



Labour Market Dynamics
Research Programme

Innovative research in employment

STUDENT ESSAYS

Work in the Twenty First Century: Union Membership, Multiple Job Holding, Gender and Non-Standard Work

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Foreword

The following provide some of the work completed by students enrolled in the paper 176.322 'The World of Work: Contemporary Issues' at the Albany campus of Massey University. A catalyst for the introduction of this paper by Associate Professor Ann Dupuis was to provide an undergraduate paper that connected major themes of the Labour Market Dynamics Research Programme with undergraduate teaching. Each of the essays presented in this Working Paper deals with issues central to LMD considerations. It was decided to publish these because of the excellence of the work, and to recognize that work. It is part of the capability-building activities that the LMDRP looks to engage in. This activity also includes funding students at the Masters and PhD level.

Each of these essays deals with some of the important issues in work and employment, globally and locally, in the twenty-first century:

- the patterns of collective representation and activity in the workplace, and the possibilities for trade unions;
- the nature of off-farm work as an example of portfolio work or multiple job holding;
- the gendered nature of employment and the impacts for women – and men – in a contemporary labour market;
- and the insecurity of work and whether Beck is right to talk of the 'risk society'.

These, and other issues, are important in understanding the evolving nature of paid and unpaid work, given the economic transformations and shifts in policy that marked the late twentieth century and since.

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Union Membership in New Zealand/Aotearoa

Richard Brown

New Zealand was not alone among developed industrial countries in experiencing a sharp fall in trade union membership during the last two decades of the twentieth century. This essay considers the main reasons for New Zealand's particularly severe decline and, using recent research, seeks to explain why, despite a modest recovery in absolute membership, union density has remained fairly static. It begins with a more detailed look at the current state of union membership as indicated by the University of Victoria's Industrial Relations Centre's (IRC) latest annual review of unions (Blackwood et al, 2005). It then turns to the deregulation of the New Zealand labour market, particularly the legislative changes which precipitated the fall in membership. Using some recent research, the essay explores the thorny issue of why there has not been an increase in density alongside the rise in membership since the advent of a more favourable legislative climate in 2000. The reasons are complex and sometimes contradictory, and range from structural issues to individual behaviour. Finally, the essay will briefly consider some of the responses of the union movement to the current situation.

The recently published IRC annual review of union membership (Blackwood et al, 2005) provides an extremely useful qualitative snapshot of the state of union membership in New Zealand during 2004. It also allows us to trace the fortunes of the union movement over a 13-year period since the introduction of the *Employment Contracts Act 1991* (ECA) and takes account of the more recent *Employment Relations Act 2000* (ERA) which superseded it. Union membership increased by 3.6 per cent from December 2003 to December 2004 to stand at 354,058. This is the fifth consecutive annual rise, and represents an overall gain of 17 per cent, or 51,653 members since union membership reached a low point of 302,405 in 1999. However, the current total is also considerably lower than the 514,325 members recorded when the IRC conducted its first survey following the introduction of the ECA.

Although membership has shown consistent growth over the last five years, union density has remained stubbornly at a historically low level. Blackwood et al (2005:2) define density as "the proportion of potential union members who belong to a union" based on the total employed labour force, or more accurately, on wage and salary earners only. After all, the total labour force includes people who are not usually considered potential union members such as employers and the self-employed. In 2004, union density based on wage and salary earners stood at 21.1 per cent (17.1 per cent if measured against the total labour force). It represents a fall of 0.3 percentage points on 2003 and takes density back to where it bottomed-out in 1999 after the ECA. Having reached 21.6 per cent in 2000 immediately following the ERA, union density has stuck at around 21 per cent. In contrast, in 1991, it stood at 43 per cent.

Against the background of a booming economy, Blackwood et al (2005) explain the most recent annual slip in density by pointing out that growth in union membership has not kept pace with the even bigger growth in wage and salary earners of 4.8 per cent. Furthermore, they suggest that although density has not managed to grow beyond the 21-22 per cent range since 1998, this "remains an impressive achievement

during a period of strong labour force growth coupled with high natural membership attrition (for example, through retirement and turnover)” (Blackwood et al, 2005:2).

The IRC survey also provides detail of the distribution and growth of union membership by public/private sector split, industry sector, gender and ethnicity. Turning to the first issue, there is a marked divide. Survey responses indicate that over half of union members (53.7 per cent) are employed in the public sector. In addition, the public sector provided 70 per cent of the growth in total membership in 2004. This is not reflected in the wider wage and salary earning workforce, where Blackwood et al (2005) suggest that less than half are in the public sector. They also illustrate a marked split in density between the two sectors, calculating a 66 per cent density for the public sector and only 12 per cent for the private sector.

A closer look at union membership by industry sector reinforces the picture of concentration in certain parts of the economy and the disparity between this and the distribution of wage and salary earners. Some 51 per cent of union members are in the public and community services sector (including health and education), which accounts for only 25 per cent of total wage and salary earners. Conversely, 23 per cent of wage and salary workers are employed in retail, wholesale, restaurants and hotels where only 4 per cent of union members are found. Furthermore, in 2004, union membership grew by 4 per cent in public and community services, but contracted by 11 per cent in retail etc. Blackwood et al (2005) qualify the recent decline in the latter sector, however, pointing out that union membership has shown consistent growth in this area since 1996 and that this has exceeded the rate of growth in wage and salary earners.

The manufacturing sector, historically a stronghold of trade unionism, and currently where most private sector members are found, experienced its third annual decline in membership during 2004. That most of this is due to “the loss of unionised jobs overseas, and high attrition through retirement” (Blackwood et al, 2005: 5) is partially backed up by the union density for the sector. This slipped 1.4 percentage points to 27.6 per cent in 2004, but remains relatively high for a predominantly private sector. In contrast, unions have only a 4 per cent density in retail. Density in public and community services stands at 43.6 per cent, down a little from 45.1 per cent in 2003.

Turning to gender and ethnicity, the survey shows that women are relatively over represented in union membership compared to their presence in the labour force. Only 46 per cent of the labour force is female but women make up 52 per cent of union members. Blackwood et al (2005) suggest that is a reflection of high female representation in the public and community services sectors which, as we have seen, is the contemporary stronghold of unionism. The researchers caution about the usefulness of their ethnicity data but nonetheless, it suggests that Maori and particularly Pacific peoples have a disproportionately higher rate of union membership than their representation in the labour force, while NZ European/Pakeha represent a significantly lower proportion of union members than their share of the labour force.

The deregulation of the labour market, which formed part of the neo-liberal restructuring of the New Zealand economy in the late-1980s/early-1990s, is widely seen as the primary cause of the dramatic decline in union membership (Kelsey,

1997). Of particular significance were the radical changes to employment legislation which culminated in the *Employment Contracts Act* (1991). Up until the introduction of the ECA, an arbitration-based system of industrial relations had evolved in New Zealand. Unions enjoyed exclusive rights to bargain in many sectors and this effectively made union membership compulsory for the large number of workers covered by collectively negotiated industry awards. The consequence of this, according to one view, was “artificially high levels of union density” (Charlwood & Haynes, 2005: 3). The Fourth Labour government began the process of restructuring this regime with the *Labour Relations Act 1987* and the *State Services Act 1998* (Conway, 2004; Kelsey, 1997). Among other things, this legislation set a minimum size for unions of 1,000 members and restricted second-tier bargaining but exclusive union coverage and national awards remained. Nevertheless, Conway (2004: 222) suggests that “the combined effects of these legislative changes and economic deregulation considerably weakened the union movement”.

