gathered information on life in New Zealand from various sources (including official ones) prior to arriving. However, the accuracy and quality of that information varied markedly. Often too, the lived reality bore only a limited resemblance to the information available.

The interviews provided some interesting observations on migrants’ experiences of discrimination. For some, this was reframed as a lack of understanding or information. In terms of labour market discrimination some thought of this as a natural and reasonable way of protecting the local workforce. Others distinguished between experiences at different levels of society describing a more welcoming response among individuals compared to the negative reactions among potential employers. As in other research, accent was a prominent issue in relation to discrimination since, in this study, many people felt clearly discriminated against, not due to their language competency, but because they spoke with an accent.

Finally the question of NSW in relation to professional migrants is addressed. For all of those interviewed NSW played a role, often a significant one, in their employment after migration. This was particularly the case in relation to their gaining some initial entry to the labour market. Despite the prominence of NSW in employment generally, it offered little in respect of people’s professional employment. Indeed, in only four instances was some aspect of the person’s NSW related to their profession.

While some of the thematic findings, such as the reaction of those interviewed to the latest changes to immigration policy, are specific to this study, many echo those of other research. In doing so they reinforce the commonality of experiences among migrants and add weight to the need for attention to those common issues that negatively affect their settlement.

Biographic Approaches

While a thematic analysis clearly has benefits in generating wider understandings than are possible at the individual level, returning to that level helps develop a further analysis. Although people may share common experiences – in this case, for example, the demand for New Zealand experience and paradoxes of migration – the details of these differ and they respond to these in different ways. Appreciating and highlighting these differences stops the thematic analysis being viewed as a static context of experience, which people are rather passively party to. Instead, it is part of a dynamic interplay of structural and individual factors that is being shaped as much as it shapes.

Where the original report gave a great deal of attention to presenting the biographical accounts of participants, this has been limited in this shortened version. Just three cases are examined at length. However, these have been chosen for the depth and weight of their narratives. Each gives rich insights into how the themes outlined in the prior analysis were encountered, lived through and experienced, coped with and responded to, and talked about. This provides not only a more intimate, detailed and complex picture, but personalises the reporting, returns it to its sources and re-animates it. In this process the harsh reality of many migrants’ experiences are laid bare, something that can be lost or made indistinct in the distance created by a thematic approach.

Appendix A

THE PEOPLE

By way of background, this appendix provides a brief biographical note on each participant. The first three participants – Steven, Jane and Doena – have been considered in much more detail in Chapter 3.

STEVEN

The Lived Life

Steven is in his late 40's and is from South Korea where he worked as an accountant. He is married and has two children, both of whom are now in their twenties. At the time of the interview he had been in New Zealand for around 11 years. A colleague within the university introduced the researcher to Steven.

JANE

The Lived Life

Jane and her family come from South Africa and had been in New Zealand just over six years when interviewed. She is in her mid forties and is married with two teenage children. In South Africa she was a secondary school teacher as was her husband. Jane offered to take part in the study after reading an article in a local newspaper.

DOENA

The Lived Life

Doena is in her mid forties, married, with two children. She comes from Sri Lanka where she was a secondary school teacher. Her family had lived in New Zealand for around six years when interviewed. She responded to an article in a local newspaper and volunteered to be part of the research.

YONG

The Lived Life

Yong is a 47 year old man from South Korea. He is a qualified engineer. He and his wife had been in New Zealand for almost 10 years when interviewed. They have no children. Another interviewee referred us to Yong and he agreed to take part.

Having gained a Bachelor of Engineering, Yong has spent his entire working life up to the point of immigration working as a mechanical engineer. For periods of three and two years he had worked in his profession on overseas placements in Saudi Arabia and Indonesia respectively. In the early 1990s he and his wife decided to migrate from Korea,

and at the end of 1993 they arrived in New Zealand. Yong spent the first two years after arriving studying at a polytechnic for a Certificate in Engineering. Following this he spent seven or eight months of job searching during which time he approached around 60 companies without ever getting an interview. As a result Yong decided to stop seeking work in engineering. Instead he considered self-employment and eventually settled on taxi-driving. He has been working as an owner/operator for the last seven years.