When the National Party, committed to a more radical deregulation of the labour market, formed a new government in 1990, it quickly passed the ECA. This new legislation represented a dramatic departure from previous industrial relations. At its heart lay the idea that the employment relationship is a contract between two equal parties. Out went centralized bargaining and union exclusivity and in came enterprise bargaining and individual contracts (Charlwood & Haynes, 2005; McLaren et al, 2004). Freedom of association was given to both employers and employees and union coverage became contestable (Conway, 2004). There is wide agreement that the ECA had an immediate and dramatic impact on union membership, both in absolute numbers and density, as the IRC statistics demonstrate. The most dramatic decline occurred in the first couple of years (Haynes et al, 2005b). Charlwood and Haynes (2005: 10) assert that:

The key point here is that union membership decline was driven overwhelmingly by political and legislative change; although the ECA was introduced at a time of high and increasing unemployment, the sheer scale and rapidity of the decline in density rules out any other explanation.

Although many workers may have left unions because the new law gave them the freedom to do so, or because of real or perceived employer pressure, it is suggested that another reason was that the ECA put them beyond the reach of unions. The shift from centralised to local and individual bargaining made it much more difficult for unions to service their members, particularly “those unions whose members were widely scattered in small workplaces and/or in lower-paid work with atypical hours” (Charlwood and Haynes, 2005: 4).

In 2000, the ECA was eventually replaced by the *Employment Relations Act*, introduced by a new Labour-Alliance government. In contrast to the ECA, the ERA recognises the “inherent inequality of bargaining power in the employment relationship” (Wilson cited in Haynes et al, 2005b: 4) and seeks to promote collective bargaining. The main ways it does so is through an emphasis on good faith relationships as well as improved union recognition and access. It is worth pointing out that the ERA is by no means a return to the pre-ECA era – there is no compulsory union membership or arbitration. It has also been criticized for allowing employers to

pass on terms and conditions negotiated with unions to non-union employees. This and the resulting 'free-riding' will be discussed further below.

As the IRC figures illustrate, the sharp fall in union membership has been halted since the ERA was introduced and unions have, in fact, experienced membership growth since 2000 (Blackwood et al, 2005). However, this growth has been relatively modest and does not take total membership back to anywhere near its peak before the ECA (Haynes et al, 2005b). Most significantly, density has not increased and remains stuck at around 21 per cent, the level it was before the ERA was introduced. We now turn to some of the explanations for this limited recovery in union membership, beginning with some of the wider changes such as the growth of non-standard work, organisational change and the attitudes of young workers.

Conway (2004: 223) identifies the growth in non-standard work as an important problem for unions, suggesting that "casualisation, contracting out, privatization and other measures that marginalise labour create both the conditions for resentment among workers and a sense of powerlessness to respond". Others point to the growth of boundaryless workplaces and careers which are seen as replacing older permanent employment relationships (McLaren et al, 2004). Unions face further organising difficulties and high transaction costs in smaller workplaces, a large and growing sector. In New Zealand, small and medium enterprises, those employing less than 20 staff, account for 97.3 per cent of businesses and 49.9 per cent of full-time equivalent jobs in the private sector, where unions are weakest. To illustrate the difficulties for unions, Conway (2004: 223) cites the example of a union that went from negotiating 49 awards and agreements before the ECA to dealing with 670 collective contracts in 1992, while its resources fell by half. As we saw above, Charlwood & Haynes (2005) also identified the problems unions had in reaching such dispersed workers as a central cause of the fall in membership post-ECA.

Conway (2004) identifies other structural changes that impact on unions. These include the high level of redundancies that accompanied restructuring in the late 1980s/1990s and the subsequent high turnover of jobs in the labour market. For example, the Telecom workforce halved from 16,265 to 8,136 between 1989 and 1998. Meanwhile, between 1987 and 1996, 1,451,000 new jobs were created in New Zealand while 1,392,700 were lost. The impact that this restructuring had on union membership is difficult to gauge. Charlwood & Haynes (2005: 10) found that "only a minor part of the decline in union density in New Zealand over the period 1990-2002 can be attributed to changes in the structure of the economy and workforce".

The difficulty that unions experience recruiting young workers is another area of discussion. There is a generation gap in union membership. Union density for workers under 29 years old is only half that of workers over 30 (Haynes et al, 2005c). Spence (cited in McLaren et. al. 2004: 23) "reflects that an entire generation who grew up in post-Rogernomics New Zealand have entered the workforce with no idea of what unionism is about". Meanwhile, Conway (2004) refers to the 'incumbency effect', the idea that young workers are heavily influenced by their early work experiences, so that an initial non-union experience will negatively impact on their future decisions about union membership. In contrast, Haynes et al (2005b) argue that 'worker voice' research challenges the idea that young people are individualistic or anti-union.

Young workers are generally no less positive to unions than older workers and may, if anything, be more enthusiastic.

In their research on the 'representation gap' in New Zealand, Haynes et al (2005b) suggest that among young workers, Maori, the lower paid and workers in smaller service industry businesses in the private sector, there is a greater "unsatisfied demand for union membership" than the general labour force. Using data from the *New Zealand Worker Representation and Participation Survey 2003*, Haynes et al (2005b: 10) calculate that 17.8 per cent of workers in non-union workplaces "would be very or fairly likely to join a union" if one was present. If one adds this to the existing union density of around 21 per cent of total wage and salary earners, it gives a potential density of around 39 per cent – the difference between the actual density and the potential representing the 'gap'.

In fact, the researchers caution against reading too much into these figures - after all, we can't be certain how many of those likely to join a union would do so if one were present. They suggest a more realistic potential density of about 30 per cent, implying a smaller, but not insubstantial, 'representation gap' of nine per cent. The point is that, for at least a portion of non-union workers, it is not hostility to unions that prevent them joining but the inability of unions to reach these potential recruits. "These workers are inherently more difficult and costly to recruit, restricting the ability of New Zealand unions to recruit the pool of non-union workers who are inclined to join a union if presented with the opportunity" (Haynes et al, 2005b: 11).

The other issue that Haynes et al (2005b) and other commentators (Haynes & Boxall, 2004; Conway, 2004; Blackwood et al, 2005) highlight in the problems New Zealand unions have encountered rebuilding membership and density is 'free-riding'. 'Free-riders' are workers who enjoy the benefits of a union-negotiated collective agreement but are not members and therefore do not contribute to the costs incurred negotiating the agreement (Haynes & Boxall, 2004). They can do this because the law does not prevent employers simply passing on salary increases and improvements in conditions won by unions to non-union employees. This includes the ERA, despite the fact it is designed to promote collective bargaining. Even the most recent amendments to the ERA which ostensibly address this issue "may prove at most a minor impediment to the continuation of this practice" (Blackwood et al, 2005: 10).

The extent to which 'free-riding' is a passive or calculating act is difficult to judge, although research by Haynes et al (2005b: 12) provides some worrying evidence for unions that there is a high level of "conscious, fairly calculating avoidance of union membership" in New Zealand workplaces. Around 62.3 percent of non-members at unionised sites had been union members before and 66.1 per cent of those who had never been members had been approached to join. The researchers do go on to caution that for other reasons not all of these non-members should necessarily be seen as 'calculating free-riders'.

Of course, non-union employees cannot indirectly access all union benefits, such as advocacy and representation in employment disputes, but it has been suggested that 'free-riding' is also facilitated by the growth of other options for workers. One area is the expansion of individual legal rights spanning from legislation in the 1970s prohibiting racial and sexual discrimination, to more recent laws guaranteeing

minimum parental leave and holiday entitlements (Conway, 2004; Haynes & Boxall, 2004). Haynes & Boxall (2004) also highlight the part played by the ECA in extending personal grievance rights to all employees where previously, grievances could only be accessed via union membership. The ERA did not reinstate this exclusive right to the trade unions and individuals can still use employment lawyers and other advocates to pursue grievances.

It has been suggested that another alternative to union membership, and therefore an impediment to its recovery, is the growth of human resource management (HRM) (Machin & Wood, 2005). Conway (2004: 224) touches on the role played by employers in providing an alternative voice for their staff in the shape of “quality circles, team-building programmes and consultation mechanisms”. Research by Haynes et al (2005a) suggests that 40-50 per cent of the New Zealand workforce is covered by some kind of joint, employer-employee consultation, and that the effectiveness of this consultation is rated as high by most workers. This coverage is higher than the 36 per cent of wage and salary earners covered by union-negotiated collective agreements, although the report suggests that “an effective union presence is associated with greater effectiveness of joint consultation” (Haynes et al, 2005a: 15). Research into HRM and unions in the UK between 1980 and 1998 suggests that HRM practices do not substitute for unions or explain the decline in union membership. In fact, there is some evidence that HRM structures and unions compliment each other (Machin & Wood, 2005).

This essay has so far discussed the main reason for the dramatic decline in union membership in New Zealand and surveyed some of the arguments about why there has only been a modest recovery. It now turns briefly to some of the actual and proposed responses to this from the union movement and researchers. Peter Conway, Director Policy and Industrial, and Economist for the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions (CTU), considers some of the wide range of potential strategies for union growth (Conway, 2004). These include unions engaging in a partnership approach with management over issues like skills development, or expanding union concerns and constituencies beyond purely economic issues to social, cultural and environmental ones. The latter is related to ‘community unionism’, the idea that union rights are part of our wider human rights and that unions need to win broader public support by linking their campaigns with the concerns of other groups in society. Many unions have also widened the services they offer to members, such as access to discounted health insurance, home loans and other financial services.

In recent years, many unions have turned to the ‘organising model’ to rebuild membership (Conway, 2004). This involves a shift from a membership-servicing approach to one which encourages leadership and activism among union members on the ‘shop floor’, including the development of delegate structures and the provision of training for workplace activists. Conway (2004) points out that moving to this model often involves a dramatic shift in the culture of unions, as well as a potentially expensive investment in resources such as specialist organisers and training for delegates. The ‘organising model’ appears to have enjoyed some success in New Zealand. The New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO), for example, which uses this model, waged a very successful campaign for a national collective agreement and a substantial pay rise during 2004.

In their research on the ‘representation gap’ and the limitations of union reach in the private sector, Haynes et al (2005b: 11) offer a more critical view, asserting that “the sort of universalist prescriptions currently advocated under the ‘organising model’ need to be treated with care”. They suggest, on the one hand, that unions may be able to recruit what they refer to as the ‘low hanging fruit’, that is workers in larger private sector workplaces with poor management or management neutral to unions. On the other hand, they argue that to penetrate the great number of small private sector workplaces, unions may have to take more radical steps. This could involve mergers and the creation of structures that link what Haynes et al (2005b: 11) refer to as “the primary and secondary labour markets”. Even if unions were to adopt such radical approaches, they would still face obstacles building and maintaining membership in these hard-to-reach workplaces.

One radical approach to union organising in these small private sector businesses and indeed to confronting the wider problem of recruiting non-standard workers, is provided by the Unite union (McLaren et al, 2004). Launched in 1994, Unite is a general union which does not restrict itself to a particular occupation or sector. Instead it focuses on the low-paid, part-time, casual and multiple-job holding workers in the private, services sector – the marginal non-standard workers. To attract these workers, Unite offers low membership fees, capped at \$4.50 per week. The union has succeeded in recruiting workers as diverse as cleaners in Auckland strip clubs, young workers in an Auckland cinema chain and workers in Burger King fast food outlets, but it is difficult to quantify its success in term of total membership (Spence, 2003; Newman, 2005). It is worth remembering that in the most recent IRC annual survey (Blackwood et al, 2005), the retail, wholesale, restaurants and hotels sector, where many low-paid, non-standard workers can be found, suffered the biggest drop in union membership and currently only accounts for 4 per cent of total membership.

Union membership in New Zealand has stabilised after the dramatic fall experienced in the wake of the ECA. Absolute membership has increased since 1999 but union density has remained fairly static at about 21 per cent. Meanwhile, membership remains heavily concentrated in the public sector and conversely weak in the private sector. Explanations for this situation range from the problems of recruiting non-standard and young workers to ‘free-riding’ and the putative rise of individualism in society. The relative importance of these and other factors is the subject of much debate in the research. In many ways, their relevance can only be tested in practice by the union movement. Unions are clearly trying to wrestle with the problem of low density, as we can see from the spread of the ‘organising model’ and radical initiatives such as Unite. It remains to be seen whether the unions can regain more of the ground lost to the “New Zealand Experiment” (Kelsey, 1997).

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Multiple Job Holding on a New Zealand Farm

Sarah Fisher

Introduction

In New Zealand, multiple job holding is an established feature of the farming sector. Both men and women commonly take up other employment in addition to their farming responsibilities. There is a whole host of reasons for engaging in multiple jobs; personal, social and economic motives all act as push and pull factors. This essay begins by exploring the narrative of my parents' experiences as multiple job holders. Taylor and McClintock's 2004 work, *Some Characteristics of Multiple Job Holding by New Zealand Farm Men and Women*, will then be used as a framework from which to examine my parents' experiences. In undertaking this essay, I am not claiming that my parents' story is typical. Rather, I aim to explore the similarities and differences between my parents' experiences of multiple job holding as expressed in their life stories and the phenomenon of multiple job holding as it is described by Taylor and McClintock. The definition of "paid or unpaid work for more than one employer or family business or farm in the course of the most recent week" (Taylor & McClintock, 2004, p. 2) is in line with my parents' experiences.

Narrative

The narrative of my parents' experiences as multiple job holders was collected by talking to them. Firstly, I explained what multiple job holding was and that I was interested in understanding their experiences of this pattern of employment. I explained that research had been undertaken on multiple job holders in New Zealand's farming community and that I wanted to explore the parallels between their stories and this research. I brought copies of this work for them to examine. My parents told their story by sitting down and just talking about their experiences. I did not have any formal interview questions but did interact with them, asking questions that would clarify their experiences. Several of my drafts and the final assignment were sent to my parents to read before this essay was submitted. I made it clear to them that the aim of this piece of work was to tell their story, freely allowing them to correct any inaccuracies or omissions that I had made in my work.

Background

In order to make sense of my parents' experience of multiple job holding, the reader requires some background information. My parents run a sheep and beef farm in the King Country. My grandfather and his brother bought the land in 1948, and ran the farm as a partnership. My father was employed as a farm shepherd on the property. Although he was a wage earner, his family connections meant that he took on responsibility for work on the farm that was not covered by his pay. In 1987, my grandfather and his brother retired, and the farm was divided. My father and mother took over my grandfather's share of the property to run as their own farm.

My mother moved to the farm after marrying my father in 1975. She was not from a farming background and did not physically take part in the running of the farm, for example, stock or yard work. However, my mother did take a very active role in the support side of the operation. Even when my father was technically only a farm

employee, my mother undertook unpaid work in support of the farm operation. This included providing food for shearers and workers, taking on responsibility for the farm bookkeeping and acting as a “second pair of hands” when necessary. Once my parents took over the running of their share of the original farm, my mother’s role increased. As a full partner in the farm, she was actively involved in farm management decisions, such as: buying new machinery; the purchase of additional land; and the employment of both casual and full-time workers. My parents’ property is rural and the nearest town, Ohura, is 16 kilometres away. The main employment opportunities (either directly or indirectly) are commonly related to the school or the prison. The next sizeable town is Taumarunui, which is located 62 kilometres away and serves as the service centre for the surrounding farms.

Multiple Job Holding

Taylor and McClintock (2004) report that multiple job holding (MJH) by farming men and women is now a long term employment pattern within the farming sector. They found that of those who were classed as multiple job holders (MJHs), 62 per cent had been employed in their second job for at least 10 years, and of those that held a third job, more than two-thirds reported that they had also held that job for over 10 years (Taylor & McClintock, 2004, p. 5).