DINESH

The Lived Life

Dinesh is in his mid forties and married with one child. He comes from India and is an accountant. When interviewed he had been in New Zealand just over 18 months. A migrant assistance programme of the local chamber of commerce arranged for Dinesh to take part in the study.

After receiving a Bachelor of Commerce from an Indian university in the late 1970s, Dinesh worked in the accounting field up until the family migrated to New Zealand at the beginning of 2002. Apart from a couple of changes of employers during his working life prior to migration, the significant event in Dinesh's employment history over this time is a period working in Kenya. Upon arriving in New Zealand Dinesh updated his computer skills with a polytechnic course on the accounting package favoured in New Zealand and undertook a WINZ⁸ employment seminar for migrants. The seminar led to a year long contract doing part-time work collecting door-to-door for a charitable trust. During the period of this contract Dinesh continued to try and get work in the accounting field making numerous applications but never even receiving an interview. At the end of his contract work he again approached WINZ and was advised of work in customer service at a petrol station. With limited options he took on this full-time permanent shift-work position. He had been in the position about six months when interviewed but was still trying to get work in the accounting field.

JERRY

The Lived Life

Jerry and his family are from the Philippines. At the time of the interview he was in his early 40's and married with two children, aged six and eight years. He worked as a senior public relations executive for a large corporation before immigrating to New Zealand about nine months ago. Jerry's participation in the study was arranged through the migrant assistance programme of the local chamber of commerce.

Jerry was born in the Philippines. He went to university but left prior to completing his undergraduate degree - with a major in communication - to take up a work opportunity. This role as a communications assistant would help him move into a public relations position with one of the largest corporations in the Philippines. He remained with this company for 20 years, rising through the ranks of the public relations division to a senior position in a regional office, until he left to migrate to New Zealand. During the later part of his career he was selected to spend six weeks in Florida on a Rotary exchange

⁸ This is the Department of Work and Income, New Zealand.

programme. Jerry's wife is an engineer and had lived and studied in the United States. They have two children, who were aged six and eight at the time of the interview. One of the children has special needs (as Jerry describes it). After arriving in New Zealand the family purchased a home and the children started school. Jerry began applying for jobs. Initially these positions reflected his background and experience. During this time he obtained weekend work at a budget hotel through a friend and got a short contract doing a piece of business orientated writing. He also completed a computer course to update his general skills and both he and his wife completed training as ESOL teachers. Just prior to being interviewed Jerry was taken on by a major airline as a customer services officer at the international airport. Although this was a permanent position, it was only part-time and involved shiftwork and rosters. His wife was doing telephone interviewing for market research.

CHARLES

The Lived Life

Charles and his wife, who had lived and worked - in senior roles within the hotel industry - in various parts of Africa immigrated to New Zealand from South Africa just over two years prior to being interviewed. He is in his early seventies, his wife a little younger. One of their two adult children immigrated and settled in New Zealand a short time before them and they joined under the family re-unification scheme. Charles volunteered to participate in the study after reading about it in a local newspaper.

Travelling with his father, who had gone there for work, Charles arrived in Africa in 1950. In those early years he spent most of his time in Uganda, though he entered the hotel industry in Kenya. Much of his working life was spent in Zimbabwe- for considerable periods when it was known as Rhodesia - though he also worked for extended periods in South Africa. Charles held a number of senior management positions in the hotel industry throughout his career. He married and had two children. His son immigrated to New Zealand about three years before our interview and Charles and his wife joined him in New Zealand under the family quota category. They had been in New Zealand just over two years when interviewed. They have purchased a home and receive a modest pension. Both Charles and his wife have sought work since arriving. He has been largely unsuccessful in securing anything but some short-term promotional work, which his wife joined him in. He was partway through another short contract, this time doing market research, when interviewed. His wife has got permanent work in church associated social services and has done some consulting for a hotel project.