My parents’ experiences fit well with Taylor and McClintock’s findings, with both of them holding a second job for over 10 years. In particular, my mother’s patterns of work closely parallel their findings. She held her second job, as an employee of the local Area School, for well over ten years. Moreover, in 1983, she started a third job as an Education Officer at the prison. However, the length of time that my mother has been employed in second and third jobs is substantially longer than the average time reported by Taylor and McClintock.¹

There appear to be many complex reasons for multiple job holding amongst farming men and women. Research that examined employment patterns in the 1980s and 1990s, such as Rhodes & Journeaux’ (1995) ‘Off-farm income study’ or McCrostie Little & Taylor’s (1997) ‘Means of Survival: A Study of Off-farm Employment in New Zealand’, found that many farm men and women moved into multiple jobs out of necessity. McCrostie Little & Taylor (1997) found that of the farm households involved in off farm work, close to two-thirds rated the additional income as important or very important for their farm finances. Often this employment provided the means to offset the cyclical nature of farm produce prices, or help dampen the effects of a ‘bad year’, such as lower than expected productivity.

However, more recent research has found that although economic reasons are ranked highly as motives for taking on multiple jobs, other factors also have an impact (Taylor & McClintock, 2004). Taylor & McClintock (2004, p. 8) found that only three per cent of respondents claimed to hold more than one job “because they had to” but identified three broad categories that encompassed the motivations for taking on multiple jobs. These were:

1. Pursuit of a career.
2. Satisfaction from having an additional job out side of the farm.

¹ 13.6 years for a second job and 10.8 years for a third (Taylor & McClintock, 2004, p. 5).

3. Economic factors, such as “generating funds for debt repayment”, “financial independence” and an “improved standard of living” (Taylor & McClintock, 2004, p.8).

My parents became multiple job holders in different ways and for different reasons. My mother’s story of multiple job holding illustrates a more conscious movement into this type of work, while my father’s experience shows an almost accidental development of this type of working pattern. The reasons and motivations for my mother to engage in employment outside of the farm, like those expressed by Taylor and McClintock (2004), are complex and consist of a mixture of push and pull factors. As a result, my mother’s hours of work and the ratio of time spent at her different jobs, have changed in response to both work and family developments.

When my mother first moved to the farm, the primary motivation for engaging in other work outside of the farm was the social factor. She was new to the area, and was living in a small flat, and she saw employment primarily as a way of making social connections outside of the family farm setting, although employment also fulfilled a secondary function of supplementing family income. My mother’s previous employment experience had been as a teleprinter operator for The National Airways Corporation, and although there were no jobs in this line of work in Ohura (or indeed any of the larger towns in the area), these skills were transferable and she was able to find employment working as the secretary at the local area school.

Working in another job outside of the farm also allowed my mother to develop her own career. The school where she worked had a vacancy for a typing teacher. By undertaking a diploma of teaching via correspondence, my mother was able to take on this role. In summary, when my mother first moved into employment off the farm, until the birth of her first child, the pull factors of career development and social interaction were the major motivators for multiple job holding. Financial incentives were a secondary factor and the extra income allowed my parents to have a higher standard of living than they would have had without my mother working.

Changes in my parents’ personal and family circumstances impacted on the motivations and ability of my mother to continue to work outside of the farm. The birth of her first child resulted in the ‘push’ factor of income dominating the motivations for multiple job holding, but at the same time, resulted in a need to cut back the hours that she worked outside of the farm. This change in job holding patterns was also reported in Taylor and McClintock’s (2004) research. They found that family factors such as starting a family influenced respondents’ decision-making processes in relation to work, resulting in women “returning to their previous occupation, changing from part-time to full-time work, or quitting their jobs as they juggled their careers with their family commitments” (Taylor & McClintock, 2004, p.11).

After the birth of her first child in 1979, my mother’s pattern of work changed significantly. She continued to support the farm operation in different ways, but had to change her work patterns outside of the farm, returning to work 8 weeks after the birth to a job sharing arrangement. She shared her job at the local school with a close friend whose child was a year older than her own baby; while one worked, the other took over the childcare responsibilities. This arrangement meant that both women

were able to continue working and making financial contributions to their families. In 1983, just before the birth of her second child, my mother took on her third job as the Education Officer at the Ohura prison. Again, economic reasons predominated as push factors for taking on this employment. The part-time nature of this work, and the fact that it took place during the evening when my father could assume responsibility for childcare, meant that it was possible for my mother to take this opportunity.

The development of non-farm careers was touched on by Taylor & McClintock (2004) in relation to an individual's motivations for holding multiple jobs as a way of pursuing a career. This idea was developed in an earlier paper by Taylor et al (2003), who suggested that "many become professional career women with a strong commitment to their profession....some reaching management level" (Taylor et al, 2003, p. 8). As outlined above, my mother was able to develop professionally as a result of her multiple job holdings. Working at the school, she became a senior teacher, teaching typing, careers and transition. At the same time, her role as the Education Officer at the prison grew, resulting in an extension of her hours and ongoing professional development. However, the small nature of the prison and the downscaling of the school in the 1990s from an Area School to a district primary also limited the extent to which my mother could progress in her education profession. In order to develop her career further, she would have had to move to larger institutions. She explains that this was never really a consideration. Although she had developed a career outside of the farm, and felt a strong commitment to her educational profession, she felt that the farm was the corner stone of her and her family's life.

In contrast, my father's move to alternative work away from the family farm emerged in a more entrepreneurial way. In 1990, severe floods struck the Ohura area, leaving many farms with extensive damage to farm access and waterways. As a result, local earth works contractors had a large backlog of work and it would have taken several months of waiting before a contractor could clear the flood damage on our farm. My parents felt that such a long wait was not tenable, because it meant that many of the paddocks would have been inaccessible to livestock, adversely affecting the running of the farm.

My parents' solution to this problem was to purchase a second-hand digger of their own. The motivation for the purchase of this machinery was for family farm work only. However, other farmers approached my parents to see if they could hire the digger to clean up their own flood damage. This purchase thus developed into an enterprise that produced off farm work and income for my father. Although the initial work was a result of the flood damage, my father continued to get offers of work from neighbours to do routine farm maintenance on their properties. Outside contracting work became a regular feature of my father's employment, and a number of neighbouring farms and stations used my father's contracting business as their primary earthworks contractor.

One of the interesting features of my father's employment experience in relation to multiple job holding is how he explains and reconciles his on farm versus off farm work. His understanding of this work was in line with findings reported by Taylor et al (2003), where farmers often did not "identify this work as secondary employment, but an extension of the farm business" (Taylor et al, 2003, p7). He therefore did not identify with any of the categories outlined by Taylor and McClintock (2004) (see

page 7) as motivations for moving into earthworks contracting. When discussing contracting, my father does not refer to the use of the machines as income that supports other aspects of the farm, but instead explains how the outside contracting work was supplementary income that covered the maintenance and running costs of the machines when they were used on the family farm.

My father's accidental discovery of a shortfall in the area's contracting market allowed my parents to further develop their earthworks business. The farm did not have such machinery as a truck or a bulldozer. Although this machinery would have been very useful, there was not enough work on the farm to justify purchasing such expensive plant. However, with the potential for my father to use this machinery when contracting on other farms, these purchases could be financially justified. In summary, my father's move into off farm employment was not driven by the pursuit of a career, satisfaction from having an additional job or financial necessity. It is really an example of how my family's farm operation evolved as opportunities were presented. This resulted in a diversification in the sources of income that came into the farm.