RAM

The Lived Life

Ram is in his early forties and comes from India. He holds qualifications in accountancy, law and management, and has worked at a senior level in human resources management in the banking sector. Although married with a teenage daughter, Ram's family have not joined him to settle in New Zealand. He had been in the country about 18 months when interviewed. Ram offered to be part of the research after reading about it in a local newspaper.

After his university studies Ram gained employment with an Indian bank. His prior and subsequent studies earned him an undergraduate degree in human resource management, a law degree, a Masters degree in public administration, and registration as a chartered accountant. He worked for the bank for around twenty years rising to a senior management position in charge of a large staff and network of branches. During this time he married and his daughter was born in the late 1980's. In 2001 Ram's secretary completed the paperwork for New Zealand residency on his behalf and in March of that year he resigned from the bank after 20 years service. After a couple of months of not seeking work, Ram travelled to South Africa at a friend's invitation and shortly after accepted the offer of a six month management contract with a large international vehicle dealership in Botswana. Early in 2002, at the end of that contract, Ram returned home to India. A couple of months later his residency application to New Zealand was approved. Initially, however, he returned to Botswana to consider an offer of a further 12 month contract but soon decided to fly to New Zealand. He arrived in April 2002 and after having his property stolen while living in backpacker's accommodation he decided to return and booked a flight for one month's time. During that period he looked for any type of work and secured a job making sandwiches for a service station franchise. This was shift work and not full time employment. He then decided to postpone his return a further three months and began searching for work more in keeping with his background and experience. Shortly after this he started a computing course and an introductory social work course and later began voluntary work at a migrant resource centre. The social work course was completed at the end of 2002 but to obtain full credit for it he needed some placement experience. This was available through his voluntary work. At the end of 2002 Ram had made inquiries regarding getting his law qualifications recognised in New Zealand and began one of two necessary papers in 2003. His social work placement and the computing course came to an end in mid 2003. Shortly after he got a full-time position at the migrant resource centre and was able to finally give up the sandwich making which he had kept up all this time. He was then appointed co-ordinator for a migrant assistance project he had developed earlier in the year and which was subsequently approved for funding. This was with the same migrant resource centre and he was continuing with this job and his law related study when interviewed.

PAULA

The Lived Life

Paula is in her late twenties and from Brazil. She came to New Zealand on holiday just over two years ago and applied for residency almost immediately, remaining in the country throughout the process as she had heard that there could be problems that are best managed in person. This mode of arrival is a feature that makes Paula's story somewhat different from others. Paula, an architect who studied in Brazil and Portugal and has worked in the former, is one of the two single people interviewed for the study. Her participation was the result of her reading an article about the study in a local newspaper.

After spending a year on an exchange programme in Japan, Paula undertook a six year undergraduate degree in architecture, graduating in 2000. She worked full-time for a year as an architect following this. However, having managed to complete large numbers of papers in the initial years of her degree, she had also been able to undertake a considerable number of varied work opportunities during the latter years of her degree that enhanced her work experience. One year of her degree was also undertaken in Portugal. Professionally she has contributed to a published book and has been involved

in research that has been presented internationally. In addition to architecture she took some design courses, becoming involved in furniture design and manufacture. Paula arrived in New Zealand for an extended holiday in the middle of 2001 and immediately began the residency process. Once she was able she looked for work, initially hoping to use her architectural background. She has had to do a range of jobs, however as it has proved difficult to get work in her field. She did manage to get some voluntary work assisting an architect and paid employment as a draughting assistant. This has been supplemented with various other jobs - cleaning, catering and café work. In 2003 she began her Masters degree in Architecture.

MELODY

The Lived Life

Melody is in her late thirties, single, and from China. She came to New Zealand nine years ago to study accountancy at university, but decided to stay after qualifying. As such this represents a slightly different mode of entry into the country. Her involvement in the research came about after she saw an article on the study in a local newspaper.