Another important aspect of my parents' work experience is their involvement in community and voluntary organisations. Throughout the telling of their work history, they constantly made reference to this unpaid work. Their participation was not confined to activities from which they could directly benefit, such as Plunket and Federated Farmers, but included district flower shows, A&P shows, the voluntary ambulance service and various conservation boards. My mother and father were not easily able to explain this seemingly remarkable voluntary contribution. They made comments along the lines of 'that is what was done' or 'I was asked to' or 'we were just doing our part'. Taylor and McClintock (2004) appeared to have a good explanation for this phenomenon, calling these voluntary works "contributions to the social capital" (Taylor and McClintock, 2004, p. 15) of a community. This explanation appears to encapsulate my parents' voluntary work experiences.

Discussion

Although I have tried to be true to my parents' narrative, this essay does not really do justice to their experiences as multiple job holders. Using Taylor and McClintock's (2004) work as a framework to examine my parents' work patterns was useful, as it allowed me to articulate the significance and make sense of some of my parents' experiences, such as my mother's development of a career in education or their respective voluntary work. However, many of the complexities involved in their working lives were so intricate that outlining them in a linear manner was close to impossible. The interrelationship between work, farm, family and community meant that the sphere of work could never be separated completely from the other components of their lives.

My mother seemed to encapsulate this idea of the interrelationship between the different aspects of their lives when she described the different functions of her kitchen. The homestead kitchen was where the family was fed; where farm contacts were signed; where the bank manager, farm consultants and stock buyers sat, ate lunch and discussed the business of farming; where she prepared schoolwork for class the next day, or read over prison reports; where prospective farm job interviews

took place; and finally, where children's homework was completed. Although multiple job holding was a key feature of my parents' work experiences, it was always related and linked to the other spheres of their lives: the farm, the family and the community.

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The Gendered Culture of Public and Private Spheres

Brigid Sinclair

New Zealand's gendered culture does not support women's unpaid family and community work, and expects women to privately finance carer responsibilities. Moreover, this same culture demands women's contribution to the paid workforce and encourages both continued education and individualistic motivations. As a consequence, many women feel that they must sacrifice their career aspirations and accept part-time or underemployment in order to manage their dual responsibilities. This essay will argue that women are being socialised into a secondary earning role. It will examine those factors that affect women's decisions to invest in parenthood, paid work or both.

It will argue that women have limited choices, and that those women who choose part-time work and underemployment in order to balance familial responsibilities and career aspirations, are inadvertently perpetuating women's overall position as secondary earners in relation to men. This in turn maintains the gendered culture of public and private spheres and women's subordination. It will argue that women are exercising control over their fertility in an effort to improve their situation and that this is contributing to a declining fertility rate.

For the purpose of this essay, gender will be defined as the:

...socially constructed expectations for male and female behaviour that are found (in variable form) in every human society. A gender system's expectations prescribe a division of labour and responsibilities between women and men and grant different rights and obligations to them" (Mason, as cited in McDonald, 2000: 159). Gender equity refers to balance, fairness and justice in social, political and reproductive areas of said expectations.²

Women enter employment for a variety of reasons, ranging from economic necessity to their own professional or material aspirations. But while women's orientations towards employment are more similar to men's than ever before, men and women still do not participate equally in the provision of care giving. However, the explicitly "gender-differentiated materialist logic of politically recognizing, and financially supporting mother's care giving" (Orloff, 2004: 2) is being displaced by supposedly gender-neutral notions of recognizing and supporting only economically "active" adults.³ Indeed, the emphasis on the responsibility of all adults, men and women, to support themselves through paid employment ignores the contradictions inherent in the continuing demands of care (Orloff, 2004).

Gendered policy has evolved from supporting women as full-time caregivers (in the context of households headed by breadwinning men or as single mothers) to requiring

² It is worth noting that gender equity is a value-laden concept, therefore the question of whose values are being applied is pertinent.

³ It can be argued that this effectively leaves primarily women with the need to privately fund all care because it is considered to be 'inactivity' under this system

and supporting employment for all. Systems of social provision and regulation are being restructured on the premises of increasing individual autonomy, often with reference to increasing levels of women's and mothers' employment.⁴ Apter (1993) believes that the continued rapid growth in the numbers of women in paid work will be the most significant change in the workforce this century. Nevertheless, neither the government nor corporations have addressed the reality of their workers' domestic concerns (Apter, 1993).

In the New Zealand context, notwithstanding the strong emphasis on equal employment opportunities, restructuring of the public sector has been indisputably masculine in tone. As Apter (1994:244) writes: "[w]orkers are wives, yet workers are still assumed to have wives. Those workers without domestic concerns, i.e. those who have wives to take on those concerns for them, or those who are childless, are those who continue to advance more rapidly and more easily and hence gain positions in which these patterns are reinforced".⁵ Formally, the restructuring of the public sector is described as increasing efficiency and effectiveness. In colloquial terms, the goal of restructuring has been to make the public sector 'lean and mean' (James & Saville-Smith, 1994). This has been achieved at the expense of many.

The current market economy and state devolution does not ensure that local groups and consumers have adequate resources to fulfil their needs. It expects consumers to shoulder the responsibility for servicing those needs. Because many communities are under-resourced, reliance is placed on the largely unpaid work of community members, which in most societies means the burden falls on women. Much of women's voluntary work involves caring for dependants in the community, such as the elderly, children, the chronically ill, disabled and handicapped (Horsfield, as cited in James & Saville-Smith, 1989:107).

Women are also expected to care directly for the community. In the voluntary sector, women have been central in the provision of support for sexually abused and beaten women and children; in early childhood education and care; in issues of elderly care and in community health initiatives. Yet traditionally there have been limited funds for such community development. It is more and more difficult for women to take on care responsibilities. Coupled with the increased pressure for women to contribute to the paid workforce, the voluntary foundation of our economic system is becoming increasingly unstable (James & Saville Smith, 1994).⁶

James and Saville-Smith (1994) believe that the way in which the voluntary sector works to fill the vacuum left by disappearing State services obscures the full implications of State devolution. "By acquiescing to the continuing and indeed increased use of women's care to substitute for State services, we maintain the

⁴ Autonomy is defined in the Collins Dictionary (2001) as meaning self-government and freedom of action. It could therefore be argued that pressuring women to accept employment has nothing to do with increasing autonomy. However, increased employment under favourable conditions usually has the effect of decreasing economic dependencies, or increasing economic independence, which might be seen, in a commodified society at least, as the foundation for autonomy (Orloff, 2004).

⁵ Evidence that childless women, or those without domestic concerns, advance more rapidly within organizations has not gone unnoticed by other women and figures largely in their choices (Skeates, 2005).

⁶ The ramifications of this cannot be dealt with in this essay due to word restrictions

gendered culture and prevent the access of disadvantaged groups to social resources” James and Saville-Smith (1994:107).

They argue that if the aim is greater gender equity, then the assumptions currently determining the direction of policies, which concentrate on individualism and the market on one hand, and the collective sacrifices of women as carers on the other, need to be overturned. To achieve this, they believe the connection between the gendered culture and the delegation of State responsibility to ‘the community’ must be revealed and challenged. However, the seeming lack of alternative care structures on which women can rely makes any decision to challenge the expected role of carer a frightening moral choice (Society for Research on Women, as cited in James & Saville-Smith, 1989: 107).

James and Saville-Smith (1989) observe that most women in our culture are still primarily identified with and committed to the work they carry out, unpaid, within the home. That work entails both the fulfilment of partners’ and children’s material needs through housework, and their psychological needs through emotional support. They argue that the primacy of this commitment remains whether or not women are in paid labour. Women may work in both the home and the paid workforce but it is still the home work that defines females in our society as ‘women’. The shape of the private sphere governs women’s culture. The private sphere in turn is determined by the requirements of a masculine culture situated in the public sphere of paid work. Significantly, the private sphere is relegated by the very nature of our cash-economy to a position of functional dependence on the public. For women, this implies not so much exclusion from the public sphere but that they, possessing the primary role in the private sphere, ultimately become dependent on those with a primary role in the public sphere - men (James and Saville-Smith, 1989).

Simon Duncan and Rosalind Edwards (1999) point out that with the changed shape of the private sphere today, it may well be more ‘rational’ for women to prioritize full-time paid work. They can no longer depend on a ‘breadwinner’ husband to support them and their children. They need to be more self-reliant. In 2005, regardless of whether a woman is on her own or in a union of some kind, with or without children, she has to face costs which were largely inconceivable at the individual level in the 1970s (Skeats, 2005). These costs, to a greater or lesser extent, will influence a woman’s decisions about her involvement in the workforce over her lifetime and her ability to support herself and/or her family.

However, Solsona (as cited in Duncan & Edwards 1999:262) argues that economic pressures seldom translate into changed behaviour if gender understandings are against this, and women’s gender understandings mean that they will rarely take full economic advantage of men, even if they are in a position to do so. Carling (as cited in Duncan & Edwards, 1999: 261) adds to this by pointing out that this self-sacrifice might be seen as self-preservation. This is presumably not only preservation in the sense of a woman’s own understanding of her identity but also in terms of the often aggressive or violent reaction of men if they feel that their dominant gender identity is being threatened.

Solsona suggests that not only is the current decline in fertility rates a collective, social and cultural phenomenon; it is also inevitably deeply gendered. Tronto and

Sevenhuijsen (as cited in Duncan Edwards, 1999:261) write that caring, including mothering, is a 'socially negotiated ethic rooted in practical activity'. Although motherhood has specific material consequences for those who undertake it, the emotional commitment that it entails goes beyond a purely labour related concept of work. Motherhood, according to Neale (as cited in Duncan & Edwards, 1999:16) "involves the development over time of moral commitment to an ongoing, interpretive relationship with a child...invariably it involves interweaving children into the life plan and life style of the primary carer".

Moral situations are not defined in terms of economic exchange but in terms of the maintenance of relationships, the meeting of emotional needs and the avoidance of harm. This means that women need to establish an emotional equilibrium between connectedness and empathy on one hand and the feeling of autonomous self on the other (James and Saville-Smith, 1989). Many women accept part-time work and underemployment to enable the balancing of the two spheres. Evidence suggests that their choice of occupation is also driven by the need to balance the different value systems (Skeats, 2005).

Statistical data regarding occupational choice shows women today predominantly remain in so called 'female' work (Skeats, 2005). Women are clustered in a relatively narrow range of occupations, and although they are now more likely to be in professional or technical jobs, this still tends to be in traditional female areas of employment such as health and education. While women are gradually moving into less traditional domains, 80 per cent still work in service industries, including retail trade, property and business services, and health and education (Skeats, 2005). These are also areas where it is often possible to work part-time or to work hours that are more compatible with family life. As such, they have long been predominantly female areas of work. The need for many women to combine work and family life results in another striking pattern of female labour force participation. Their participation in the work force is largely determined by their family's life cycle stage (Skeats, 2005).

This brings us to another hurdle women face in their working lives. While the gender gap for participation in the paid workforce is narrowing, women's work in New Zealand is punctuated by career interruptions and characterized by pay differentials between men and women, occupational segregation and unpaid work. While women's overall participation has increased dramatically in the last 40 years, the rise disguises the fact that business views the age band of 25 to 45 years as prime employment ages (Wallace, as cited in McGregor, 2002:2). This is precisely the age band where women have children, and therefore interrupt their careers, which in turn impacts on their progression into senior management (Lawrence, as cited in McGregor, 2002: 2). This illustrates the male bias of the public sphere and one of the mechanisms that keep women in secondary work roles.

In advanced countries today, women are able to compete as equals in the labour market only if they are not constrained in their family roles. Women who value their involvement in individual-oriented institutions are therefore faced with a dilemma if they view a potential future family role as inconsistent with their aspirations as individuals. Some women in this category will opt out of the family role rather than the individual role, that is, they will not form a permanent relationship or they will decide to have no children or fewer children than they would otherwise have intended

(McDonald, 2000a). Most young women today have been educated and socialized to expect that they will have a role as an individual beyond any family role they may have. Coupled with the lack of support and status afforded the carer role and the strong incentives⁷ to contribute to the paid workforce, it is not surprising that fertility levels are declining.

Factors other than economic costs also affect women's decisions, as noted by Solsona (as cited in Duncan & Edwards 1999: 262). On the surface, it appears that young women today have opportunities not dreamt of by earlier generations: they can choose if, when and how many children they have, and there are few if any careers that women cannot choose to enter. Nevertheless, gender expectations are now full of contradictions for women. Women are expected to compete in the workforce and use the skills and training they have acquired at considerable expense, but as mentioned earlier, if they have children, their chances of an equal career track with their male peers are very limited (Apter, 1994).

However, there is also significant direct and indirect pressure on women to have children and be good mothers. Women who work often feel that they are judged negatively and women who choose to stay home with their children feel they are devalued. These conflicting gender expectations make it very hard for women to gain a sense of success and well-being (Skeats, 2003). It could also be argued that having children becomes a strong biological urge for many women and choosing to deny this urge can add to the sense of failure. Hence the problems do not end for those who choose to remain childfree.

Women choosing to delay childbirth and to have fewer children, and those who choose not to have children, have contributed to a situation that Pool (2005) describes as alarming. Fertility statistics indicate a global decline in fertility in Western democracies. If left unaddressed, this will have serious consequences for the global economy, as well as for individual countries and their social structures. Pool notes that since the late 1970s in New Zealand, family sizes have been around or below replacement. They have been less than 50 per cent of the level they were during the Baby Boom, below 2.1 births per couple, and probably declining further. Since family is the basic building block of society, these statistics are disturbing.

Social values are changing and this is clearly evidenced by the increase in women participating in the paid workforce and the declining birth rate. Orloff (2004) agrees, and states that in many western democracies employment among younger cohorts of women has risen, but is coupled with record-low fertility, for employment on the whole remains on the male model and is incompatible with childbearing and child-rearing. She argues that in countries with "strong male breadwinner" patterns, there will be deep problems of social sustainability (very low fertility)⁸ or continuing gender inequality. The politics of breaking from maternalism and the breadwinner model are therefore of great interest, both theoretically and practically.

⁷ e.g. government's working for families packages, financial independence, social acceptance, autonomy, personal satisfaction, self-esteem, establishing a pension for old age security, to name a few.

⁸ very low fertility means a total fertility rate below 1.5 birth per women on average

McDonald (2000) also observes a correlation between very low levels of fertility in advanced countries and inconsistency between the levels of gender equity applying in varied social institutions. He states that in countries with very low levels of fertility, it can be assumed that there will be high levels of gender equity in institutions that deal with people as individuals, for instance education and market employment, but low levels of gender equity in institutions that deal with people as members of families, such as industrial relations (the terms and conditions of employment), services, government transfers, and the family itself. Simply put, he believes that if women are provided with opportunities nearly equivalent to those of men in education and market employment, but find these opportunities severely restricted by having children, then on average, women will restrict the number of children that they have to an extent which leaves fertility at a precariously low, long-term level.

Maley (2002) observes that countries with high living standards have low fertility rates and countries with low living standards have high fertility rates. Maley believes it is probable that falling fertility is, in part, a response to profound social and economic changes such as the movement of mothers into the workforce and the increasing fragility of married life. He is pessimistic and suggests that it may be that these are so deeply determined, so entrenched and popular that they are beyond reversal or mitigation except at unacceptable financial and social cost (Maley, 2002).

Folbre (1983) would seem to agree, believing that conventional fertility theorists' failure to register the importance of changing power relations within the family constitutes what many feminists might consider a fatal error of omission. She argues that change in fertility rates requires changes not only to the socio-structural supports, but also to the moral supports, i.e. changes in the morality governing the nature both of the relationship between partners and of women's ordained role as child-rearer. In all societies, family organizations are sheltered from radical change by an idealized family morality, a moral conservatism that is often enshrined in the prevailing religion.