Melody was born in China and has an older and younger sister. She gained a science degree and worked in a research centre and then an exporting company in a more business orientated role. She moved to New Zealand when she was 29 years old in order to study accounting - China had completely changed its accounting system to the Western model and Melody wished to train in the new system but such training wasn't available in China at that time. While Melody was at university her younger sister also came to New Zealand to study. They both attended Massey University in Palmerston North and their parents spent a couple of years in the country with both daughters. After getting her degree Melody stayed in New Zealand in order to complete the study and work requirements for becoming a chartered accountant. She moved to Auckland to facilitate this, travelling back to the university when required and to sit exams. Melody's initial job search was a general approach to businesses for graduate-entry positions but this yielded no interest from employers. She then began looking for jobs that drew on her migrant background and she obtained work in the Asian section of a large bank. About six months before being interviewed Melody had decided to set up her own business and has recently taken on an assistant. She is heavily engaged in the business community.

INTERVIEW 11⁹

The Lived Life

This couple are in their forties and come from India. They have two children – a son nearing the end of his secondary education and a younger daughter. The husband is a specialist surgeon who has worked predominantly for missionaries. The wife, who was the principal applicant in the residency application, has a Masters degree but has mostly worked in administration, fundraising and other ancillary roles in relation to her husband's employment. They had been in New Zealand 10 months at the time of interview. I was approached by the wife after she read an article about the research in the local

⁹ As noted earlier, these interviewees preferred this form of identification.

newspaper. While keen to share her own experiences she was particularly interested in having her husband's story told. As he was a migrant doctor, this was very relevant to the study especially since, unlike many earlier migrant doctors, he had come fully aware of the restrictions on his ability to practise but hoped to find work that utilised his wider background and skills. This interview was somewhat different from any of the others in that both the husband and wife were present and contributed. Thus it fell outside the strict model of biographic-narrative interviewing as presented in the methodology section. However, it is possible to construct this in terms of a "couple's" biographic-narrative of their migration story.

This couple chose New Zealand as their primary migration destination and the family arrived in Wellington in February 2003. The husband immediately got casual work as a caregiver and the wife shortly after got temporary employment in a reception role. She briefly tried caregiving herself but "couldn't take it". After about three months the family moved to Auckland as the husband tried to gain temporary registration with the Medical Council. As part of this he had already found a supervised position as a GP in a rural town. However, regulations prevented this and he had to again turn to casual caregiving, which he was still engaged in at the time of the interview, while applying for more appropriate positions. The wife had worked in a temporary administration position with a charitable organisation while the family were in Wellington. She was given office work by a friend following their move to Auckland, but she too kept looking for suitable work. Initially, though, she was forced to take an assistant's job in a bakery before getting a part-time telephone interviewer position with a market research company.

SARALA

The Lived Life

Sarala and her husband Panini migrated from India with their daughter just six months before being interviewed. This was their second attempt at settling in New Zealand as about two years prior to this time they had arrived but only stayed about a week. As such we have a further variation on the standard model of migration. Panini was a university lecturer in commercial law while Sarala had worked in medical reception, typing and administration. Sarala offered to take part in the research after reading about the study in a local newspaper. Although the interview was with Sarala, who did not perfectly fit into our categorical definition of a professional, it was enlightening in regards of their migration experiences. Although gathered second hand, the experiences of Panini, who does fit the category of interest, are valuable contributions to the study.

Given that this was an interview very focused on work and work experiences and with life in New Zealand, there are not a lot of markers to the lives this couple lived in India. Panini has a university background in both accountancy and commercial law and taught the latter as an Assistant Professor. Sarala has worked for about 10 years in medical reception and medical secretarial work at large facilities and hospitals in India. They had, as Sarala described it, a small family - "my husband, me and my daughter" who was nine when they arrived in New Zealand. Their extended family lived elsewhere in India. As acknowledged above, they had moved to New Zealand two years ago but only lasted a week before a combination of factors - family and health related - saw them return home. On this occasion Panini had arrived a month before the family. Initially he attempted unsuccessfully to get accountancy related work. However, after a month he took a job as a customer services person in a service station. This was a considerable distance from his home and so after a time the owner arranged for a transfer to a closer branch. Having

arrived a month later, Sarala spent the first month settling in and getting their daughter enrolled in school. She then began looking for work with little success. After about three months she got called for an interview for a clerical/administration position with a health provider after applying unsuccessfully for a related job. At the time of the interview she was one month into a twelve month fixed term contract.