Most often, idealized family morality confines women to the authority of men. Social norms may allow women increased control over their own fertility within what is, in most respects, a male dominated family system, so long as their increased independence does not threaten the system itself (Folbre, 1983). However, McDonald (2000) argues that low fertility will eventually change the nature of women's lives and therefore *is* a threat to the family system. In time, women will demand greater levels of equity for themselves in institutions outside the family. McDonald points out that recognition of this outcome lies at the heart of the conservative, usually religious, opposition to birth control.

Women's returning to work while their children are young is an example of change in social values within the family, and it is certainly changing the nature of women's and children's lives.⁹ Since the 1970s, more and more mothers with young children have become part of the workforce. When New Zealand was emerging from the peak of the post-war Baby Boom in the mid-1970s, only one quarter of those whose youngest child was not yet of school age were employed and of these only just over a third were full-time (Skeats, 2005). Labour force participation of women with young children in the

⁹ The effects on children of changing social values and the lack of a 'stay at home parent' are the topics of much debate but cannot be dealt with here due to word restrictions.

1990s gained momentum. By 2001, it had almost doubled. While the majority were in part-time employment, there was also a growing trend towards full-time work (Skeats, 2003).

Skeats uses data from the 2001 survey to compare the experience of different generations of New Zealand women. The probability of returning to work before the youngest child is aged 2 years increases with each successive age group of women. Additionally, the more recent the maternal birth cohort, the greater the probability of returning to work with younger and younger children, and those who do so are more and more likely to work full-time (Skeats, 2005). The trend towards more individualistic motivations seems to be gaining momentum. The possibility of women voluntarily relinquishing their hard won financial independence appears slim, which may be seen as supporting Maley's (2002) views of entrenchment.

A contrasting view, however, is that in today's economic climate where two incomes are needed to achieve the same standard of living that one income would have achieved a generation ago, many women work in the public sphere out of necessity, not from a desire for economic autonomy. For many, staying home with children is for the privileged only (Skeats, 2005). Contrary to the feminist image of women aiming to achieve like men, attaining a fair share of power, making equal money, reaching the top positions in the heretofore masculine realms of business, government and law, Apter (1994) argues that many women look up at the "top," and are deciding that they don't want to do what it takes to get there. She observes that many women would prefer not to work in the public sphere as trailblazers for economic autonomy, but instead, given the option, would choose to stay home with their children. As a compromise to social pressure and economic necessity, they choose underemployment and part-time work.

Hakim (2003) believes work-centred women are in a minority. She states that preference theory predicts men will retain their dominance in the labour market, politics and other competitive activities, because only a minority of women are prepared to prioritise their jobs (or other activities in the public sphere) in the same way as men. Hakim asserts that home-centred women are also a minority group, and a relatively invisible one given the current political and media focus on working women and high achievers. Home centred women prefer to give priority to private life and family life after they form a relationship. Hakim believes that the majority of women are adaptive-women, which is the term she gives to those who prefer to combine employment and family work without giving a fixed priority to either. Women today have the equal right to make the same bargain that men have made for centuries, to take time from their family in pursuit of success. Instead, some women are redefining success. And in doing so, they are redefining work.

Women's definition of success has gone through many changes. At one stage, their recipes, or their husband's promotion, or their well brought up children served as measures of their success. Next, being successful required becoming like a man in terms of participating in the male public sphere, and it was about the male definition of success (i.e. money and power). However, this definition comes at a high price for women, and many are equating success with words like satisfaction, work/life balance and sanity (Duncan & Edwards, 1999). Many women look at what achieving their career goals will require of them, and some are deciding that they are unwilling to pay

the price. They work out of necessity, not for personal satisfaction. This could be the result of successful gender socialization and certainly supports Solsona's (1998) point of view about economic pressure not being sufficient to change women's aspirations if gender understandings are opposed to those aims. Women and men still rarely step outside the realm of the expected in terms of occupational choice, instead choosing to fulfil their socially constructed gender roles (Else and Bishop, 2003). A majority of women decline to embrace the male idea of success at the expense of their own more community/family based concepts.

However, the low fertility rate would suggest that the economic system and attendant individualistic ideology is beginning to reap what it has sown. Freud (1961) once said that women would be the death of civilisation. He may well turn out to be right if the fertility rate continues to decline. McDonald (2000) believes that the achievement of gender equity thus far in individual-orientated institutions will not be reversed, and that unless gender equity within family-orientated institutions rises to much higher levels than prevail today, low fertility rates will persist. A step in the right direction would be to coerce or force employers to accommodate dual responsibility for both women and men.¹⁰

Gender boundaries need to shift and blur to allow a merging of roles and the traditional public/private sphere mentality needs to be rigorously deconstructed. One feminist economist attempting to do this is Marilyn Waring. In her book *Counting For Nothing*, Waring (1988) attempts to deconstruct the economic system by focussing on the way in which gender is built into the capitalist class structure. She examines militarism, "development", pollution, reproductive technologies, breastfeeding, diet, the sex trade and rural women's labour. She weaves all of these quite different subjects together, showing how they are all integrated into standard economic models in a way that heightens the exploitation of women by keeping it invisible and "off the books".

In a later book, *Three Masquerades*, Waring (1996) explores the interconnections between equality, work and human rights. Waring warns that until the whole is exposed to question, nothing changes in the power dynamics of who chooses, who judges, who defines, who rules and who imposes. Lies, she claims, thus masquerade as truths. She argues that there is a basic question in economics about what we value and how we value it. Waring believes this is a fundamental ideological question. She points out that if people are asked what they value most in life, they will say their children, their partner, their health and their religion. Usually, it is something that cannot be bought. At the same time, she argues, we are invited to believe the Chicago School rhetoric that market pressure determines value (Waring, 1996). The difficulty is the embeddedness of the current system. Any attempt to dismantle it is perceived as a threat. One possibility is that the declining fertility rate may become such a problem for the dominant powers that they are forced to re-evaluate the value system in some way.

Historically, women's place has been in the home. Today this role remains compelling for women but is beginning to lose strength. Women are now expected,

¹⁰ More and more men these days express a desire to spend more time with their children. It is vital this be encouraged as a step towards gender equity (Duncan and Edwards, 1999).

and are expecting, to work in the paid workforce regardless of carer responsibilities. However, the lack of support for women's unpaid work effectively traps women in a no-win situation where they must both sacrifice a hard-won career and accept part-time work or under-employment so they can accommodate their familial role, or sacrifice having children, or at least sacrifice the ability to be a good mother. Many are choosing to prioritise their career and remain childless. Some choose later and fewer children. Economic necessity and social pressure to contribute denies many women the right to choose to stay home with their children. The decisions women are making, which can be seen as very rational, are contributing to a decline in fertility, a situation this male-privileged culture can ill afford.

Unpaid work needs to be valued and supported to enable an even playing field in the paid work force. Women do not have much choice but to limit their fertility in the present system. The current gendered system is restricting many women to part-time and underemployment, and women's acceptance of this situation is inadvertently perpetuating the gendered culture of public and private spheres and women's subordination. Nevertheless, the declining fertility rate as a result of women attempting to fulfil these dual roles may force some change in the value system. Apter (1993) believes that the continued rapid growth in the numbers of women in paid work will be the most significant change in the workforce this century. It could be argued that it is changing far more than just the workforce and many would agree.

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Non-standard Work and Insecurity in New Zealand/Aotearoa

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In the last two decades, we have moved into an era in which fewer people work in standard, productive labour, and a greater number now work in service-based and information-based occupations. Moreover, technological innovation, state deregulation, the restructuring of many organisations, and decreasing union representation have forced us to find new ways of working within this context. In addition, the proliferation of smaller private-sector companies and the contractual and casual nature of the work they offer have caused a corresponding rise in employment insecurity for many New Zealand workers. It is argued that the new flexibility has social and economic advantages for workers because it breaks down ties to full-time jobs and provides more balance in life, greater personal freedom and control over one's destiny. There are, however, inherent insecurities in flexible work.

McLaren (2001:3) contends that if we accept that the nature of work has changed, and irreversibly so, we need to understand not only what individuals experience in enduring employment insecurity, but also "what strategies, characteristics or traits [they] require forsecurity of future employability". McLaren (2004:234) further claims that "the capacity to be reflexive and critical of [the] world of work "can reduce employment insecurity." This essay critically discusses this claim against a theoretical backdrop and examines some current research in the New Zealand context.

Emerging in the late 1980s and 1990s in response to the new flexibility of the labour market, employment insecurity has been the subject of a broad international debate from a number of varying perspectives. Indeed, McLaren (2001:4) cites Hudson and Wilkinson as defining job insecurity as "...the downside of flexibility". Standing (2002:34) has developed indicators on various forms of work-related insecurities, including those relating to labour market security, employment security, job continuity, protection at work, income, work benefits, skill reproduction and worker representation. These are deemed quantitative and objective and reflective of a socio-economic perspective against a backdrop of standard, rather than non-standard work.

Psychologically-based literature, however, focuses on the effects of job insecurity on the individual, examining its causes and its consequences in terms of fear and anxiety, the degree of the feeling of powerlessness over the situation, and how severe the threat of the job loss is perceived to be by the worker concerned. McLaren (2001:8) notes that whilst this literature can contain useful indicators, "...job insecurity is seen as an intermediate level of experience between...secure employment and job loss". She also notes that much of the research has been linked to organisations undergoing a decline, and that many of the assumptions have again been made using standard work models, rather than those of the new flexible world of work.

From a sociological perspective, however, insecurity of employment is seen differently. It has resulted from the rationalisation of work in response to the greater flexibility of capitalism in this era. In contrast to the previously well-ordered patterns of industrial society, work has also had to become more flexible, or non-standard, in order to keep costs down and to meet changing workplace needs and fluctuations. McLaren (2001:30) notes that "the organisational world is [now] full of contradictions

and uncertainties that all employees have to come to terms with". This leads, she contends, to "increased feelings of existential insecurity", in other words, to the loss of frames of reference and, inevitably, to employment insecurity. Next, I will pose several theoretical views which attempt to explain employment insecurity and discuss how successfully they support McLaren's earlier assertion.

Beck (2000: 42) contends that changes in the labour market are critical to "the rise of insecure forms of lived experience". He suggests that there has been a change in the nature and the meaning of risk. He contends that whilst there have always been hazards in the natural world, the application of technology has created "manufactured risks", such as pollution and unemployment. The mechanisms of state are increasingly unable to control these risks, and they migrate to the individual. Beck states that the mobility of capital, labour and information has destroyed local support networks and has increased the need for personal responsibility and decision-making.

In the...individualisation of life situations and life paths...people are removed by mobility, education, competition...regulations, market relationships...from the traditional commitments to the milieu of their birth and are turned over to their individual labour market fate with all the concomitant risks. (Beck 1998:45).

Beck further contends that risk transcends class because of the elimination of scarcity under the Fordist system; the distribution of social goods; and the advent of the social 'bads' of the 1970s which disrupted the patterns of industrial class-structured society. He asserts that class societies are preoccupied with issues around scarcity and that risk societies are concerned with the problems of insecurity (Beck, 1992:49). Beck further suggests that within this risk society, new categories of inequality (for example, unions) emerge to fill the vacuum created by the decline of traditional class positions (ibid).

Bauman (2001:24) also argues that '[w]orking life is saturated with uncertainty'. He reflects on a time when workers had certainty and predictability in their lives but can now no longer plan their futures. Like Beck, he suggests that the new uncertainty is a "...powerful individualising force" (ibid). He accuses institutional agencies of supporting market forces and free trade as the norm, whilst in truth, these are the "prime sources of existential uncertainty" (Bauman, 1999:28). Bauman's theory further supports Beck's in his standpoint on the significance of class, saying that everyone, regardless of the level and power of their social position, is now potentially redundant or replaceable, and that their existing privileges are under threat (Bauman, 1999:52). He contends that these forces prompt those who are not yet the victims of these changes to be reflexive and assess their own futures. He cites Bourdieu (ibid), who says that the fear generated from these events haunts both the conscious and the subconscious, and that there is now nowhere for the individual to put their trust.

In contrast to both Beck's and Bauman's theories, Mythen (2005:136) believes that more proof is required of the extent and effects of individualisation, particularly in relation to collective experiences. Mythen believes that Beck has overlooked the "cohesiveness of social structures...and the complexities of social reproduction" in analysing the 'risk' society, and suggests that he is going too far in suggesting that these structures are being supplanted by 'secondary agencies'(Mythen, 2005:138). In

support of his position, he cites Tulloch and Lupton, and several other theorists, in contending that “life biographies remain strongly influenced by gender, class, age, and nationality” (ibid). He also argues that embedded forms of stratification will strongly influence the intensity of individualisation.

Mythen tellingly adds that whilst the process of individualisation may be universal, “experience of this process will be heterogeneous” (ibid). The author also points to examples of the new forms of collectivism which have arisen in response to the individualising effects of the labour market, including international collaboration between trade unions, and cashless trading networks, both of which he suggests “retain social purchase” (Mythen, 2005:137). Mythen also queries the extent of the ‘risk society’, suggesting that it needs to be further researched across geographical, social and economic contexts. He concludes that contrary to Beck’s schema, “class location remains a key determinant of employment opportunities and, at a broader level, life chances” (ibid) and that the lowest paid, least educated members of social groups are more likely to experience insecurity and vulnerability in employment, the critical issue being, he argues, not the perception of risk, but its impact (Mythen, 2005:140).

McLaren’s research involved groups of people in New Zealand who were working in the labour market in differing contexts. They included managerial personnel in permanent employment, skilled knowledge workers and other professionals with non-standard working arrangements, temporary agency office workers, as well as a group in “low skilled casual, temporary, or fixed term employment” (McLaren, 2004:233). These workers’ perceptions and experiences of employment insecurity were the subject of McLaren’s research. She noted some interesting results. In all but the latter group, participants in the research were resigned to some sense of insecurity, however, many “tried to develop strategies to manage their lives...by ensuring they had the skills and human capital to sustain ongoing employment” (McLaren, 2004:233). Some also appreciated the sense of flexibility and autonomy which accompanied and, in some cases, outweighed the perceived insecurity. Most felt confident in their future employability.

Central to the results of these groups of workers was the notion that security does not just concern keeping a job, but also concerns ongoing employability and the ability to deal with uncertainty (ibid). These findings reflect the previously discussed theoretical positions of Beck and Bauman with regard to the rise of insecurity of employment in the face of a transformed labour market and the corresponding need for individualisation and reflexivity on the part of workers in a changing world of work. However, in analysing the responses of those workers in the low skilled, casual, temporary, or fixed term categories, McLaren found that security of employment was, in many instances, beyond these workers’ control. She reported that there were ‘enormous hardships [and] a poverty trap with expectations of long-term employment diminishing and existential uncertainty increasing’ (McLaren, 2004:234). The findings for this group reflect the theoretical standpoint of Mythen in his assertion that insecurity and vulnerability in employment is most likely to be experienced by the lowest paid, least educated workers.

In the twenty-first century, we are all living in an insecure work environment. What is important is how we see ourselves and how we manage and perceive the value of our

skills and abilities. To successfully participate in the new labour market, we need to see ourselves as active agents with ongoing employability so that we can transform our sense of insecurity and uncertainty into a sense of opportunity. However, the lack of ability, and the powerlessness of the lowest paid and least educated workers to actively participate in the labour market in this manner points to a serious inequality which requires ongoing research, and public policy debate.

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