Appendix B

METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will briefly overview the elements of the research approach adopted in the study – the Biographic-Narrative-Interpretive Method or BNIM. While the Labour Market Dynamics Research Programme (LMD) has employed qualitative approaches quite extensively, these have usually entailed semi-structured interviewing and thematic analyses. Shifting to the BNIM therefore represents some deliberate and significant shifts in relation to aspects of interviewing, analysis and reporting. Though the emphasis on biography might also be viewed as a shift, the LMD has often had, albeit implicitly, a biographical orientation (see, in particular, Shirley et al, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c, 2001d, 2001e).

The use of BNIM in policy related research has been established in two multi-national projects. These are the Cultures of Care Project (e.g. Chamberlayne and King, 1997; Chamberlayne and King, 1996), which explored the experiences of people engaged in primary care-giving roles, and the Social Strategies in Risk Societies (SOSTRIS) Project (e.g. Chamberlayne, Rustin and Wengraf, 2002) that used notions of individualisation and reflexivity to explore the meanings of social exclusion in contemporary European societies.¹⁰ In justifying the choice of approach for this type of research the leaders of the SOSTRIS project argued that "the most important findings of the socio-biographic phase of the project were obtained from *detailed analysis of particular life-histories, not from aggregating or averaging the findings from each of them.* ... The findings of the project thus 'insist on complexity' and on 'individuality' more than they establish standard patterns" (Chamberlayne and Rustin, 1999:10 - emphasis added). However, working between the individual and collective levels in this way "involves a major change in policy thinking" (Chamberlayne and Rustin, 1999:12). This is a shift to what is essentially a 'bottom-up' view that starts with individual lives as a means of understanding social life and change, and as a basis for policy and programme development.

Within the context of the SOSTRIS project Breckner (2002) applies these general themes to the specific case of migration, insisting that both the societal and personal circumstances of migrants be considered. Briefly, Breckner (2002:226, emphasis added) argues that the development of sound and effective policy to deal with the problems people encounter during migration requires "a careful exploration of the *peculiarity and typicality* of migration experiences with regard to their biographical significance emerging in the stories" that people tell.

BIOGRAPHIC-NARRATIVE-INTERPRETIVE METHOD

By way of briefly outlining the BNIM approach I want to consider the interview and analysis phases separately.

¹⁰ The "Other Resources" section of the References chapter provides further information on both projects.

The Interview

The specific interview method that has been employed in this study falls within what Wengraf (2001:111) describes as a "lightly structured depth interview". This method can be broken down into three parts. The first part uses "a single initial narrative question" which is focused on eliciting narratives about "part or all of the individual's life story, their biography" (ibid.). As the name suggests, this approach does not structure the interview around a question schedule as such – regardless of how loose such a schedule might be. Rather, a single question is asked that serves as the basis for eliciting a narrative from the interviewee (called the biographer) around the specific issue under consideration. In this research the single question aimed at inducing narrative (or SQUIN) was:

Tell me the story of how a (professional occupation) from (country of origin) comes to be in (current non-standard work) in New Zealand.

Such a question is necessarily prefaced with some additional remarks which outline the approach being used. Specifically, people were encouraged to tell the above story, from any starting point and up to the present, including the events and experiences which were important for them, and taking as much time as they need. In addition, participants were told that the interviewer would not interrupt, but simply listen and take notes. The interviews were audio-taped. Given that this approach is very different from the usual question and answer format and that it can be hard to orient oneself to producing a narrative in this fashion, the interviewer was also required to support and encourage the person in the telling of their story.

The initial question serves to prompt an initial narrative, which in BNIM terms is highly significant in the analysis. The second part of the interview approach used here begins at the end of the initial narrative. Based on the notes taken, the interviewer then asks a series of questions which are structured to elicit further narratives. These serve to provide further information, to focus on issues of interest, and clarify material already collected. It is important to note two points about this. It must be reinforced that further narratives are being sought. As well, it is not necessary for the narrative to make sense to the interviewer since it is the interviewee's account and its meaning and relevance for them that is important. In asking these follow up questions every effort is made to follow the order and use the words of the interviewee in the initial narrative.

The third and final part of the interview allows the interviewer more control over the nature and focus of questions. This is the opportunity to pursue areas of researcher interest not raised in the preceding parts of the interview and to collect other relevant data (such as demographics). By way of ending that interview a final question is asked around any other material they wish to add, thereby giving them a chance to raise issues that the interview process may have provoked. Following the interview, like many other approaches, the interviewer records impressions regarding the interview. In this study the first set of impressions and the like were recorded immediately following the interview. Similarly the transcription process involves a procedure of attaching recollections and impressions to the text. As Chamberlayne and Rustin (1999:24) put it in respect of their project, "the transcribed narrative and the interviewer's supplementary memories of the interview, then became the resource of data on which interpretation and analysis were based".

The Analysis

This data is then analysed using a lengthy and detailed approach. As a first step the interview transcript is prepared by transforming it into two accounts. In one, the recounted story is organised into a chronology of lived experiences that is sometimes referred to as

the lived story. This differs from the told story in that a person may not recount events in sequence and the lived story rests on verifiable events as data. The Biographical Data Chronology (BDC) serves as the basis for one part of the overall analysis.

The second account remains in the form of the told story but is restructured by breaking it down into segments according to three criteria or types of changes – changes in speaker, topic or the way a topic is spoken about. All but the last are fairly self-evident and need no further comment. The third change refers to what are known as textsorts. Wengraf (2001) identifies five textsorts – his DARNE typology – and these have been employed in this study. They are description, argument, reporting, narrative, and evaluation (the first letters of each giving DARNE). Table 1 outlines the definitions of each. An interview transcript rendered according to this structure is called the Told Story Sequentialisation (TSS) and serves as the basis for the second form of analysis.

Analysis of both the BDC and TSS is conducted by a group of researchers. They approach the analysis initially 'blind' to the whole life history and told story. Instead they consider each life event or each segment of the told story as it emerges without reference to what follows. As Chamberlayne and King (1996:99) put it,

This stage examines the temporal and thematic ordering of the account, the modes of discourse, and the patterns of interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee, and makes detailed analysis of key text segments which are of particular salience to the interpretation of the text.

In respect of the analysis of biographical data, this is designed to generate hypotheses about what might occur and the meaning of events within the various contexts – societal, generational, age, family and milieu - that the person was living through. These can be compared with subsequent events or segments so that those hypotheses that are supported (wholly or partially) are retained while the others are discarded. As Breckner and Rupp (2002:297) summarise it, the process is designed so that the researchers "acquire insight into the variety of possibilities inherent in social contexts" and are then "able to identify those chosen, ignored or rejected by the interviewee".

Analysing the told story in this way – that is, through a process of hypothesising – is aimed at determining how the interviewee makes sense of their life in the present through considering the topics that are presented (what is talked about and left out; how much depth/detail is accorded each topic; and the relationships between topics – both in order of telling, other connections) and how they are talked about (in terms of textsorts). Hypothesising tries to account for all the possibilities (in terms of events in the BDC and segments in the TSS) of what might come next in the person's life or story. Only those supported by subsequent interview data are retained.

While the analysis also recognises that the account that is rendered is affected by the interview process, it is founded on the belief that alternative and more significant influences – what Rosenthal calls the structuring principle of the story, its gestalt – are assumed to guide the selection and way of presentation of the story (Breckner and Rupp, 2002:297). An overall aim of this process is to reconstruct this gestalt sense of biography that can be thought of "as a comprehensive, general pattern of orientation" such that "the narrated life story represents the biographer's overall construction of his or her past and anticipated life, in which biographically relevant experiences are linked up in a temporally and thematically consistent pattern" (Rosenthal, 1993:62).

Thus far there has been independent analyses of the lived life and told story. They are, however, also drawn together for comparison. The goal is to consider how the two are connected. The various forms of analyses serve as the basis for a variety of ways in which the findings can be considered. This is the subject of the final section. Before moving on to that it should be noted that given this rather intensive process, not all the

interviews can be subjected to such a complex and group orientated analysis. In this study all the cases were prepared according to the above protocol. However, only half were analysed by the research team. These were chosen for the richness of their narrative and to represent a cross-section of case types. The others were analysed in depth by the lead researcher working independently using adapted forms of the above methods.

Table 3 Categories of Textsort

The DARNE Typology	
<p>D = Description The assertion that certain entities have certain properties, but in a timeless and non-historical way. No attempt is made at story-telling/narration. There is a sort of timeless 'anthropological present' about the described person, a situation, whatever.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A DESCRIPTIONS is a <i>de-historicised</i> moment of a <i>possible</i> Narrative</p>	
<p>A = Argumentation The development of argument, theorising and position-taking, usually from a present-time perspective, often from a past-perspective, often a blend of the two. It is generally in a stand-alone form (not explicitly connected to the content of a particular narrative). Only sometimes is it in the form of an explicit 'disagreement' with an explicit counter-position, though one is usually implicit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">An ARGUMENT is an <i>expanded</i> Evaluation</p>	
<p>R = Report This is a form in which a sequence of events, experiences and actions is recounted, but in a relatively experience-thin fashion, such that it appears to be recounted from some distance. Very often, it provides an overview of a range of events some of which are then singled out for detailed narrative treatment. Very often, it covers a relatively long period of time. The difference between this and the next category is one of degree.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A REPORT is a <i>thin</i> Narrative</p>	
<p>N = Narrative The telling of a story by which event Y followed event X, and event Z followed event Y, either for causal reasons or just 'because they did'. The story is not told in a very 'thin' way, like a bare (police) report, but rather in 'rich detail', and sometimes even in the present tense by the narrator virtually 'reliving from close up' the sequence of events recounted. Often there are words in 'direct speech' as said by the actors in the story episode being narrated.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A NARRATIVE is a <i>rich</i> Report A NARRATIVE is a <i>re-historicised</i> combination of Descriptive and describable moments</p>	
<p>E = Evaluation The easiest way to think of this is as the 'moral of the story' – of a thin report or a rich narrative –stated explicitly as such, usually before or after the story-sequence In question.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">An EVALUATION is a <i>condensed</i> Argument</p> <p>There may also be text segments that can be thought of as Mixed Category Categorisations. That is, they are made up of two types of textsort (as above). It may be possible to distinguish predominant from subordinate components of the mixture in terms of the relative dominance of the components in the 'flavour' of the text structure sequence identified.</p>	

Source: Wengraf (2001, 243-255).

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<http://www.open.ac.uk/shsw/Research/rpculturesofcare.html>

Social Strategies in Risk Societies - SOSTRIS

<http://www.open.ac.uk/shsw/Research/rpSOSTRIS.html>

The SOSTRIS reports each contain separate reports from the seven participating countries as well as a composite report. They canvas the following areas:

SOSTRIS Working Paper 1 (1997): Social Exclusion in Comparative Perspective

SOSTRIS Working Paper 2 (1998): Case Study Materials – The Early Retired**

SOSTRIS Working Paper 3 (1998): Case Study Materials – Lone Parents**

SOSTRIS Working Paper 4 (1999): Case Study Materials – Ethnic Minorities and Migrants

SOSTRIS Working Paper 5 (1999): Case Study Materials – Unqualified Youth

SOSTRIS Working Paper 6 (1999): Case Study Materials – Ex-traditional Workers**

SOSTRIS Working Paper 7 (1999): Case Study Materials – Unemployed Graduates

SOSTRIS Working Paper 8 (1999): Case Study Materials – Innovative Social Agencies in Europe

SOSTRIS Working Paper 9 (1999): SOSTRIS Final Report – From Biography to Social Policy

** Working Papers 2, 3 & 6 also contain methodological appendices by Breckner, Rustin and Wengraf as listed above.

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